

REPORT
April 2015

Community Radio and Sustainability

A Participatory Research Initiative



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Community Radio and Sustainability

A participatory research initiative by



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Supported by
CEMCA & UNESCO



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Executive Summary

Community Radio in India completed a decade in 2012; currently there are 183¹ operational community radio stations in India, and 15 in Bangladesh. Nepal has a longer history of CR with 246² community radio stations on air. Community Radio has been supported through a policy in India and Bangladesh and for several years through an open media environment in Nepal. The Community Radio practices in India, Bangladesh and Nepal are varied and there are nuanced differences in the approaches to community radio in these countries.

This research is an attempt to explore sustainability of CR in the South Asia region through a participatory approach of working with selected CR stations in the region that represent the diversity in the sector. The research uses a mixed method approach including qualitative and quantitative tools and is founded on Ethnographic Action Research principles. Research methodologies were validated through a stakeholder process. Community researchers from each participating CR station were trained in ethnographic research tools. Data was collected over six months and included weekly diary notes, significant good practice stories, brief survey questionnaire, annual budgets and monthly expense sheets of the CRS. Ideosync researchers undertook field visits and in depth interviews with CR staff, volunteers and management committee members.

A desk research guided the formulation of key ideas around sustainability. Analysis of the data involved exploring relationships between different sets of data and triangulating the information gleaned from all the different methods. Core principles of the CR was centred throughout the analysis to seek answers to the critical question – ‘what are the practices that CR stations trying to sustain and what challenges do they see in the process?’

Key outcomes indicate that overall CR stations have evolved several ways in which to engage and enable participation of their geographical communities especially in content creation. Most CR stations are able to reflect a fairly high presence of women among their staff and volunteers. However overall the percentage of live programming is very low across the broadcast of the CR stations that participated in the study.

There is much to be done with regard to financial independence, transparency and accountability to communities. Many CR stations supported by large and medium NGOs are fairly successful in creating financial sustainability founded on a project based development paradigm. Overall CR stations were low on community generated financial support. The research shows that CR stations established by communities in remote or sparsely populated areas would need some form of public funding to diversify fund sources as community based funding in such resource poor and sparsely populated areas was challenging. Some of the other key outcomes include:

- CR Stations supported by large parent organizations enjoyed greater infrastructural stability with concurrent anxieties around closure of the CR in case the parent organization’s support is withdrawn
- Small NGO or cooperative run CR stations have greater financial diversity than university and Educational run CR Stations. For large NGO supported CR Stations, the capacities of the staff from the parent organization to bring in funds and /or the size and track record of the parent organization helps in creating greater financial diversity and sustainability for the station.

- CR stations that have had prolonged years of community engagement stand a better chance of community funding.
- In terms of finances for the CR station, the data indicates that higher the community participation in program production, lower the overall monthly expenditure of the radio station
- Transparency of financial decision making, financial independence of the CR Station and accountability to its community were some of the areas where most CR stations scored low.
- Almost all CR Stations in the study are perceived as being “for the community”- both by the volunteers and team members working at the station as well as listeners
- Data indicates that 25% of CR Stations in the study are able to create spaces for decision making by marginalized community members. Presence of marginalized community members in either staff teams or management committee does not necessarily enable them to have a voice in guiding the perspectives of various programs or internal policies of the CRS.
- Not all CR Stations have an open house meeting with all volunteers. The pressure to make payments is high making some CR Stations change their internal payment policies to retain volunteers and staff.
- While gender parity is high in most stations however five community radio stations out of 12 have formally adopted a gender policy. While women from the community may play a strong leadership role in the day-to-day content and broadcast management of the station, the same is not necessarily the case in areas like financial, technological or institutional decision-making.
- Stories that emerged as significant good practices show a high number of good practices around content and production while fewer or almost no stories around internal CR policies.

This research shows that the CR stations in the region have evolved and are continuing to evolve strong community engagement practices that are leading them towards social sustainability however more work needs to be done in order to be able to help them become stronger and more independent media institutions. This will require greater capacity building in terms of clarifying the purpose and goals of free and plural community media and lay down principles and practices for transparent and accountable institution building in order to strengthen the overall institutional sustainability of the CR stations.

1

Background and Introduction

Ideosync Media Combine with support from CEMCA and UNESCO undertook a participatory research initiative to explore the parameters that impact the sustainability of Community Radio in the South Asia region. For this purpose, a broad list of 25 CR stations across India, Nepal and Bangladesh was drawn up keeping in mind adequate representation as per the following criteria:

- i. Institutional set-up: CR Stations governed and managed by educational institutions, agricultural institutions, large, small and local NGOs, cooperatives etc
- ii. Geography: Such that stations selected are representative of all regions
- iii. Duration of Broadcast: Such that stations are representative of young and experienced stations

As a first step, a validation workshop was held on 16th June 2014, with partners and experts from Nepal, India and Bangladesh including representation from AMARC, UNESCO and UNESCO chair on Community Radio, BNNRC, CRF (Community Radio Forum) and CRA (Community Radio Association), CEMCA and others. Deliberations on the desk research outcomes and proposed research methodology resulted in positive feedback and insightful recommendations. Based on these inputs a final list of 13 CR Stations was drawn up from the broad preliminary list. The 13 CR stations included 9 CR Stations from India, 2 from Bangladesh and 2 from Nepal. Research methodologies were revised based on inputs received during the validation workshop.

Consent was sought from the selected CR Stations to participate in the research with a primary requirement for financial transparency. CR Stations were asked to nominate one person to undertake research training which was undertaken through a face to face workshop on 5th of June, 2014 as well as through an online webinar on the peer learning website 'Community Media Manch' (www.manch.net.in). The online workshop was primarily organised for the few stations that were unable to make it to the residential research-training workshop. All community researchers were trained in understanding the overall research methodology, the research tools and in particular, ways to write their diaries and document the significant good practice stories.

2

Research Methodology and Data

The research uses a mix of participatory, qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Ethnographic Research was the key participatory method, which was undertaken by community researchers. This included the writing of weekly diaries. Researchers were trained to look at the processes and practices underway at their CR stations and write up a short analytical piece that would include their own key observations regarding the ongoing work at the station especially in the light of the CR station's long term sustainability. Participants were encouraged to observe daily activities at the station, analyze and record their experiences, document challenges encountered at the station and resolutions reached. These diaries were received in English, Hindi, Bengali, Nepali, Gujarati and Tamil depending on the languages that the local researchers were comfortable writing in. The quality of the diaries and the levels of the community researchers' own analysis and perspectives were extremely varied across the data set received from the field. (Please see **Annexure I** for sample diary)

The other ethnographic tool used was significant good practice stories. All CR stations were provided a basic template in which to write up one story that signified a particular good practice at the station that occurred during the previous month. The domains under which these good practices would fall were identified in the template for CR stations to mark up before sending in the significant good practice stories. (Please see **Annexure II** – Significant Good practice story template attached). The practice stories received were also extremely varied in their quality and articulation of why the practice documented by the community researcher was considered good for the long-term sustainability of the CR. Many significant good practice stories were received without any domain specification and were categorised during data analysis by the Ideosync team. The stories were also written up in a variety of local languages and needed to be translated.

Another ethnographic data tool used during the research was mind-maps. Mind maps were drawn up during focus group discussions with CR station staff and volunteer teams. These discussions were focussed on the question of sustainability. Mind maps were drawn during discussions to record the linkages that the discussants made between various issues that emerged during the discussions on the sustainability of the CR station. These focus group discussions and mind map recordings were undertaken at the community level by the community radio researchers in some cases and by the Ideosync research team in most cases. The mind maps that have emerged during this research throw up interesting data around linked ideas for 'sustainability' of the CR station. (Attached please see **Annexure III** – Sample of a mind maps)

Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire provided to the CR station. The questionnaire covered basic aspects regarding the working of the CR station for example availability of a separate Bank account, numbers of paid staff and volunteers, number of hours of broadcast etc. (See Attached please see **Annexure IV** for questionnaire filled by the CR stations). CR stations also provided their annual budgets for the last two financial years (2012-2013 and 2013-2014) and monthly expense sheets for June – Nov 2014. CR Stations were also asked to share brief audio recordings from their daily program broadcasts in order to analyze how each individual station sounds.

The data collection process continued for 6 months beginning from June 2014 to November 2014 with several CR stations sending in materials only by the end of December 2014. The overall data includes:

Table 1: Total Data Received

S No	Data	Total
1	Diaries	284
2	Mind Maps	72
3	Significant Good Practice Stories	69
4	Survey Questionnaires	12
5	Annual Budgets	12
6	Monthly Expense Sheets	12
7	Sample Recordings	69
8	Interviews and Group Discussions on site with CR Station management /staff/volunteers/listening communities	31 FGDs & 25 IDIs (A total of over 65 hours of recorded interviews and discussions)

Along with the data that was sent by the CR station, the research also included a two-day observation visit by the Ideosync team to a total of 10 CR Stations in India and Bangladesh. The ideosync team visited each CR station and spent time with the Community Radio team, met with at least one representative of the management group of the Community Radio station/parent NGO and also met with the community wherever the CR stations were able to organise such a meeting. During these visits focus group discussions and mind map exercises were undertaken with the community radio teams and community members listening to the CR station. Discussions focused on their understanding of sustainability, history of how the CR station began, their individual interest to join community radio, process of issue selection and content production followed by the CR, community feedback processes, challenges which the radio team foresees to the long term sustainability of the CRS, roles and responsibilities of team members, capacity building of team members, transparency of budgets and accounts related to the CRS within team members and to their community, community participation in CR related decisions including financial decisions, transparency of the management structure etc. During these 2 days, IMC team members also observed live shows conducted by the station to understand the quality of participation in and around the radio and ways in which they connect with their community. These interactions were recorded.

3

Desk Research

Before the fieldwork and collection of empirical data, Ideosync undertook a desk research to review existing understanding around community radio and sustainability indicators. A total of 52 publicly available documents were reviewed in order to come up with the following:

- i. A definition of sustainability that could form the basis of this study in South Asia
- ii. Any correlations between various parameters or indicators of sustainability that this new research could validate
- iii. Any gaps that need to be fulfilled through this new research in South Asia and understanding around sustainability and community radio

The desk research provided several definitions for sustainability. Lisa Canon in her book *Life beyond Aid* defines sustainability as³ “...the ability of an organization to secure and manage sufficient resources to enable it to fulfil its mission effectively and consistently over time without excessive dependence on any single funding source. Sustainable organizations have, at minimum, a clear mission and strategic direction; the skills to attract resources from a variety of local, national and international sources and the knowhow to manage them efficiently.

Gumucio Dagrón (2001) discusses sustainability of community radio as three distinct but inter related concepts:

- **Social sustainability:** This refers to community ownership of the station and participation in the production and airing of programmes at both decision-making and operational levels. Only communities that have “appropriated” a communication process can make it socially sustainable. There is more to this than simply getting community members to use the equipment and to present programmes.
- **Institutional sustainability:** This refers to the ways in which broadcasters function; station policies, democratic processes, management styles, internal relationships and practices, and partnerships with external agencies. The external environment, in particular the presence or absence of enabling laws, policies and regulations, influences institutional sustainability.
- **Financial sustainability:** This is about a broadcaster’s finances, its income generating potential, and how money is used and accounted for. This has a lot to do with the social and institutional environment. Communities that are involved in and identify with a broadcaster are more likely to make sure it has enough money to function. Meanwhile, laws and regulation should also facilitate broadcasters’ access to funding from local, national and international sources.

According to Gumucio, social and institutional sustainability are the foundation on which financial sustainability is built.

In its impact assessment of community radio, AMARC (2007) found that⁴ “The sustainability of local CR is related to its capacity to have relevant participatory and creative programming that attracts the audience and encourages access to the media in their own language and is alternate and distinct from public and commercial broadcasting (Rights based!) It is also linked to financial support and

technological support otherwise it distracts community radio practitioners from dedicating themselves to radio production, increase community participation and the pertinence of programming.”

UNESCO⁵ as part of its Media Development Project identified four decisive factors to minimize vulnerability and to ensure sustainable functioning of CR Stations. These factors are based on the challenges and obstacles identified (that included stations being off air due to lack of proper technical configurations, inadequately trained staff etc) while looking at the local community radio stations already established in Mozambique. These include:

- **A strong community ownership** where the community feels that this is their station to the extent that they support the station with content creation, preventing thefts and overcoming financial problems. A social mobilization process was thus designed, carefully identifying in each community the many sub-communities within, ensuring information to, dialogue with and mobilization of all of these. Two primary and parallel processes – creation of the association and the process coach scheme - both pivotal in creating community ownership feeling, a number of other, very different measures have been carried out, in order to facilitate the community ownership
- **Effective Training and Capacitation** of the community, so that they could run the station effectively in terms of management and community relations, programming, administration and technical maintenance.
- **Technical sustainability system** needed, including effective and realistic responses at the different levels of support needed.

Community media⁶ are more sustainable when communities actually own the media in question and when there is a strong ‘sense of ownership’ within the community. Where governance structures are representative and processes are democratic, a community service is more likely to be sustainable. Public accountability generates trust, and trust is more likely to attract support from the community and other funders. Therefore, strong and effective financial planning and management are the foundation of financial sustainability for community media

Implicit in the above definitions and those offered by Gumucio and Toby Mendel⁷, is the critical need to define the purpose /mission and vision of community radio as separate and distinct from Government/public or commercial radio. Sustainability therefore needs to be linked to the question of *what needs to be sustained*. Financial sustainability parameters cannot alone help respond to questions of what indicates long-term sustainability of the Community Radio. It becomes essential to understand if a community radio station embodies all or most of the critical principles recognised internationally as key characteristics of community radio – in order to assess if what is being sustained is indeed ‘community radio’.

Further, it is also critical to assess if there is a shared meaning of terms like Community Participation, Ownership and Community Interest. The data was thus analyzed keeping some of the above definitions and critical parameters for community radio in mind to understand and explore the situation in south Asia vis-à-vis sustainability and understanding within Community radio stations in India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

4

Analysis Design

The study sample consisted of a total of 13 CR stations of which one CR station dropped out and did not provide any data. There was representation in the overall research sample, of CR stations supported by large not-for-profit organizations (annual budgets of more than 1 crore); Medium not-for-profits (annual budgets between 50 lakhs and one crore) and small not-for-profits (annual budgets less than 50 lakhs a year); as well as educational institutions and agricultural universities. The sample also had representation from CR stations that had been broadcasting for one to three years, between three to five years and for more than five years. Since Community Radio stations shared their budgets and financial details as part of the research, they preferred that the findings and the analysis be presented in a manner so as to maintain confidentiality and not link individual stations to specific data.

Two rounds of analysis were undertaken using the data. In the first round all data sets were independently coded to seek findings for each station. A second round of analysis was undertaken to explore relationships between different sets of data and triangulate the information gleaned from all the different methods. Additionally correlations were sought regarding influence of the kind of organization or the number of years of broadcast on any of the various parameters of sustainability.

The following core principles⁸ were kept at the centre of the analysis design to seek how the CR stations were faring. This would respond to the critical question of what practices the CR stations were trying to sustain.

A Community Radio Station:

- Serves a recognizable community;
- Promotes access to media facilities and to training, production and distribution facilities as a primary step towards full democratisation of the communication system;
- Offers the opportunity to any member of the community to initiate communication and participate in programs
- Encourages local creative talent and fosters local traditions;
- Uses technology appropriate to the economic capability of the people
- Is motivated by community well-being, not commercial considerations;
- Facilitates full interaction between the producers and receivers of messages;
- Is managed and owned by the community members. Community or their representatives have a voice in the financing of radio programs;
- Promotes the right to communicate, assist the free flow of information and opinions, encourage creative expression and contribute to the democratic process and a pluralist society;
- Is editorially independent of government, commercial and religious institutions and political parties in determining their programme policy;
- Provides a right of access to minority and marginalised groups and promotes and protects cultural and linguistic diversity;
- Follows management, programming and employment practices which oppose discrimination and which are open and accountable to supporters, staff and volunteers.

5

Key Findings

I. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Infrastructure stability

Based on the information provided by the community radio stations in the questionnaires as well as a verification of their annual budget sheets, it was found that CR stations supported by large NGOs and Universities had greater infrastructural stability i.e. the CR stations in these organizations operated in their own buildings as opposed to in a hired space as was the case for CR stations supported by smaller or

Table 2. INFRASTRUCTURAL STABILITY

Educational Institution	
Agricultural University	
Large NGO	
Medium NGO	
Small NGO	

medium NGOs.⁹ A triangulation with data from interviews and mind maps suggest two kinds of anxiety regarding infrastructural sustainability, among those working in and managing the everyday running of the Community Radio stations. Those in CR stations supported by universities and large NGOs are quite certain that the Community Radio station will cease to exist if the support from the parent organization/university is withdrawn since the building of the CR station itself is 'owned' by the parent organization. Those in small organizations are anxious about regular availability of funds to continue to pay rent for the space in which the CR station is situated. Additionally, for some CR stations a significant concern is that of shifting their location in case there are any disagreements with the landlord. The CR policies in Bangladesh and India require the GPS coordinates for the radio transmission tower and the license is provided for a specific geographic location. There is no provision in the policy that allows for any shift in the location even within the local area.

Financial Resources and Management

It has been well documented in several researches and is also evident through the desk research of this study, that greater diversity of funds provides greater long-term financial sustainability to the Community Radio station. Therefore diversity of funds is a practice for stations to strive towards. The data emerging from the CR stations in this study sample shows that six out of the twelve CR stations have at least three sources of funds including funds from the parent organization, project and advertisement funds from government sources, project funds from national and international development aid sources and community generated funds.

Table 3. DIVERSITY OF FUNDING SOURCES

CR	Parent Org	National / Govt	National/ Non-Govt	National/ Corporate	International	Local	Grey Scale
1	0	20%	20%	0	30%	30%	High
2	0	15%	35%	0	0	50%	
3	0	20%	50%	0	0	30%	
4	24%	0	0	0	50%	26%	
5	0	0	39.1%	0	60%	0.9%	
6	0%	94%	6%	0.38%	0%	0%	
7	20%	10%	0	0	70%	0	
8	60%	0	0	0	40%	0	
9	65%	0	30%	0	5%	0	
10	80%	18%	2%	0	0	0	
11	90%	0	0	0	10%	0	Low
12	93%	5%	1%	0	0	1%	

The study further shows, that currently a considerable amount of funding to CR stations is available through the support of the parent organization. CR stations in educational institutions run by State Universities are supported entirely through National Government funding available to the University. The data does not show any direct co-relations between fund diversity and the kinds of organization supporting the station nor the number of years of broadcast. However there is some indication that University and Educational institutions have less fund diversity than small NGO or Cooperative run CR stations. Additionally data emerging from interviews and researcher observations during the CR visits indicate that trained staff in at least three large-NGO supported CR stations contributed to generating 'development' projects for the CR station by writing and developing project proposals and undertaking advocacy activities, thus bringing in funds and creating greater financial diversity and sustainability for the station. International funding is also available in cases where large and well-established NGOs are supporting the CR station. The amount of such 'development' funds available to the CR station seems directly proportional the capacities of the staff from the parent organizations supporting the Community Radio stations or the size and track record of the supporting institution.

Community generated funding either do not exist or are small for most CR stations. The community funds are generated mostly through membership, shareholder support (in Nepal) or local advertising (India).

There are a few other critical aspects that emerge in the research around the issue of financial diversity:

- When a large portion of the funds are made available through one source, there seems to be no felt need for diversifying fund sources and the CR station staff does not feel inspired or pushed to locate new and local sources of funds.

- There are also some regulatory restrictions especially within large NGOs as well as national Government supported institutes regarding processes of accepting funds for the CR station. Lack of separate and independent fund management structures within the CR - as is seen in the later analysis complicates the situation of fund diversity
- CR stations have not yet been able to develop a process of quantifying in financial terms the in-kind community support they may be receiving. This in many ways prevents them from recognizing and projecting their local support base and including the same in their advocacy and fund raising efforts.

An examination of the balance sheets, annual budgets and expense statements of all the participating CR stations, shows that stations supported by larger NGOs have either created a corpus fund or have been endowed by a corpus fund. They are able to support a part of their monthly costs using the bank interests generated by these funds. However in practice, the financial support from the parent organization is not in the form of a monthly or annual grant to the CR station that can be utilized through community generated budgeting. It is on the other hand managed through direct payment of salaries and rentals and other operational costs.

Table 4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & FUNDS

CR	% of community funding	% of community members CR Management Committee	Duration of Broadcast (in years)	Grey Scale
1	50%	100	14	High
2	30%	100	6	
3	0	100	3	
4	0	100	3	
5	30%	90	3/8	
6	0	90	2	
7	0.9%	90	2.7/8	
8	26%	73	2.7	
9	0	67	3	
10	0	63	5	
11	0	50	4.8	
12	1%	25	7.2	Low

There is some correlation seen between the number of community members in the management committee of the CR station, the number of years of presence in the community, and the quantum of community contributions to the Community Radio station. Table 4 shows that CR stations which have had prolonged years of community engagement stand a better chance at having stronger community funding. These CR Stations were able to acquire funds from its community in the form of membership fee, advertisements from local shops and suppliers, community donations, birthday, marriage, anniversary or special day announcements, generator charges for a live local games etc. the staff and management committee structures of these CR stations also shows greater presence of community members.

There are a few exceptions to this correlation, marked in green in the table 4 above. An exploration of the in-depth interviews undertaken during observation visits to the CR stations shows that these exceptions arise due to location specificities. Location plays an important part in the kind of local and community resources that a CR station can generate. CR stations situated in extremely remote areas or in areas of extreme poverty or facing challenges of poor coverage due to sparse population in the coverage areas were unable to generate financial resources from within the community despite strong participation by community members in the management of the CR station.

In terms of expenditure, the average monthly expenditure for most CR stations participating in the research is between INR 50,000 to INR 1lakh (Bangladeshi Taka and Nepali Rupee have been converted into Indian currency for ease of analysis). One CR station reported a monthly expenditure of less than Rs. 20,000 per month and one reported an average monthly expenditure of over Rupees One lakh.

Table 5 Monthly Expenditure of CR station

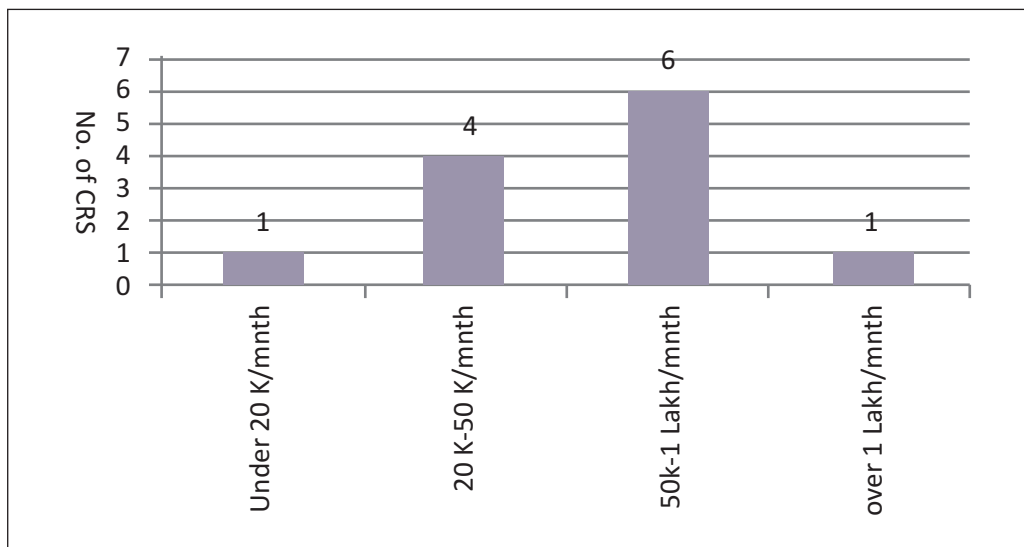


Table 6 EXPENSE SPREAD

CR	Areas of expense	Reported order	%	Grey Scale
1	Honorarium and team salary	9/11 -1st plc	82%	High
2	Repair /Maintenance/Upgradation	4/11-2nd plc	36%	
3	Field Level Activities	4/11-3rd plc	36%	
4	Administrative Expenses	4/11-4th plc	36%	
5	Program Production	4 /11-5th plc	36%	
6	Capacity Building	6/11-6th plc	55%	
7	Publicity	8/11-7th plc	73%	Low

Most common areas under which a community radio station makes its expenses include, staff salaries, honorariums and travel reimbursements to volunteers, electricity, water, stationary and other administrative overheads, program production including telephone and internet charges and any costs for music etc, field travel for research and recordings, training for volunteers and staff, and publicity and marketing. As part of the research, CR stations were asked to arrange these areas of expenditure in a descending order from maximum expense to minimum expense. An analysis of the information provided by the CR station and the monthly expense sheets and annual budgets provided by them shows that Community radio stations spent most on staff salaries and honorariums followed by repair maintenance and up-gradation of equipment. Capacity building and publicity consumed the least amount of funds on an average. Field activities, administrative expenses and program production expenses varied at third fourth and fifth place in terms of proportion of monthly expenditure.

They requested ...local businessman ... to provide advertisings on the occasion of the festival to enhance their business with festival greetings. Local people were told that they can be a shareholder of radio. - Weekly Diary, Nepal

"We have a slogan of our radio "One house One share' thereby increasing ownership and contribution of the community to the radio station." - Significant good practice story, Nepal

Table 7 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PARTICIPATION AND EXPENSES

CR	Slab	Monthly Expense (INR)	Participation	Grey Scale
1	50 K to 1 Lakh	52102	86%	High
2	Under 20 K	16000	85%	
3	20 K- 50 K	50000	81%	
4		40000	71%	
5	50 K- 1 Lakh	68,000	69%	
6		68843	67%	
7		92000	67%	
8	20 K- 50 K	35000	65%	
9		30000	57%	
10	50 K-1 Lakh	70000	55%	
11		80000	45%	
12	Over 1 Lakh	1,87,756	0%	Low

There seems to be some correlation between the community participation in program production and overall expenditure of the CR station (Table 7). Data analysis broadly indicates that higher the participation of community volunteers in program production, lower the overall monthly expenditure of the Community radio stations. The percentages in the participation column in table 7 above denote the presence of community volunteers and unpaid team members contributing to the Community Radio station.

However this is not perceived as a positive outcome by those at the CR station. Many stations feel that they have to hire unskilled local people due to paucity of funds and wish they had the funds to hire 'professionals'.

But we also have problem of funds and well skilled manpower for the radio program production. Our institute could not give what the skilled professional demand first. Unskilled get trained on institute's investment then they leave after that. – Weekly Diary, Nepal

Transparency of financial decision-making is low across most of the community radio stations. Only six out of the twelve Community Radio stations have a separate Bank account for the CR station. For the rest the parent organization manages the funds through its own bank accounts. Overall only 4 out of the 12 Community radio stations had any kind of process or practice for financial transparency. In all the CR stations particularly from India and Bangladesh, there is an overall control of the parent organization on the accounts and financial management of the Community Radio station. These accounts and financial details are shared only within the advisory or management committees of the station. There are no processes to share account/income and expenditure statements/fund flows etc with the larger community of either the CR station staff or volunteers or the CR listening community. In many cases

senior staff salaries or remuneration, if any for management committee members and other such details are not available to CR staff or volunteers.

Only one CR station in India displays its income and expenditure statements on the CR stations' walls and another station reportedly holds an annual community meeting where this information is announced to those who attend the meeting. There is greater transparency among CR stations in Nepal where income and expenditure statements are announced on air, published in the regular newsletter as well as shared with the CR shareholders. This seems directly linked to the institutional structure of the CR station.

There is also not much discussion regarding the issue of transparency or independence as is evident in the weekly diaries and significant good practice stories. Some diary entries show that community members do ask for such information however the CR stations have yet to evolve a mechanism to make the financial information available for community audit or scrutiny.

One of our listeners visited the station and started to ask about the profit and loss. Now, I was sure that he must be a shareholder. I informed him besides breakeven point for monthly expenses nothing more profit has been made. We had few copies of audit reports, which were presented in the general assembly. I gave him a copy of it. He was so happy then. - Weekly Diary, Nepal

Some of our listeners come to the station and ask us how do you manage your financial needs. We tell them how every one is partly a volunteer and how there is always a struggle for funds. Our accounts are there for everyone to see. Many don't believe that we work with so little; some are appreciative of the commitment. - Weekly Diary, India

II. SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are various ways in which Community Radio Stations provide space for their audiences/community members to engage with their broadcasts and production processes. Almost all community radio stations have some sections in their program broadcast with voices from their communities. These voices may be recorded as 'bytes' by staff reporters/producers of the CR stations who go into the field to collect these 'bytes'. A few CR stations undertake in depth engagement that involve regular conversations with their community members by visiting them and organising focus group discussions and undertaking in depth interviews, which inform the content and the perspectives of their programs. Many stations have live call in segments to some of their programs or have a special feedback program to enable listeners to provide inputs to the community radio station. Several weekly Diary entries indicate the various ways in which CR stations are linking and connecting to their audiences.

"We ask a winning question and give away awards regularly. The names of the awardees are also given in the local Newspaper. This encourages our regular listeners and increases our popularity"

- Weekly Diary, India

Many stations also hold at least one annual community event – on their anniversaries- where community members have an opportunity to engage with the CR station teams. Nine out of the Twelve CR stations conduct narrow casting activities that enable them to meet their communities in small group settings. Some Community radio stations have an online presence through a website or a face book page that allows community members to stay abreast of and comment on various ongoing activities at the CR station. Another critical way in which community members engage with the CR station is by volunteering with the station. Some stations have evolved a way to make physical feedback collection points available to their listeners.

Post boxes are kept in villages. Through these people can give their opinions and suggestions regarding programmes. – Weekly Diary, India

A key component for community engagement on any local radio is live broadcast. More could be done to enhance this aspect of CR in the region. Of an average total of 150 numbers of hours of content currently being broadcast by the twelve CR stations participating in this study, less than 40 hours (less than 35%) is live. The diaries and significant good practice stories also bear this out.

In usual days, we have only one hour phone-in programme in which only a limited number of listeners make calls to the station. - Weekly Diary, India

The power of live broadcast is also critical for breaking the myths around technology and access for remote and marginalized communities. CR stations have realized this but require greater investment of time and energy in building capacities of their volunteers and reporters to undertake live programming.

An 85-year-old woman said during a live mobile telephony program, “ I am an old woman, I don’t know anything about this mobile-shobile or radio” - and since it was live the entire community heard it. It was a great ice breaker with the community and helped us begin our engagement with them” – Significant good practice story, India

Community events and meetings also form an important part of the way in which CR stations have started engaging with their communities. Some of the qualitative data shows that despite mobile telephony and possibilities for call in, the face to face interaction has its own space for enabling and building stronger relationships and these opportunities should continue to be supported even though they are time consuming and more resource intensive.

The main motive behind organising the meeting was to have a Public hearing on “Domestic violence”. The meeting was attended by over a 1000 men and women along with other district officials - the DIG, SDM, ASP, etc., who promised to continue their support to the CR station at the event. This was the first time I had seen all the district officials on the same platform. The community put several questions to the officials and it became the beginning of a relationship. – Weekly Diary, India

Volunteer practices at the CR stations participating in this research are quite diverse. Some CR stations have no volunteers at all while others have a volunteer strength that is three to four times their staff strength. Some CR stations provide only non financial incentives to their volunteers like food, training, free internet and library facilities while others give part time or task based pay for writing scripts or presenting the program or being an actor in a radio drama etc. or provide travel reimbursements or mobile recharges.

Volunteers also undertake a wide variety of tasks. In some stations volunteers participate in regular team meetings of the CR station where decisions are taken while in other cases they function from their own homes and villages and are in touch with the CR station only via phone or monthly visits or during volunteer only meetings. The CR team either identifies volunteers during community events or they enrol themselves in the work of the CR station on their own. The CR station builds their capacities in terms of program production, broadcasting etc through training programs. They usually support the CRS in community mobilization for narrowcasting sessions or a community events, assist during pre-production and formative research for content, production and post production of programs, identify and mobilize local artists for recording of songs, drama, recording vox pop with community members etc.

CR station put out a report on the local water problem. Engaged with local authorities and kept pursuing the issue till it was solved. If the CR station broadcasts on issues of local concern then new volunteers want to join as they see merit and value in the work . They want to train and contribute and don't ask for money because it is linked to their daily everyday lives. - Weekly Diary, India

Table 8 Non-staff presence and opportunities for Participation for Community

CR	Non-staff presence	Opportunities for participation	Grey Scale
1	69%	7/7	High
2	55%	7/7	
3	45%	7/7	
4	86%	6/7	
5	71%	6/7	
6	0%	6/7	
7	85%	5/7	
8	57%	5/7	
9	81%	4/7	
10	67%	4/7	
11	67%	2/7	
12	65%	1/7	Low

Taking the data of community engagement opportunities for CR and the data on presence of community volunteers at the stations an analysis was undertaken to see if there was any link between greater opportunities for community engagement and higher non-staff presence. The column on “opportunities for participation’ in Table 8 takes into account seven most common ways which the CR stations in the study engage with their listeners – phone-ins during live programs, listenership survey, community events, Narrowcasting sessions and listener group meetings, SMS, letters, suggestion box, online engagement opportunities like facebook fan page. A few stations had four or fewer than four of these opportunities for community engagement. The table column on ‘non staff presence’ shows that the stations in the study are quite diverse in their approach to Volunteers and paid staff. CR stations human resources consist of paid staff from 20% to 80% with at-least one station that has no volunteer support and operates only with paid staff. There seems to be a very tenuous link between these two parameters as there are more than a couple of exceptions. Table 8 shows that the number of volunteers does not depend on whether the CR station has more opportunities for community engagement or fewer. This may depend more on the kinds of volunteer policies that the CR station may practice. These are discussed in the next section on institutional sustainability.

Often we have community volunteers willing to work and give their services for free - act in the drama segment or come and provide information etc. However, when we have the funds we do pay travel allowances for people who come from far away. After all they are also making an effort and we should be able to recompense them. - Weekly Diary, India

Qualitative data from the research suggests that the quality of engagement with the community is more likely to determine the kind of participation that the community has in the CR station and the levels of perceived ownership of the station within the community.

Conversations with community members during the research visits showed that the communities were unclear regarding the ‘identity’ of the CR station or who manages or controls it and who funds it. During conversation with the communities, some communities thought that the local CR was a government program, some felt it was owned by the NGO, some gave names of the popular Radio Jockeys as the one’s running the station but the histories of these Radio Jockeys as coming from the community were not clear. – Mind Map with Listening Community, India

The fact that Community Radio is ‘BY the People and OF the people’ seems not to have formed the primary basis of engagement with the community in most CR stations except those where the ‘history of their beginnings’ was before the CR policy and those that had a slower and more iterative genesis. Almost all the CR stations in the study are perceived as being ‘FOR’ the community – both by the volunteers and team members working at the station as well as the listeners.

Some of the diaries did articulate and document efforts made by the CR to explain the purpose of the Community Radio and be more transparent about its processes. There need to be more such engagements.

At the general body meeting this month over 600 people from our area participated. Annual report was read and submitted for the approval of public. The activities of the CR were explained to the people. – Weekly Diary, India

Several diary entries show participation of one kind or another by the community.

Every day we have some listener or the other dropping in. We have to give them time and attend to them properly no matter how busy we are otherwise they call on air during our open program and register their complain. Our listeners feel an ownership on the station and we have to be responsive. - Weekly Diary, India

Local Partnerships: CR stations seem to have managed to develop strategic partnerships and networking with other local NGOs. 9 out of the 12 CR stations reported through the questionnaire that they have developed and established a local network with local CBOs (Community Based Organizations) Local Government departments, village based organizations and other local NGOs.

One of the key principles for Community radio is providing access to marginalised communities or those whose voices have been silenced by mainstream media. In order for CR stations to emerge as a distinct local media with an identity of its own - different from public or commercial media - they need to create a strong commitment and engagement with the marginalised communities in their areas. This would lead to social sustainability of the CR station. All the CR stations participating in the research have fairly high populations of people considered minority groups, marginalised or backward. However the levels of participation of these marginalised communities' varies in the different CR stations that were part of the study.

Table 9 Community Radio provides right of access to marginalized

Communities (MC=Marginalized Communities)						
CR	MC in Management Committee	MC in staff	Physical access	Voice of MC in programs	Processes for mobilization in MC areas	Grey Scale
1	1	1	1	1	1	High
2	1	1	1	1	1	
3	1	1	1	1	1	
4	0	1	1	1	1	
5	1	1	0	1	1	
6	1	1	0	1	1	
7	1	1	0	1	0	
8	1	0	0	1	1	
9	0	0	1	1	1	
10	1	0	0	1	1	
11	1	0	1	1	0	
12	0	0	0	1	1	
						Low

Table 9 shows an analysis of indicators like presence of marginalized community members in the station’s management committee, in the staff, ease of access for marginalised community members to the CR station and whether program content of the CRS reflects the voices of marginalised communities in those areas. The data indicates that 25% of the CR stations in the study are able to create such spaces for marginalised community members. Diary entries in some stations show that there is a perceived need for special efforts to be made in ensure participation.

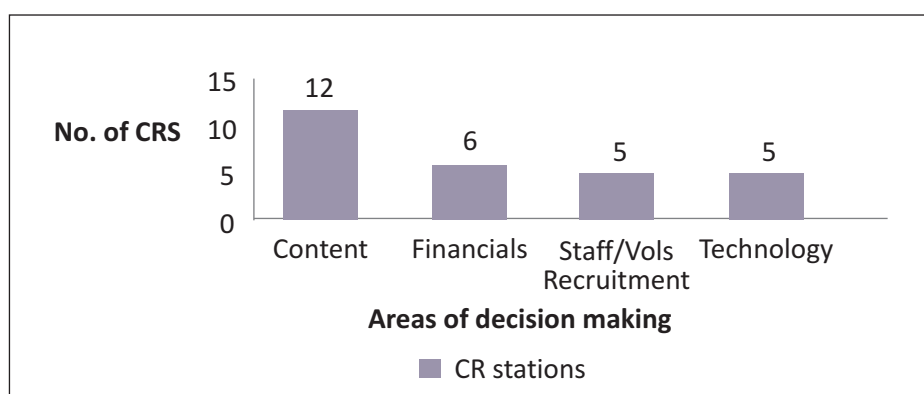
When X (CR Reporter) is inviting participants, she needs to put special attention to maintaining sex ratio. On a caste basis, Dalits and Janajatis (local castes and tribes) need to be pushed for participation. Program participants will be mostly those who never get the opportunities to meet the organizers. They will put their curiosities and complaints. Doing this, X says that she will have chance to have a deeper relation with the local people. - Weekly Diary, Nepal

Some CR stations do make such special efforts as is indicated in their diary entries. Additionally training in methodologies such as *Community Learning*¹⁰ help the CR station evolve community engagement processes that provide enhanced access and participation of particularly marginalised groups.

The CLP methodology and the intensive research required helped us undertake in-depth conversations with women. The severe health issues, mental and emotional trauma faced by them when they hold off defecation for late evenings or early mornings due to non-availability of toilets. How susceptible they become to harm at several levels The CLP approach was significant for the radio because with this, the community radio team was able to talk about the real issues of the people. It lends much greater credibility to the program content and helped the team delve further and establish connections with the community. - Weekly Diary, India

Further, an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data indicates that mere presence of marginalised community members in either staff teams or management committees does not necessarily enable them to have a voice in guiding the perspectives of the various programs of the station or the internal policies of the Community Radio station. A focus on their concerns would require more capacity building and a change in internal architecture of how the Community radio stations are run and managed.

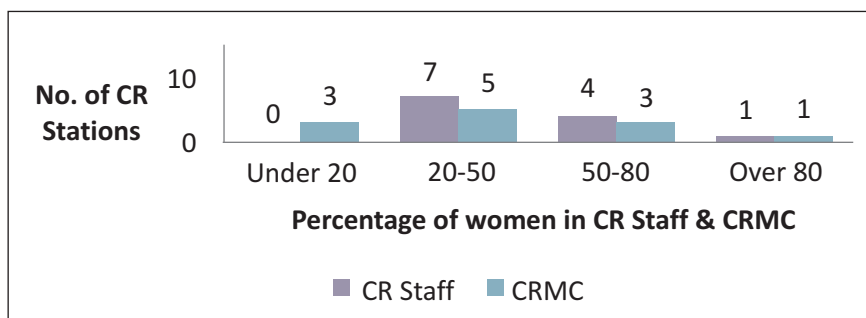
Table 10 Community’s involvement in decision making



As is further evident from table 10 above, in terms of decision-making, the CR stations have been able to make substantial progress in engaging and involving their communities in discussions and decisions around content. Five out of the twelve CR stations have separate content management committees that comprise of community members where all content and radio program related decisions are taken. However, Community participation is not as strong in areas such as financial decision-making, decisions regarding recruitment of new staff or volunteers as well as decisions in terms of technology and equipment.

Gender equality seems to be a strong area of overall commitment and most CR stations are working towards involving women in their teams at all levels including in the management teams. The graph below shows that overall there are more women in Community radio production teams/staff than in the management however; Community Radio management committees do have a fairly high presence of women. On an average women’s presence in staff and management is 20-50% with only one CR station having more than 80% women on their staff and in their management committees.

Table 11 Women participation in CR Staff & Management Committee



The qualitative data shows that decision-making capacities and the quality of women’s participation in the CR station varies across the stations and is dependent on the capacities of the women. While women from the community may play a strong leadership role in the day-to-day content and broadcast management of the station, the same is not necessarily the case in areas like financial, technological or institutional decision-making.

An analysis was undertaken to assess the overall social sustainability of the Community radio stations participating in the research by collating and triangulating several data sets. Data available on community engagement, participation, ownership perception, presence and decision making by women members, marginalised communities etc were collated to create a simple table as follows. Table 12 shows that 92% of the CR stations have a management committee structure which is reflective of the community that it serves. 62% of the CR stations promote gender

Table 12 Social sustainability Indicators

The management structure of the CRMC reflects the community it serves	92%	High
Community Radio promotes gender equality	67%	
Community Radio is accountable to the community	33%	
Community radio provides right of access to marginalized community and right of access to media	25%	Low

Earlier, (before training) anchors used to ask with the callers did you have tea, Have you eaten lunch? Have you take snack? How is weather? But now they asked did you have toilets in your village? What kind of farming do you have more in your village? What about the condition of crops? How much distance do you have for the school? Is there road digging in the village? - Weekly Diary, Nepal

While gender parity is quite high in most stations, only five community radio stations of the twelve who participated in the research have formally adopted a gender policy. None have a formal grievance cell. In practice this does not change very much because in none of the CR stations is the gender policy discussed, debated or understood by all its members. The policy is also not displayed anywhere and there are no processes in place to register any grievance in cases of non-compliance etc.

Table 13 Significant Good Practice Stories

Program Content	28	High
Community Interest/Benefit	18	
Community Access/Engagement	13	
Technology	7	
Funds	6	
Editorial Independence	2	
Ownership/accountability to community	2	
Internal Policies	0	Low

In terms of the practices that the CR stations recognised as significant for sustainability, stories that emerged as part of the **Significant Good Practice stories** documentation, show a high number of good practices around content and program production. Stories that discussed good practices around community interest or benefit were second highest in number with most such stories documenting anecdotal benefits of individual members in the community as a result of a program broadcast by the CR station. Several significant good practice stories document a direct benefit to the community as a result of a program broadcast by the Community Radio station or the intervention of the community radio reporters in local events.

Table 14 Diary Discussions

CR Management	High
Content	
Listener/Audience	
Collaborations	
Community Engagement/ Participation	
Capacity & Skill Building	
Technology & Infrastructure	
Challenges	
Fund Generation	
Community Volunteers Base	
Engaging with local stakeholders & action	
Paucity of funds	
Impact of CR	Low
Ethics/Values/Decisions (on basis of gender, caste, etc.)	

Child marriage is a much prevalent practice in our area and despite it being illegal several families still forcibly marry their young girls. We have been regularly broadcasting programs to make people aware that this is wrong and that they can be punished. Recently we got to know through our community volunteers that such a marriage was going to take place. People expect that because we are the local radio/media we will be able to do something. We complained to the local authorities and we were able to prevent the marriage from taking place. When the CR station is able to benefit the community like this there will be an ownership of the CR station by the local people” – Paraphrased from Significant Good Practice story, Bangladesh.

Our program on lack of drinking water in the local school and its impact on students created a local discussion. It emerged that the village school had no funds. The CR report generated community interest and a local benefactor raised the funds for the school taps and drinking water facility. – Significant Good Practice Story, Nepal

However there are fewer or almost no stories around internal CR policies whether these are around policies for gender equality, volunteer support, ethical principles etc. This is reflective of the low levels of formalized internal policies at the CR stations whether regarding volunteer recruitment work and growth, gender or ethical guidelines for local advertising etc. Most CR stations take the Government policy as their primary guide and have not made much effort towards creating more localised and focused guidelines for themselves. Even in Nepal where there is no CR policy, there seem to be no practices around evolving internal policies that would strengthen the CR station towards its core principles. 7 out of the 12 CR stations who participated in the research have adopted their parent

organizations policies as their own guiding policies. A brief analysis suggests that these have not been adapted in any real sense but just been adopted as policies that the CR station will also follow.

An analysis of the weekly diaries received from the Community Radio station also indicates that maximum discussions revolve around practices of CR management (HR and volunteer coordination, broadcast timing etc), content and listener and audience feedback. Collaborations, Community engagement and participation, funds and challenges come next and there are very few discussions around the impact of the Community Radio or the kinds of ethical codes and value decisions that need to be taken by the Community Radio. A total of 284 diaries were received from the CR stations. The diaries written in vernacular were translated into English or Hindi and then were coded as per the emergence of critical ideas related to sustainability. (**See attached Annexure V for a sample-coded diary**). These codes were then collated as a grey scale (see table 14 above) where the darker side of the scale indicates more the number of codes related to that issue.

The ability of the CR station to attract volunteers, keep their moral high and have some kind of volunteer policy that motivates the volunteers to stay with the CR station for a longer time impacts the overall institutional sustainability of the Community Radio station. The diary entries show a struggle within the CR institutions to have trained human resources to undertake and perform the myriad tasks and take on responsibilities at the Community Radio stations.

We have not managed to get volunteers in far away areas so we depend on our listeners for sending us information local events. We need to work on increasing our volunteer network in villages that are far away so we can fulfil our mandate” - Weekly Diary, India

This is the day of our monthly meeting. Everyone sits together for this meeting, staff and volunteers and share the work that they have been doing, their successes and challenges. The volunteers and reporters also fill in their travel forms for reimbursement for which payments are made on the 7th of every month. Our open monthly meeting idea helps everyone get a sense of how the CR station is doing” - Weekly Diary, India

Not all CR stations have an open house meeting with all volunteers as is suggested in the above diary quote. However in several CR stations the practice of meeting together to discuss issues has been noted. In several CR stations the management committees are not as engaged as the CR volunteers or reporters may like. Of special interest are diary entries that indicate a shift in how the CR as an institution is viewed by new trainees – as a livelihood provider - and how this is cause for concern for those who have engaged with the CR for longer.

I sometime ask the new trainees why they want to join the community radio. They say they like to listen to their own voice on radio and also they would like to earn as there are expectations their families have of them. I then wonder if these young trainees will ever be able to stay around for six – seven years like I have done...making the kinds of economic sacrifices. Community radio can never really give you your livelihood- it’s something else” - Weekly Diary, India

We at the CR are facing challenges in terms of keeping the volunteers going with us. In spite of our continued efforts to explain to the volunteers, they still look at working with radio as a job or an income source. This idea is problematic. - Weekly Diary, India

The pressure to make payments to volunteers is high, making some CR stations change their internal payment policies to retain volunteers and staff. Two community radio stations documented a change in their payment policies during the course of the research and both these stations also document a reduction in their overall broadcast hours during the course of this research.

To complete the work in assigned time and to motivate the volunteers, Program director announced an honorarium would be paid for writing the script, field level recording of the program, editing and providing voice. This announcement fuelled the excitement of the volunteers - Weekly Diary, Bangladesh

Need for project funds to pay salary and other expenses to CR staff. CR staff salaries are held back for several months due to non-availability of funds. Staffs then don't perform. Some staff live away from their homes and therefore find it difficult to live without regular salaries. Parent NGO supported fellowship for CR volunteers to provide 'good' workers with stipends and train them in all aspects of the CR station. Seen as a way to gain better human resources and greater sustainability for the CR station. - Weekly Diary, India

Five of the twelve CR stations in the study have any kind of arrangements with local service providers for maintenance and upkeep of their equipment. Similarly only five out of the twelve CR stations have identified members from within their listening community who have the technical skills to support them in any electrical or technological issues arising at the Community radio station. In terms of institutional sustainability with regard to equipment and technologies, the CR stations are faring quite poorly and there needs to be more mechanisms to provide sustainable support to all community radio stations in this regard.

6

Conclusions

F. CONCLUSIONS

Community Radio is still nascent in Bangladesh while in India it has completed a decade and in Nepal it has existed in its myriad forms without a policy for much longer. It is therefore critical to pause and reflect on these research findings before expanding and treading further on the path of operationalizing the CR policies as they currently exist in Bangladesh and Nepal and seek to replicate the experience in other South Asian countries like Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

The existence or non-existence of a guiding national CR policy plays an important role in determining the kind of Community Radio being sustained in the country. The policy has impacted the kinds of institution that is eligible to establish Community Radio as well as the kind of institutions the Community Radios themselves are evolving into. The practices at the stations in the three countries are quite diverse with CR stations in Nepal having a slight edge over those in India and Bangladesh from the point of having evolved as 'media' organizations' rather than as 'development' organizations. Communities in all three countries are conceived of as geographic communities and not as communities of interest. All stations work on principles of not for profit in India and Bangladesh where as the underlying principles in Nepal seems to be community shareholding at least in the CR stations that were part of the study.

The focus of the content in Nepal is slightly more towards local reporting with local journalism being practiced by the Community Radio reporters whereas in India and Bangladesh those working in the Community radio stations focus more on 'information provision' and 'providing links to welfare/development services.

The Community Radio stations have been able to create a space for themselves as a local language media that provides relevant information for its geographic communities and have been able to evolve mechanisms for support from the 'parent organizations' to fund 'development project' based work. This is particularly the case in India and in Bangladesh and more specific to CR stations supported by large NGOs.

The study shows that Community Radio will have to continue a high level of engagement with its community over a longer period of time, enabling listening audiences and community members to play successively bigger roles in all aspects of its decision making – not just in terms of content design but also in institution building and internal policy decisions, to be able to raise resources from within the community. CR stations in extremely poor and remote areas will need to remain small if they are to survive primarily on community resources but may also need additional institutional support in the form of public funding or continued support from a well funded parent NGOs. This is due to the lack of overall resources in the areas in which they operate.

“Our entire process is based on community engagement. Before we began our radio station we had gone and visited community members in many close by villages, to discuss the idea of the community radio and how it will be different from any other radio. Who among them will be interested to join, what they will do? People are also keen to understand exactly what responsibilities they can realistically fulfill as they are also busy earning their livelihoods. An open discussion results in identifying several tasks that people can indeed do like identifying local singers and musicians, becoming our eyes and ears regarding local events, collect local information from local authorities in their villages, assist us when we organize community events or any campaigns, provide assistance when we come to the village for recordings, keep us posted of current information or issues or problems in their area, find out talent in the local area and those who sing or write or tell stories well. Now when we are broadcasting, we thank them for their assistance on air and we are able to create a large volunteer base that helps us run the radio station and do innovative, interesting and relevant programming for our listeners. Before we start any new program also we follow a similar process” - from Significant Good Practice story, India

Community Radio can also be well sustained through the patron ship of large Not-for-profit development organizations that have over the years evolved good social work practices. As institutions these Community Radio stations may not be able to become completely independent of the donor-project based focus given the embedded interests of the supporting NGOs however, they have the potential to perform an important role in providing critical information to communities in remote areas in the local languages. The NGO supported CR stations may need to evolve clear internal policies that will help strengthen the CR as a local media institution as well as create transparency and accountability mechanisms that make the relationships between the NGO and the Community Radio clearer and help clarify the identity of the Community Radio to its communities.

Five hours of programming and two hours of feedback sessions have been going on since the 30th of last month. Because of which we are able to identify what the listeners like and what they do not. We have identified those issues and made programmes on them, for example, child rights, women empowerment, usage of roads in the villages, etc., People now feel that it is their radio and if they get their issues to us, the radio would be able to do something about it. Also, they are willing to contribute and help us and do not hesitate in bringing their views to us. - Weekly Diary India

This research shows that the CR stations in the region have evolved and are continuing to evolve strong community engagement practices that are leading them towards social sustainability however more work needs to be done in order to be able to help them become stronger and more sustainable institutions. This will require greater capacity building in terms of clarifying the purpose and goals of free and plural community media and lay down principles and practices for transparent and accountable institution building in order to strengthen the overall institutional sustainability of the CR stations.

We have observed that making the program with topics which have direct impact with the community makes good relationships between the community and radio. Most of the practical questions were raised. For example – does the electric panel box get the extra load during additional lighting for festival, why electricity authority has not giving any information to the consumer for its awareness etc. If we could make the program that have direct concern with the community in future we may not have close the radio due to financial crisis because they will be ready to collect funds for the program from which they are benefiting in daily life.” – From Significant Good Practice Story Nepal

In terms of financial sustainability this research shows that communities are more willing to provide local resources to Community Radio stations when the Community Radio stations broadcast content of immediate relevance to the community. This requires the Community Radio policies in the region to make local news possible. Additionally local advertising helps CR stations in areas where there is potential for such advertising ie where there are local businesses and small markets that can support and generate advertising. In remote and marginalised areas where the CR stations are serving extremely poor or sparsely populated geographical pockets, public fund support will be required to ensure financial sustainability of these stations otherwise they will need to be more dependant on donor funding of their parent organizations (NGOs).

The research findings throw up several questions to ponder and recommend action. Some of these include:

- i. If smaller organizations and local communities are to have a voice, the CR policy guidelines need to take into account the 'catch 22' situations that the requirement for a fixed location and GPS reading puts. Such a policy guideline favours organizations with available infrastructure and likely immovable prospects for the CR station thereby marginalising voices that may not have access to such immovable property or infrastructure.
- ii. Technology innovation and R&D need to be supported to create easily movable transmission systems like the 'radio in a box' that will minimise infrastructure requirements as well as serve in good stead in times of disaster.
- iii. Similarly easier more hardy and locally maintainable and repairable technology solutions especially for transmission need to be made available – perhaps a recommendation for policy to open up to more local transmitter manufacturing.
- iv. Since the NGO models seems financially sustainable what financial practices could be evolved to create greater independence and transparency to the community of the CR stations they support?
- v. The research throws up the need to build CR stations as local media institutions that are guided by local priorities and where internal policies reflect critical principles of inclusion and social justice. Perhaps a shift in the kind of capacity building required alongside building capacity for creating community learning programs or local content may be considered
- vi. How can the idea of CR as a livelihood be changed so that it comes to represent the 'something more' as has been articulated in some of the diary entries shared by the CR stations
- vii. The research shows that quality of engagement with the community is a greater determinant of community ownership rather than the number of opportunities for participation. It will be important to refine what this quality engagement must entail?
- viii. There may be merit to exploring history and memory of the CR movement wherever it existed in the South Asia region (Nepal, India, Srilanka) to trace the influence of movement culture on institutional character

7

Constraints and Challenges

The research faced certain constraints and challenges, which are listed here to further inform the results presented in this report.

1. The scope of the this exploration was fairly large given the ways in which mixed method research approaches have been used and the intensive and participatory methods of collecting qualitative and ethnographic data. This made the time allocated to the study a challenge to doing justice to all the data that has emerged
2. An enormous amount of information has come in vernacular and other languages and had to be translated in order to make it accessible for analysis. This had a bearing on the amount of time it took before any analysis design could be evolved. It is also important to bear in mind that some nuances may have been lost in translation.
3. The budget for the research did not allow travel visits to Nepal. Triangulation of data from Nepal has therefore missed out on the critical observations of the lead researchers engaged in this study.
4. There is still some extremely interesting data available in the mind maps and the in depth interviews and focus groups discussions held with communities which have not been fully transcribed or analysed due to paucity of time. It is hoped that this work can be further supported to do a more in depth and thorough analysis using some of the data that has yet to be explored. Further work on the data analysis may strengthen the tenuous links between CR principles and sustainability that have emerged through this research.

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Endnotes

- ¹ CRFC data accessed on 20th March 2015 <http://crfc.in/list-of-cr-station/?status=operational-station>
- ² ACORAB statistics accessed on 20th March, 2014 on <http://www.acorab.org.np/>
- ³ Lisa Cannon, Life Beyond Aid, 1999
- ⁴ AMARC. Community Radio, Social Impact Assessment. Removing Barriers, Increasing Effectiveness; AMARC, 2007.
- ⁵ Creating Sustainable Community Radio Stations – a major challenge
- ⁶ Community Media Sustainability Guide: The Business of Changing Lives; Jean Fairbairn; 2009
- ⁷ Tuning into Development, Toby Mendel, UNESCO 2013
- ⁸ CRCIT version 2.0, UNESCO Chair for community Media and CEMCA
- ⁹ Large NGOs are those with annual budgets over one crore; Medium NGOs are those with an annual budget between 50,000 and One Crore and small NGOs are those with annual budgets of under 50 Lakhs
- ¹⁰ Commonwealth of Learning Community Learning Program Model
<http://www.col.org/progServ/programmes/livelihoods/healthyComm/Pages/CommunityLearningProgrammeModel.aspx>
(Accessed 20th march 2015)

Annexure

I. Sample English Weekly Diary

September 20, 2014

This past week, the radio staff represented by the team coordinator came up with an idea to collectively work on programs during the run up to Vidhan Sabha elections in the state of XXXX. The code of conduct was already applicable and they wanted to call the contenders in the run and interview them about their plans for developing their wards. The team coordinator shared that the program could be either recorded discussions or live. Staff from Good Rural Governance program at the XXXX agreed to help the community radio team for better coordination with the Vidhan Sabha electoral candidates. The Good Rural Governance program at the foundation recently conducted training on pre-election campaign awareness through Aadhaar, an NGO based in XXXX.

What the team shared was a good idea to reach out to the people in XXXX district of XXXX and help them take an informed decision. If dealt with sensitively, the program would be a great success. We in the management team discussed amongst ourselves and then had a detailed discussion with the radio staff knowing their expectations from the program and how they wanted to conduct the whole thing. We felt that the time was too less to tackle such a different theme. And as we had not done anything of such sort earlier at the station, there are good chances of candidates exploiting the medium to their advantage to elevate their position.

We together decided and communicated to the team that we should do such an elaborate exercise of calling the candidates at the station next time and this time we should limit ourselves to just communicate the importance of vote and broadcast people's voices on what they expect from the candidates of their wards. The team coordinator also agreed to focus on treating it as a voter awareness campaign but this wasn't as the radio staff expected and they kept pursuing to go ahead with the original plans of interviewing electoral candidates.

However, we were firm on our decision, knowing the poll rigging and other mischievous acts that are common in XXXX. Normally, the management team doesn't interfere much in the programming and acts as a facilitator, but if anything new has to be done, we all discuss and decide with the radio team.

The radio team eventually didn't take up the program at all and just played a byte from a community member on the power of vote. We all hope that we are better equipped and trained to tackle such themes in future. Had it been done this time, the team would not have done justice to the theme as well as to the community it caters to.

II. Template for Significant Good Practice Stories

Title of Story: _____

CR Station: _____

Date: _____

Domain

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Access/Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funds | <input type="checkbox"/> Ownership/Accountability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Interest/Benefit | <input type="checkbox"/> Program/Content |

STORY: (What happened? Where and when did it happen? Who all were involved and How?)

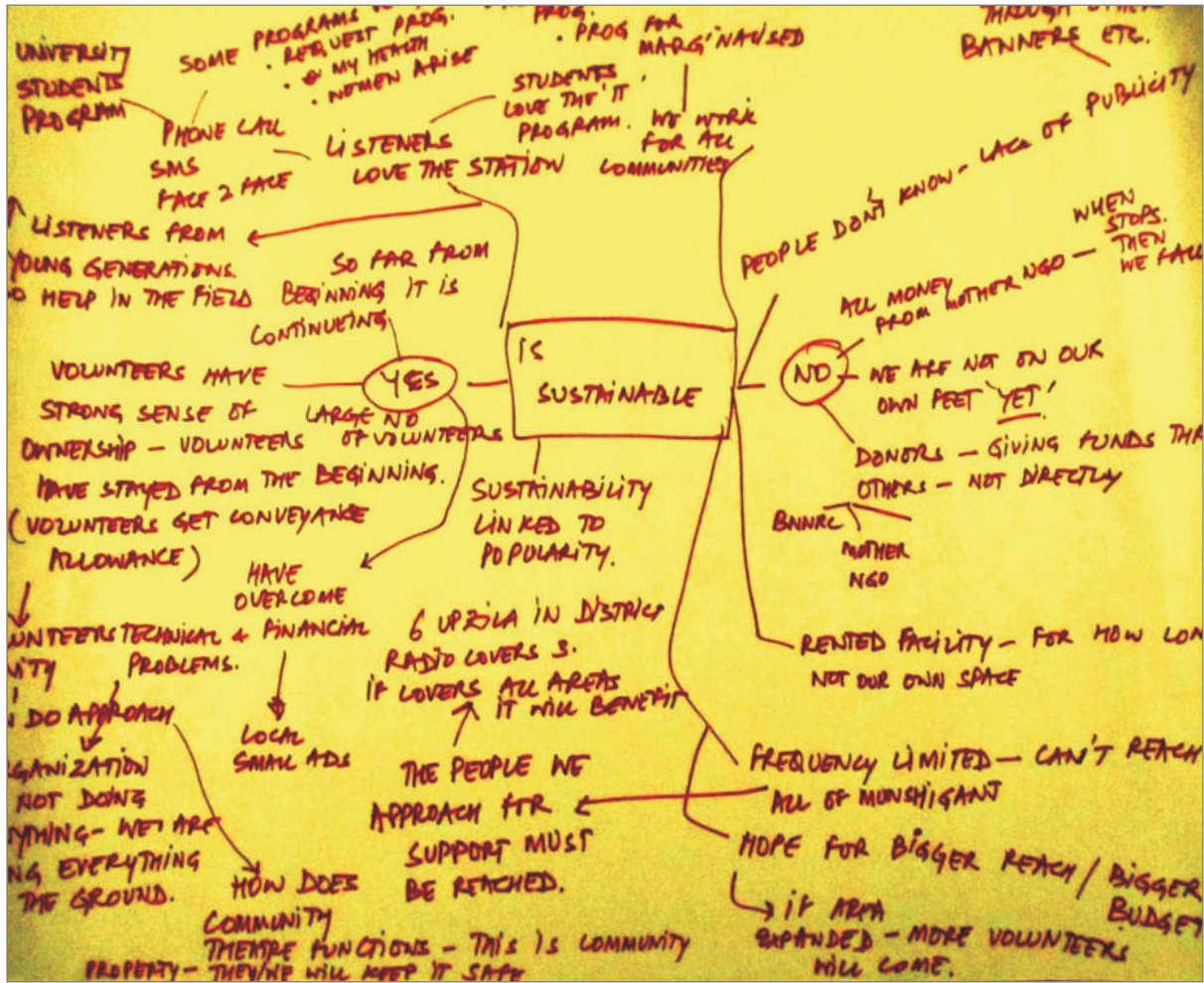
Why do you think this is significant for the sustainability of your CR?

How do you know that this has made a difference? Or will make a difference

Please sign to approve use of your story in Ideosync CR Sustainability Research

.....

III. Sample Mind Map Data



IV. CR and Sustainability - Questionnaire

CR and Sustainability Questionnaire

June, 2014

Name of the Investigator _____

Date _____

SECTION I: Parent Organization/Institute Details:

- 1) Name of the Parent Organization/Institute

- 2) Complete Address, contacts, email, website of the Organization/Institute

- 3) Names and designations of Key Persons (Head of organization; Senior program officers officer etc) from the parent organization/institute and contact details (Please specify name of contact persons, phone numbers and email id)

- 4) Mission and Vision of the parent organization/institute

- 5) When did the organization get registered? (Please provide details)

- 6) Thematic and Geographic Areas of operation

- 7) Funding Sources (National and International)
 - (a) National -----
 - (b) International (if any) -----
- 8) Total Number and name of members of Governing Body and their details (Please attach supporting document, if any)

- 9) Total Annual Budget of the Organization/Institute (Please put a tick mark against any of the options given below) (Please attach a copy of the supporting document)
 - (a) More than INR 2 crore ()
 - (b) Between INR 1 Crore – 2Crore ()
 - (c) Upto INR 1 Crore ()
 - (d) Upto 50 lakhs ()
 - (e) Less than 50 lakhs ()

19) Name the Districts, blocks, villages etc that the station’s service caters to?

20) Name the districts/blocks/villages where the CR Station conducts its narrowcasting activities?

21) In what languages are the programs aired on the Community radio?

22) Are there any minority groups/marginalized groups in the community (If so, please specify)

B. Human Resource Details

23) How many salaried staff does the station have? (Please mention total number, their names along with their designation of work)

24) Does the CR station have policy documents related to administration, recruitment, leave, bylaws etc ? (Please put a tick against the options given below)

- a. Yes () b. No ()

25) If your response to Q 24 is yes, please specify what these are? (Kindly attach supporting documents of the policy documents)

26) How many women members are there in the team and what CR station related functions do they perform?

27) Is there any gender policy? If yes, then please share supporting document.

28) How many members in the team belong to the marginalized communities named in (22) above?

29) How many volunteers from the community participate in the station’s work process?

- 30) How do the volunteers get compensated for their time?

- 31) Does the station have a Management Committee?
 (Please put a tick against the options given below)
 a. Yes () b. No ()
- 32) If yes, how many members in the Management Committee belong to the community that the Radio Station serves? (Please attach supporting document on names and designation of members of CRMC)

- 33) What processes have been established to cultivate leadership for the CR within the community? (Please describe)

C. Programming Details:

34) What are the station’s broadcast timings? (Please provide one week’s programming schedule)

Hours of Broadcast			
Broadcast Timings	Total Hrs of Broadcast per day	Hours of New Broadcast per day	Repeat Broadcast per day

- 35) Is there a separate Content Management Committee that looks into decisions on Content for the Community Radio?
 a. Yes () b. No ()
- 36) If your response to Q 35 is yes, please provide details of the members of the Content Management Committee.

- 37) Prior to the setting up of the CRS, was there any engagement with the community regarding the CR?
 a. Yes () b. No ()
- 38) Please provide details of the engagement:

- 39) Mention some of the feedback mechanisms that the station uses to improve or create relevant programs?

- 40) Apart from programs aired, mention some of the field level activities conducted by the stations to engage with the community.

D) Financial Annual Expenditure

41) What is the station’s monthly expense? (Please mention an average monthly expenditure of the station)

.....

42) Under which of the below mentioned heads is a proportion of the station budget spent? (Please rank the following heads from 1-7 with highest expenditure as 1 and lowest expenditure as 7)

- Honorarium and team salary
- Administrative costs
- Program Production
- Repair / Maintenance / up gradation of Equipments
- Capacity Building
- Field level activities
- Publicity

43) What proportion of the CR Station’s annual budget is generated locally from within the community? (Please provide details)

.....

44) What proportion of the CR Station’s budget is generated through:

- a. Public funding? -----% of total funding
- b. Donor grants? -----% of total funding
- c. Sponsored programmes? -----% of total funding
- d. Advertising? -----% of total funding
- e. Any other ? -----% of total funding

E) Partnerships & equipment Maintenance capacity

45) Does the station have arrangements with any local service providers for maintenance and repair of its equipment? (If yes, please describe)

.....

46) Are there members of the station’s listener community with technical support and repair skills? Do such community members contribute with technical upkeep? (For both questions, if yes, please describe)

.....

47) Has the station established any partnerships with local CBOs, village organizations, local government, or NGOs? (If yes, please describe the nature and scope of the partnership)

.....

For any clarifications, please feel free to write to us at:

Leonea Fernandez (lfernandez@ideosyncmedia.org)
Venu Arora (varora@ideosyncmedia.org)

V. Sample of Coded Weekly Diary

August 12, 2014; 12.05 PM

Last week some new programmes were produced at the studio. A popular folk artist visited the CRS on 7th August. He played different tunes with his sitar. We have recorded the instrumentals played by the musical instrument and keep on playing the tunes as fillers in between the radio programmes.

Some community people visited the station last week. They were willing to participate in different programmes of the radio station. One of the ladies performed live at the studio of the station. She had learnt music when she was at school. She sang a number of songs and was joined by her husband. Another person approached the radio station and expressed his desire to do a weekly programme on our local culture. He also wants to do a radio drama on some social issues. He has been requested by our team to visit our station and perform in the programmes.

Our CRS has been frequently visited by the community people last week unlike in the past. One lady also came up to the station to talk about simple and healthy recipes. She did a recorded programme interviewed by our radio anchor. She felt elated to hear her own voice in the radio. She has promised to come again to the CRS to do more such programmes.

Another programme on ethnic food was done by a famous nutritionist of the city. She talked about local food and their significance in our diet. She also talked about some easy to cook recipes and use of low oil in our food. The programme is aimed to benefit people particularly the housewives.

A young boy from a new and emerging band of the state also came to the studio and

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