Title: Children's learning Programs and Community Radio: A case study of collaboration
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Setting the Context: Community Radio In India

Community radio is distinguished by three essential principles: non-profit making, community ownership and management, and community participation. It is further characterized by its limited local reach, low-power transmission, and programming content that reflects the educational, developmental and cultural needs of the specific community it serves. For the purpose of community radio, a community is defined as a non-sectarian group of individuals who are territorially bound and share a common socio-economic interest.[i]

The supreme court of India declared airwaves as public property in 1995 and this started a people's movement for the right to freedom of expression and right to voice. The movement gained momentum over nearly ten years and in 2002 the Government allowed Educational Institutions to apply for licenses and establish community radio stations. The policy guideline was revisited in 2006 and for the first time in India, civil society organizations were allowed to apply for a Community Radio license. Today there are 152 broadcasting Community Radio stations in the country and while no comprehensive evaluation or review has been undertaken, it is an accepted view among activists who have spearheaded the movement that much is still to be achieved by way of creating not just a liberal policy environment but also strengthen efforts at building capacities of the Community Radio stations to truly respond to the core principles of Community Radio[ii].

For those of us actively involved in various ways to support and strengthen Community Radio in India there is a palpable tension between what is seen as a 'development initiative' – ostensibly a donor driven resource intensive delivery mechanism for information dissemination and what is seen as - a community driven participatory process – ostensibly one that enables communities to explore appropriate technologies, experiment and find their own voice. Are the two mutually exclusive ways of working with Community Media? Is there a middle path, especially at a time when the sector is nascent and social institutions still unable to fully take responsibilities for a democratic and community owned local media.

It is in this context that this paper analyses the findings of the impact assessment of the SCHWAB Radiophone Sesame India Initiative.

As part of its initiative in India, Sesame Workshop began the television broadcast of its entertainment education show for children - Galli Galli Sim Sim in 2006. The show with its four muppets : Chamki, Boombah, Googly and Anchoo entertained the children while simultaneously imparting significant educational messages and learning skills. Considering that television penetration in India is still in a growth phase and there are many pockets, which do not have access to television especially, cable television, the SCHWAB Radiophone Project was designed to broadcast Galli Galli Sim Sim for a year, over ten community radio stations across North India, to reach children in rural areas of the country. With mobile telephony becoming popular, the Sesame initiative integrated access to the GGSS radio show via mobile phones thus enhancing access to the show. As part of the initiative the following actions were undertaken

1. A pre produced show was provided to the local community Radio station by Sesame
2. A community segment produced by the local CR station (in some cases this was produced by sesame's field producers)
3. A call-in interactive segment where local audiences participate in the show with their suggestions, inputs, stories etc

The initiative also supported outreach events that the local Community Radio station organized in their local areas.

Impact Assessment methodology: Using participatory Ethnographic Action Research

Ideosync, India conducted an impact evaluation for the Radiophone initiative. The evaluation research used ethnographic methodologies (among others) to study the change at each station and its listening communities as a result of the Radiophone initiative.

Based on the objectives of the project, the following key questions guided the research:

1. What is the effect of educational content broadcast over the radio on young (5-8years) children and parents?
2. How does the community participate and respond to a radio content, which focuses on educational content for young children?
3. How does the combination of a development program and Community Media play out in the community radio space?

It is third research question that this paper explores in greater detail.

The idea of using Ethnographic Action Research was to develop a culture of research and reflection the project development and implementation process. It emphasizes observing actions to generate knowledge and learning, which can then constructively feed into the next plan. As part of the EAR methodology, one reporter from each partner Community station was enrolled as a community researcher. This person was also the primary contact from the CR station for the SCHWAB Radiophone project and was responsible for the program production. The reporter researchers, was asked to maintain a regular diary where they document their experiences and interactions with the audiences of the Galli Galli Sim Sim show as well as reflect on the activities under the project and write their own ideas thoughts and insights on the subject in discussion. The reporters were given a list of things to focus on when writing their diaries and these included: how community members participated in the show, comments about their own abilities and skills to foster and enhance such community participation, their observations of changes (if any) in the community as a result o the show and specifically around the desired practices that the radio program was trying to promote among children.

Each Reporter researcher was asked to make atleast two diary entries per week.

The reporter researchers were then trained to understand codes and were asked to code their diaries once a month and send the coded entries to Ideosync. The diary entries were colour coded as per the coding instructions below:

1. About the program: (Yellow) whatever is said about the program good or bad will fall under this category
2. Skill reflection: (Light Green) Skills needed to work on and skills, which have been honed in the process by the reporter research. Similarly for the community what kind of skills they are lagging and what kind of skills have they picked up in the process? All this will fall under this category.
3. Understanding of issues: (light blue) Instances where people demonstrate an understanding the issues that affect them or demonstrate a lack of understanding of the problems and/or its implications.
4. Community participation in the show: (pink) Instances where communities show active participation in the activities and broadcats of the show as well as reluctance or hesitation to participate or lack of interest by the community
5. Challenges to change: (red) Factors that are acting as hurdles in the process of change.
6. Ideas for change/ success stories: (purple) Any kind of idea that comes from within the community suggesting a solution to a problem; or a success story shared by someone as a way to solve a problem discussed during the show or during community interactions.
7. Community Action: (navy blue) Actions taken by community that may have catalysed some kind of change in any sphere of community life that can be related to Galli Galli Sim Sim.
8. MSC potential (grey)- If there is a notation in your diary that seems to have the potential as a Most Significant Change Story since it has elements of change should be coded as an MSC potential

Sample Coded Diary Entry

Wednesday, 14th March 2012
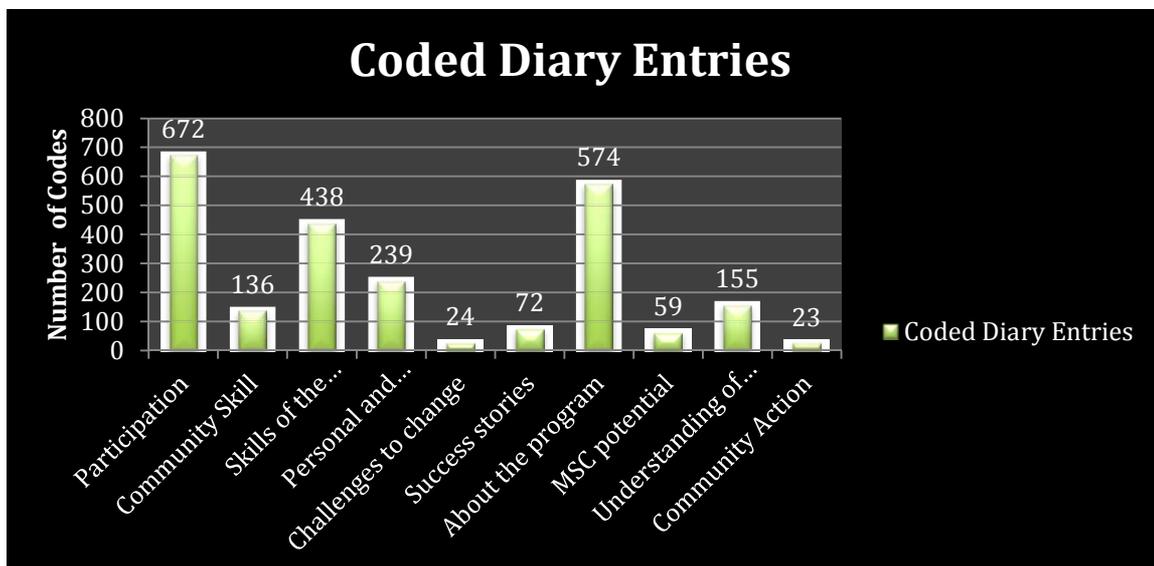The reality of our schools

This week has been hectic but I want to write about what happened on Monday which is our day of broadcast. The day was going smooth and I was preparing for my show 'Gali Gali Sim Sim'. In today's episode we were to discuss 'importance of hand washing'. Sita sitting next to me was sipping tea and enjoying watching me prepare for the show. All of a sudden she said,

"Anu I think Chamki and her team are getting popular with each passing day". My face lit up like a 100 watts bulb as soon as she said this and of course the increase in number of calls after each episode testified to her statement. With my spirit all pepped up I prepared everything for my show - what questions to ask the people and how to get more people to call in about hand washing. I was thinking most people in my village actually don't have toilets and go out in the open so I was wondering how to bring that up in the conversations on the call in segment. Then it was time and I went into the studio. Everything was going great and we could see our phone lines were flooded with calls. I was happy that the message had been conveyed well and so many people wanted to share their experiences. Many said that they do wash hand with soap. But, one particular call from a 4th standard boy left me speechless! Since he was studying and knew the importance of washing hands he said he tried to wash hands everytime before lunch. But, in school soap was not readily available. All of a sudden I sounded preachy since, I had been telling everyone for the past 20 minutes wash hands with soap… wash hands with soap but what could this child do when there was no soap? This child was going to the same school where I had studied and I remembered with dismay that indeed we never had soap in school. On my way back home I co-incidentally happened to meet the principal of my school and he held me high esteem as I was now in the CR station and had done well at school. I greeted her and spoke to her about the experience on the show. She immediately realized what I was stressing on and said that within a week she would ensure that students have soap with them. As I write this I wondered if indeed she would remember to do that or if we should take some steps to go and check later. I hope the child will call again to let us know if things indeed have changed in the school.
(MSC potential)

Also in all the excitement of the show I completely forgot to bring up the issue of not defecating in the open and washing hands in that context. An important point got left out!

A total of 550 coded diary entries were received from ten Cmmunity Radio statins across the year.

Coded Diary Entries

Category	Number of Codes
Participation	672
Community Skill	136
Skills of the…	438
Personal and…	239
Challenges to change	24
Success stories	72
About the program	574
MSC potential	59
Understanding of…	155
Community Action	23

The diary code **Own Skill Reflection and Personal and technical challenges** reflected some of the capacity building issues that occurred during the SCHWAB radiophone project. Personal skills of the researcher were among the higher numbers of marked up codes at 438. The code has been primarily used to underline everything noted by the researchers in their diaries related to his or her own reflections of their own capabilities or the lack of during the project.

"I thought of doing the mind mapping exercise for which I called up the people in the village but they refused as people were not present there. I called someone from another village and they agreed to get together for the discussion. I was also happy as I was going to conduct the FGD by myself for the first time". Henvalvani, July 2012

"I was not at all satisfied with broadcasting I could not even include the community segment for the first episode" WKA Aug 2012

"I went to a big school for the first time and spoke to the Principal there. I told her that we want to narrow cast (Galli Galli Sim Sim) GGSS in her school and wish to work with the children for a longer duration. The Principal promised us his full support and I felt happy that he agreed in my attempt itself". WKA, August 2012

"This week our community segment went on air for which I went and did the recording all by myself". Radio Mewat, Oct 2012

"….but I learnt today how to upload programs and I will try and do it on my own in the future". Radio Bundelkhand, August, 2012

"When I went there, I felt a bit nervous as there were so many men but after going to Baramade I felt a bit confident after speaking to these adults. Those boys were a bit mischievous". GKA, January, 2013

"*One important thing is in earlier episodes, I used to end up asking the same few questions to the callers...But in episode number 9 I asked questions related to the episode and spoke with ease with the callers".* WKA September, 2012

 There were two types of training that were undertaken with the community researcher reporters. The first was a project management and content engagement training that sesame undertook. The management structure f the project was such that the community reporter was responsible for all engagements with Sesame. This put them in a position of responsibility they had not been in before. Although there was a lot of trepidation and within stations some tensions also emerged between the radio managers and the researcher reporters, however the coded diary entries show that it pushed the reporters to become responsible to the tasks they were allocated to undertake and felt the pressure of reporting on the project. The process of writing the diaries further helped them reflect on things they were doing well and others that they needed to improve on.

While returning, I thought to myself that many people cannot speak in the program as the line remains busy. I decided that I would reduce the amount of time I speak to each person so that more number of people can participate in the program. Radio Bundelkhand, December, 2012

When our episode got over, I sat with the team to think of what was lacking from our side that we did not get a single caller. That's when we decided that we would prepare better for our next episode and speak in a more interesting manner during the segment. AeM, February, 2012

I later felt that I should not have spoken to the listener in that manner but I have to do this as sometimes the calls start coming in immediately after the program which does not give me time to speak about the program. Lalitur, October, 2013

It was raining heavily since morning but I didn't lose heart. Everyone at the station advised me to speak over the phone itself and not to go out into the field. However, I did not listen to anyone and carried on. It was important to go to the field" Radio Bundelkhand, August, 2012

Personal and Technical challenges received 239 codes and revealed the wide variety of technical issues faced by the Community radio stations as many stations were situated in remote areas with few technological and infrastructure resources.
The issues related to getting used to the new technology, GRINS – the content management system that is being used by most community radio stations in India - finds the maximum mention in this code apart from lack of access to internet, etc.

Our phone was not working…. I could not understand what I should do. Radio Bundelkhand, July 2012

Today's episode was also not getting uploaded… and as would have it, the internet stopped working for almost 2 days due to which I could upload the program for 2 days. Henvalvani, July 2012

When I had to speak to the Doctor, the GRINS started creating problems. I was receiving phone calls but it was not being shown on the screen. WKA, October2013

I received other calls as well but the callers could not hear what I was saying though I could hear them quite clearly. Due to this, I could not speak to them". Radio Mewat, November, 2012

The Sesame initiative provided support to several stations that did not have content management software to acquire the GRINS software and get trained in using it. Overall while this built technical capacity of the station, the necessary and regular engagement with the software that the program demanded of the researcher reporters, pushed them to learn the software faster and respond to the technical challenges as they emerged on a daily basis.

The code was also used to highlight programmatic challenges, which were faced during the implementation of the project. These were largely related to community events being conducted, reporting processes, hunting for change stories, etc.

'But these days the preparation for planting of potatoes is going on in full swing due to which parents are probably not able to spend time with their children to listen to the program. This is reflected in the number of calls as well'. Kumaonvani, December, 2012. This also brings to light the fact that children usually called with the aid of adults.

'I got a mail from (Sesame Program Managers in Delhi) which said that that questions prepared for the event are not appropriate. She asked me to cancel the quiz and do something else in its place'. Radio Bundelkhand, September, 2012

The challenges, which were faced at a personal level, were also tagged under this code. Researchers felt pushed by the rigorous routines that the program implementation and fairly stringent reporting deadlines asked of them. While this clearly increased the overall tensions and resistance in the CR stations, the diaries show that researcher reporters tried hard to meet the deadlines despite local challenges.

"Mam (the station manager) has asked me to learn Hindi typing and that she would remove me from GGSS if I don't learn it within a week. I was thinking of how difficult it will be for me to learn typing within a week. This will cause me to leave both radio and GGSS. She has made

it compulsory for me that i have to sit and do Hindi typing for an hour everyday... it is very difficult for me to survive without talking to people. While other members of staff have lunch for 1 hour, i have lunch for 15 minutes and then go to continue my typing. Radio Bundelkhand, July 2012.

I am not able to understand that if this is an issue with the net. I did upload the first episode from the station itself. It is not possible to for me to go to Jhansi to upload the program as it is 10 km from here and the program gets over only by 5:30pm and I myself live 30 kms away from the station. Radio Bundelkhand, July 2012.

The Sesame project while implemented in the "Development initiative" mode provided an opportunity for Community Radio stations to oush their own capacities and create a culture of reflecting on their work and improving upon it. It also enabled skill building of individual reporters to deal with program management reporting and working on innovative ideas to increasing community participation. Post the inotiative, some of the structural imperatives that the initiative demanded are being adopted at the station. Timeliness of reporters is being isisted by station managers, more reporters are wanting to practice and learn use of the content management software, the community radio stations are thinking of finding nternal support to underake some form of community events that they saw worked well in generating community participation during the implementation of the GGSS initiative.

So while the SCHWAB Radiophone partnership with Community radio was primarily designed at reaching out to children in remote areas with fewer media options , with educational content, the initiative created a bi- product in building long term capacity within the station. The change was primarily due to the processes that were implemented: the process of regular reporting and monitoring on project deliverables and the process of ethnographic action research that enabled researcher-reporters to reflect on their work.

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[i] UNDP-UNECO background paper on Community radio in India
[ii] Community Radio Forum of India, Policy White Papers