

## **Workshop Report**

# **Training Workshop on Operational Sustainability for Functional Community Radio in Bangladesh**

**09- 11 June, 2013**

**Venue: Community Radio Mahananda, Chapainawabganj**

**Jointly organized by**

**Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) and  
Community Radio, Radio Mahananda**

**Supported by: Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) /Commonwealth Educational Media  
Centre for Asia (CEMCA)**

## Executive Summary

Currently, one of the major challenges faced by Community Radio Station (CRS) operators in Bangladesh is sustaining the operation in CR. Most CRS manage to raise the initial funding for setting up the stations but thereafter find it difficult to run the CRS as thriving community institution. Raising the money for operations, engaging the community, providing relevant programming and keeping volunteers motivated pose major challenges. Unless all these aspects are taken care of and sound station and content management practices adopted, the station fall into doldrums.

In this context, to promote sustainable CR operation in Bangladesh, CEMCA initiated to organize a 3 day long workshop from 9th to 11th June, 2013, at Community Radio, Radio Mahananda, Chapainawabganj. The event was jointly organized by Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) and Community Radio, Radio Mahananda. The output of the workshop was visualized as following:

- Sustainability parameters are identified and contextualized to CR Policy in Bangladesh.
- Action Plan developed by each of the stations, to rest the parameter based on the base line data.
- Capacities of CRS, strengthened in sustainable operation of the stations.

A total of 23 CR practitioners from 12 Community Radio Stations of the country participated in the program. Among the facilitators, there were four representatives from COL/CEMCA, BNNRC, Rupantar and CR Radio Mahananda.

The issues covered in various sessions were : Present Scenario of CRSs in Bangladesh, Assessment of CRS, Sustainability Matrix: Highlighting the Contributing and Challenging Factors of 'Institutional Sustainability' Program or Social Sustainability' Financial Sustainability' of CRSs, Action Plan for Operating CRS as a Sustainable Model.

The participants described the workshop as an opportunity for them to discuss the program, challenges and possible interactions for activating sustainability.

Thereafter all the efforts of the event concerned to provide suggestions for identifying 2 CRS to test the parameters and develop a sustainable model in the second phase.

<b>1. Title</b>	Operational Sustainability for Functional Community Radio in Bangladesh
<b>2. Workshop Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To identify sustainability indicators on the basis of Community Radio Policy and practices in Bangladesh.</li> <li>▪ To examine and discuss various aspects [opportunity, challenges] of sustainability to ensure effective functioning of Community Radio Stations.</li> <li>▪ To prepare an action plan for each Community Radio Station for effective application of sustainability at its level.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Date of event</b>	09-11 June, 2013
<b>4. Participants</b>	<p>A total of Twenty three (23) Community Radio (CR) Practitioners from 12 community radio stations of Bangladesh participated in the training workshop. Of them, five (05) were female and 18 were male participants.</p> <p>The categories of the participants included Head of news, Program Producers, Reporter, Correspondent, Station Manager, News producers, News and Program Presenters etc. (List Annex-I)</p>
<b>5. Session Facilitators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ms. D Rukmini Vemraju, Programme Officer (Health and Livelihood), COL/CEMCA</li> <li>2. Mr. Saifuddin Sabuj, Director, Radio Program, Rupantor</li> <li>3. Ms. Tamanna Rahman, Coordinator, Training, BNNRC</li> <li>4. Ms. Allaya Ferdous, Station Manager, CR Radio Mahananda</li> </ol>
<b>6. Desired Output</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Various aspects of Sustainability identified</li> <li>b. Different parameters of sustainability of all CRSs explored and identified</li> </ol>

- c. Challenges faced by all CRS to ensure effective functioning of CRSs [that will have impact on their local communities] addressed.
- d. Ability to prepare separate action plan of each participating CRSs by identifying all aspects of sustainable options.

## 7. Methodology

Discussion, power point presentation, group work and presentation, question-answer and open discussion.

## 8. Materials Distributed

- Booklet – Gender Equality and Socialization Guideline for Community Radio Stations (National and International Context).
- Booklet – Ensure equal access in using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Right to Information (RTI) of girls and Young Women for protecting violence against them.
- Lecture Presentations.
- Folder, Sticker, pen, note pad, Daily schedule, CDs of the presentation with photographs etc.

## 9. Workshop sessions: description in brief

**Day –One**  
**09 June, 2013**

The Workshop began in time and was conducted as per schedule (Annex -II).

**Md. Shah Azad Iqbal, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Radio Mahananda** in his welcome speech expressed his gratitude to BNNRC, CEMCA, Japan embassy and other donors for their continued supports in promoting CR in the country. He also spoke about the challenging role of CR initiating organizations.

**Ms. Tamanna Rahman, Coordinator, Training, BNNRC** briefly discussed about the objectives and goals of the workshop. She

requested the participants to provide their all efforts to achieve the target results of the workshop.

**Mr. Saifuddin Sabuj, Director, Radio Program, Rupantor,** requested all to identify the areas of threats, challenges and picked up what lessons they would learn and bring with them from the workshop. He also shared some concerns on different constraints in CR in the country's context. He stressed about the importance of auditing the issues on quality radio programs.

D Rukmini Vemraju, Programme Officer-Livelihood and Health, CEMCA, welcomed the participants. She emphasized to ensure participation of more female CR practitioners especially on this kind of workshop in future. She suggested all to take different lessons learnt and follow good practices from other CRs of South Asian region.

The whole session was moderated by Mr. Takiur Rahman, Assistant Station Manager, CR Radio Mahananda. He thanked all the participants to join the workshop despite of their busy scheduled work. The formal sessions of the day started after the introduction of the participants.

A presentation was given by Ms Rukmini on the overall workshop contents highlighting sustainability of Community Radios (Annex – III). During the presentation she discussed on some issues:

- Core principles of Community Radio-CR.
- Challenges faced by CRS.
- Different Aspects of Sustainability.

At the end of her presentation, she described Community radio as a media-outlet 'By the community', 'For the community', 'Of the community', and in her explanation, she said, CR has already proved in 'for the community' but still it is beyond of being 'By the community' and 'Of the community'. Therefore

**Day –Two  
10 June, 2013**



all should have to provide all efforts in this needed area.

The next Power Point Presentation was presented by Ms. Tamanna Rahman (Annex-IV) which reflected the context of CR Policy provision and different challenges of CR in Bangladesh. She highlighted on the strategic plan of CR, 2011 approved by Ministry of Information, GOB. She remarked that the community radio practitioners, as a key role-player, would be able to identify the parameters and contribute in sustainability of the CRSs.

During rest of the sessions of the first day, each representative from each CRS, share his/her particular challenges. Ms Rukmini and the three facilitators were engaged to provide their support if there were any gaps to be identified. In the next sessions, participants were busy in identifying the challenges of their CRSs by forming 3 groups at broader areas (institutional and technical, programs and financial) and preparing their presentations on those issues.

The first half of the second day was covered with the group presentations on focusing challenges of CRSs and how to overcome those. Ms Rukmini, Ms Tamanna, Ms Aleya and Mr. Sabuj facilitated the group presentations. The summary of the presentations from all 3 groups are given in (Annex- VI)

In the session during second half of the day Ms Rukmini oriented all about the techniques to examine and discuss various aspects [opportunity, challenges] of sustainability including the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis to ensure effective functioning of Community Radio Stations. Here she shared some parameters on sustainability of CR. By forming 3 groups, Ms Rukmini assigned all the participants to develop future action plans. She has associated three facilitators in this process.

**Day –Three**  
**11 June, 2013**

Based on the challenges of CRSs, the participants identified various indicators of various parameters. On behalf of all participants, a total of 3 presentations were presented that focused three aspects – ‘institutional’, ‘programmatic or social’ and ‘financial’. At the end of first half of the day, the participants received a format to prepare a future action plans towards sustainability. The time limit to submit the individual action plan by each CRS by 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.

**Conclusion:**

In a brief closing ceremony at the end of three day long workshop, **Ms Rukmini**, hoped for better contribution of all the participants on all sustainability measures through further individual action plans to be developed by the participated representatives from the 12 CRSs.

On behalf of BNNRC, **Ms Tamanna Rahman** requested all participants to make an individual action plan. She requested all to implement all promises and be accountable as duty bearers (by being the members of the CSOs) in their local areas.

**Mr. Saifuddin Sabuj** appreciated BNNRC and CEMCA’s initiative to focus on sustainability for CRSs in Bangladesh. He said that this workshop would be very much effective for promoting CR in the country and hoped CEMCA would take it positively and be ready to support such kind of activities in future.

At the end of the programme, **Mr. Takiur Rahman**, gave cordial thanks to the participants on behalf of CR Radio Mahananda, for their contribution to make successful the event and updating their positive argument through interactive discussion and experience sharing. He closed the program with vote of thanks to all for organizing this effective event.

## Reflection

The reflections given by the Resources and Participants are given below:

**Ms. D Rukmini Vemraju, Programme Officer –Livelihood and Health** found this workshop was successful. She assured all, on behalf of COL/CEMCA, to try her best to continue support that would be contributive to reduce the capacity gap of sustainability of CRSs in the country.

In her speech, she said, “this program was a very enriching experience. All the participants from 12 CRSs contributed very well to all the sessions. Organizers and facilitators (BNNRC, Rupantar, CR Radio Mahananda) did a great job of making all sessions successful in a timely and participatory manner. Very good hosting arrangements. I look forward to seeing the action plan from all participants”.

I am really impressed to see the pro-active role of the participating practitioners of all community radio stations. All of them were very serious and participatory during the whole sessions till their group works and presentations”, remarked **Mr. Saifuddin Sabuj, Director, Radio Program, Rupantor** about the participants on behalf of the resource persons of the event.

“We fully understand about the issues and forms of various sustainable aspects i.e. institutional, financial, social issues of CRSs in the country’s perspective and now we feel enough confidence to handle the challenges through developing an individual action plan”, said **SM. Abu Sufian, Station Manager, Radio Nalta**.

In her remarks, **Zinia Farzana, Producer, Radio Mukti** has expressed her feelings, “We have received complete lesson on designing and developing indicators through identifying parameters of sustainability of community radio stations, which was totally a new idea to us. We really felt the importance of all concepts related to sustain of CRSs. We will try to reflect this knowledge in our individual action plans”.

In his evaluation sheet, **Mr. Mahfuj Faruque, Head of News & Program, Borendro Radio** demanded capacity support to the community radio stations for continuing this type of effort. He also supported Ms. Zinia about her feelings towards this event.

**Sultana Akter Lipi, Program Presenter, Radio Bikrampur** and **Mr. Waliur Rahman, Producer, CR Padma** both were excited to develop their group presentations on identifying completely a new area of their work. These demos were completely prepared by their own group including identifying of challenges, parameters to discover action plan of their CRSs.

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