NARRATIVE REPORT ON
EXPERT ROUND TABLE MEET TO LAUNCH AN
ACADEMIC PROGRAMME FOR COMMUNITY RADIO TECHNICIANS
October 4-5, 2012

Context

Taking its engagement in the development of community radio sector in India further, in the current three year plan (TYP 2012-15), CEMCA has undertaken a new initiative in the Technical and Vocational Skill Development Sector that seeks to develop online and multimedia courseware for skill development for Community Radio (CR) technicians. Currently technology support is an under-serviced area in community radio sector and CR stations frequently report challenges and downtime due to lack of adequate and timely support. This initiative seeks to:

- Create a technical cadre to service the community radio sector
- Contribute to making the CR sector more robust by addressing a gap area in technical aspects
- Create learning avenues and opportunities for employment through skills education

CEMCA has undertaken to develop content and release these as Open Educational Resources (OER) and also partner with Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions to offer formal   programme for certification by appropriately adopting these for their context. Initially, Broadcast Engineers and Consultants India Limited (BECIL) provided the basic outline for the technical content to be covered in the programme. The Ford Foundation supported travel of four outstation experts to attend the meet.

The first step towards this was an expert roundtable organised on 4-5 October 2012 that brought representatives of different stakeholders engaged in the sector like Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, International organisations, CRS Representatives, NGOs, manufacturers of broadcast equipment and station management software, with the purpose of setting the expectations for the programme and defining its scope. An Instructional Design and ODL Expert guided the process of evolving the programme curriculum and conforming to the Distance Education Council (DEC) standards and procedures for offering self-learning academic programmes. List of participants in the workshop is given in Annex 1.

Summary Report of the Expert Round Table Meet

The two day meeting began with a welcome address by Rukmini Vemraju**,** Programme Officer, Livelihoods and Health, CEMCA, who outlined the programme objectives. Sanjaya Mishra**,** Director, CEMCA set the context of ODL for curriculum development and stressed on accessibility of creating learning materials and opportunities to all irrespective of whether they were registered learners or not by placing the materials online and urged the experts to discuss important issues like entry level qualifications, multiple media mix etc. K. Subramanian,

CMD, BECIL noted the enthusiasm and praiseworthy efforts made by CR Stations to tackle technical issues and underscored the lack of technical expertise in the CR Sector. On behalf of BECIL, he pledged full cooperation and support of his team and also indicated the possibility of offering scholarships and practical training facility under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity. Iskra Panveska, Communication and Information Advisor, UNESCO, New Delhi described the effort as worthy and timely and said that their publication –Community radio- A users guide to technology would form a useful starting point. Referring to the growing interest in CR in India and neighbouring countries she urged that the programme be designed keeping learners across South Asia, especially Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives where UNESCO was already supporting CR initiatives. Ravina Aggarwal of Ford Foundation noted the significant progress the sector had made as a whole despite the technological challenges. Observing that the CR movement has entered a second generation, she noted that CR had developed local expertise and grassroots leadership and to strengthen that, she suggested that the programme be a good blend of academic expertise and local leadership. She also pointed to the need of covering socio-economic development perspective in the technical courses.

Stating their vision and expectations from the programme, Satish Nagaraji, One World South Asia said that post launch of this programme, "there should be no stopping of broadcast because of technical breakdown". Prof. Kandarpa Das, Radio Luit, Gauhati University suggested a blended approach to programme delivery, and observed that Class 10 would be a good entry level. He saw an employment opportunity on a pay-per-visit basis for the certificate holders and offered to have the materials translated into their local language Assamese.   Ramnath Bhat, MARAA said that contextualised understanding of the medium was important for technical personnel also and suggested that the courses should relax entry level so as to include community members, especially women, who may not have finished schooling up to Class 10. N. Ramakrishnan, Ideosync, expressing immense faith in people's ability to learn technology said that the primary focus should be on field experience and the materials should be accessible to new learners. He suggested that the materials be learner centric and have a preventive maintenance perspective as this is what will help CRS run smoothly. Hemant Babu, NOMAD wondered if the programme scope could be widened to community media rather than a focus on radio alone and observed that (lack of) formal education was not a barrier to learning. He shared how NOMAD teaches and trains CRS to install and maintain the transmitters successfully. Pankaj Athawale, MUST Radio, Mumbai University stressed on including topics pertaining to operational issues of a CRS, demos and practical hands-on sessions.

Ms. Supriya Sahu, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting participated in the event on the second day and appreciated the effort by CEMCA and also said that MIB could support some scholarships and components of face-to-face workshops and training sessions. She also said that institutions like Indian Institute of Mass Communication and Film and Television Institute of India set-up by MIB and run CRS could partner as delivery institutions for face-to-face workshops.

Professor Santosh Panda, ID and ODL Expert reassured the group that all concerns would be accommodated and over the next days guided the discussions.

A good discussion ensued and over two days (programme details in Annex 2), several key areas of the programme were agreed.

Highlights of the Discussion

- Learning content will be developed as OER and be accessible to any learner.
- For certification, the entry level will be Class 10. Credit system for recognising prior knowledge will be developed to be more inclusive, especially in the community context. [This is very important from the view of the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) notified by the MHRD, GOI].
- At a later stage, a group of ODL institutions will be associated as partners and will offer certification for the programme. CEMCA/BECIL may consider accrediting the programme with these institutions.
- Learning materials will be licenced under creative commons and institutions will be able to localise the materials freely.
- While print will be the mainstay of the programme, a judicious mix of media and face-to-face sessions will be an integral part of the course.
- A concept map, detailing all the components of the courses into four Modules and approximately 30 units , along with a suggested media-mix was worked out.

Next Steps

A thorough review of the concept map will be undertaken by the experts to ensure its completeness. At a subsequent meeting, other open issues will be revisited.

A collaborative content development page may be created on WikiEducator where the contents can be further discussed and refined.

A 3-4 day intensive workshop will be organised for course writers after which the actual content will be developed by April 2013.

The discussions were facilitated and recorded by Jayalalshmi Chittor, Senior Consultant, CEMCA and Rukmini Vemraju , who also proposed a formal vote of thanks and concluded the meeting. A special mention was made of Ford Foundation for lending travel support to four participants.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME FOR CR TECHNICIANS

RUDRAKSH HALL, INDIA HABITAT CENTRE, OCTOBER 4 & 5, 2012

List of participants

No.	Name	Affiliation
1.	Ms.Supriya Sahu	JSB, MIB, GOI
2.	Ms.Ravina Aggarwal,	Ford Foundation
3.	Ms.Iskara Panevska	UNESCO
4.	Mr. K Subramanian,	CMD , BECIL.
5.	Mr J P Nathani	GM. BECIL
6.	Mr. Y K Sharma	Advisor, BECIL
7.	Mr Abhay Gupta,	DGM, BECIL
8.	Prof. Santosh Panda	STRIDE, IGNOU
9.	Mr. N.Ramakrishnan	IDEOSYNC -NGO
10	Mr.Ram Bhat	MARAA- NGO
11	Hemant Babu	NOMAD-NGO
12	Aditeshwar Seth	GRAMVANI -NGO
13	Prof.Kandarpa Das	Radio Luit; Gauhati University
14	Mr.Pankaj Athawale	MUST Radio; Mumbai University
15	Mr.Krishnamoorthy	Independent Consultant
16	Mr.Satish Nagaraji	OWSA
17	Ms.Jayalakshmi Chottoor	Consultant, CCFC
18	Ms.D Rukmini Vemraju	Programme Officer , CEMCA
19	Dr.Sanjaya Mishra	Director, CEMCA

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME FOR CR TECHNICIANS

RUDRAKSH HALL, INDIA HABITAT CENTRE, OCTOBER 4 & 5, 2012

Thursday, October 04, 2012			
09.30-10.00	Registration		
10.00-11.00	**Inaugural Session**	**Vision , Perspectives and Expectations from the Programme**	
		Welcome Address (5 mts)	Rukmini Vemraju, PO,CEMCA
		CEMCA Vision for the programme (10mts)	Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA
		Need for the programme and technical perspective (10mts)	K.Subramanian, CMD,BECIL
		Observations and Expectations from the Programme (25 Mts)	All Stakeholders UNESCO, UNICEF, FORD FOUNDATION; CRS reps (2); DEF, OWSA; IDEOSYNC; MARAA; NOMAD; GRAMVAANI
		Inaugural Address (10 mts)	Supriya Sahu; JSB; MIB
11.00-11.30	**TEA-BREAK**		
11.30.12.30	**Session 1**	Programme Outline	Presentation by BECIL and Discussion
12.30-13.30	**Session 2**	OER and ODL Perspective and programme structure	Presentation by Dr.Santosh Panda, ODL Expert Followed by discussion
13.30 14.30	**LUNCH BREAK**		
14.30-15.30	**Session 3**	Formation of Working Groups Review of Programme Outline and additions	4-5 Groups formation as per topics Facilitated by RV/JC
15.30-16.00	**Session 4**	Presentation of working groups	Facilitated by RV/JC
16.00-16.30	**TEA BREAK**		
16.30-17.30	**Session 5**	Finalisation of Modules	Facilitated by RV/JC
Friday, October 05, 2012			
10.00-11.00	**Session 6**	SLM structure (media mix and credits, practicals)	ID/ODL Expert Dr.Santosh Panda
11.00-11.30	**TEA-BREAK**		
11.30-13.00	**Session 7**	Identification of sub-topics/units for each module, practical work etc	Working Groups
13.00-13.30	**Session 8**	Presentation by Groups	Facilitated by RV/JC
13.30-14.30	**Lunch Break**		
14.30-15.30	**Session 8**	Presentation of complete programme structure Next Steps and wrap-up	CEMCA
15.30-16.00	**TEA-BREAK and CLOSE**		