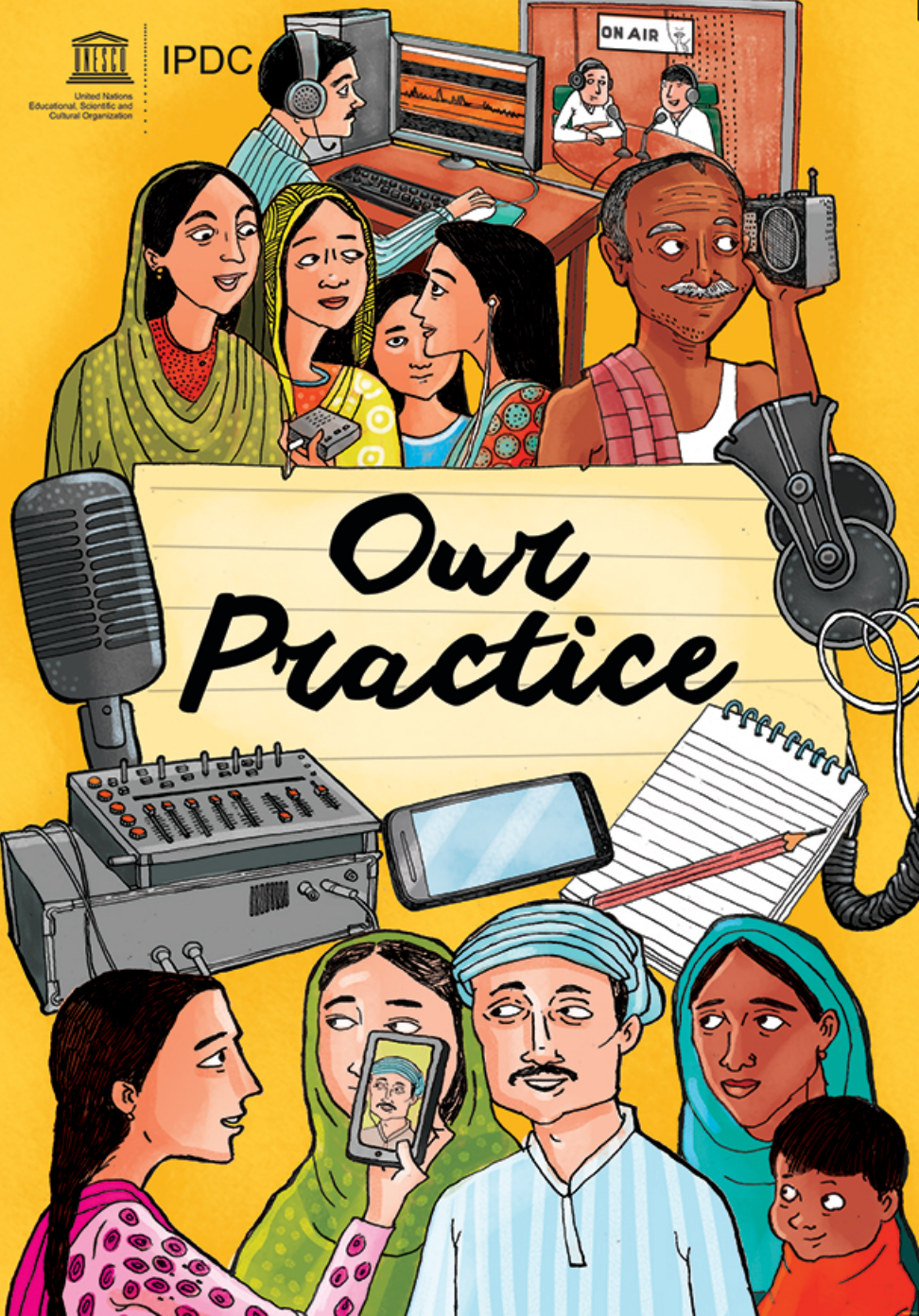




IPDC

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



# Our Practice

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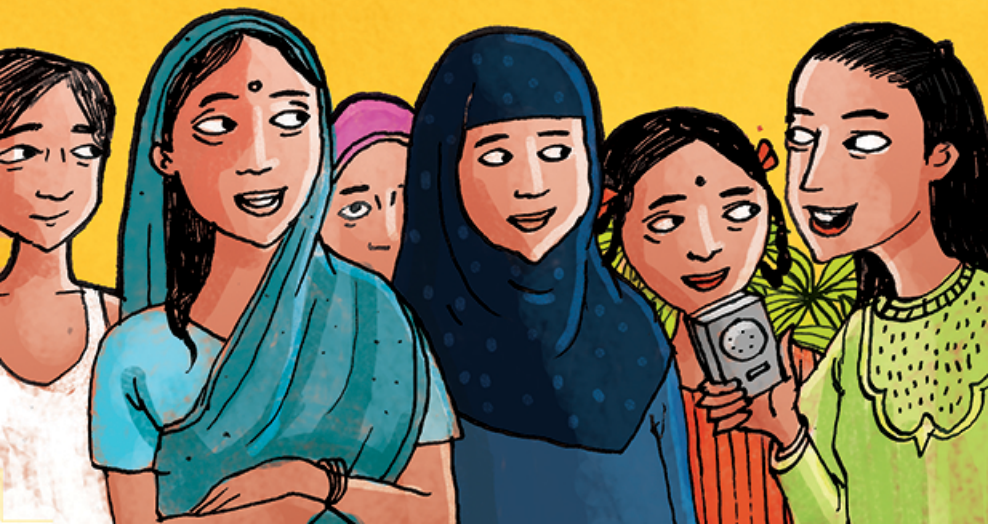
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The illustration depicts a vibrant scene of community radio. At the top, a radio station is shown with a host at a desk and a 'ON AIR' sign. Below, a group of people, including women in saris and a man with a mustache, are gathered around. One man is holding a portable radio to his ear. In the foreground, a woman shows a video on her smartphone to a group of people. The central text is framed by a yellow banner, with a large microphone on the left and a pair of headphones on the right. At the bottom, there is a mixing console, a smartphone, and a notepad with a pencil. The bottom of the image features logos for Ideosync Media Combine, UNESCO, and IPDC.

# Our Practice

Documenting Community Radio in India and its contribution to Freedom of Expression through a series of short videos made by Community Radio Reporters

  
**Ideosync**  
MEDIA COMBINE

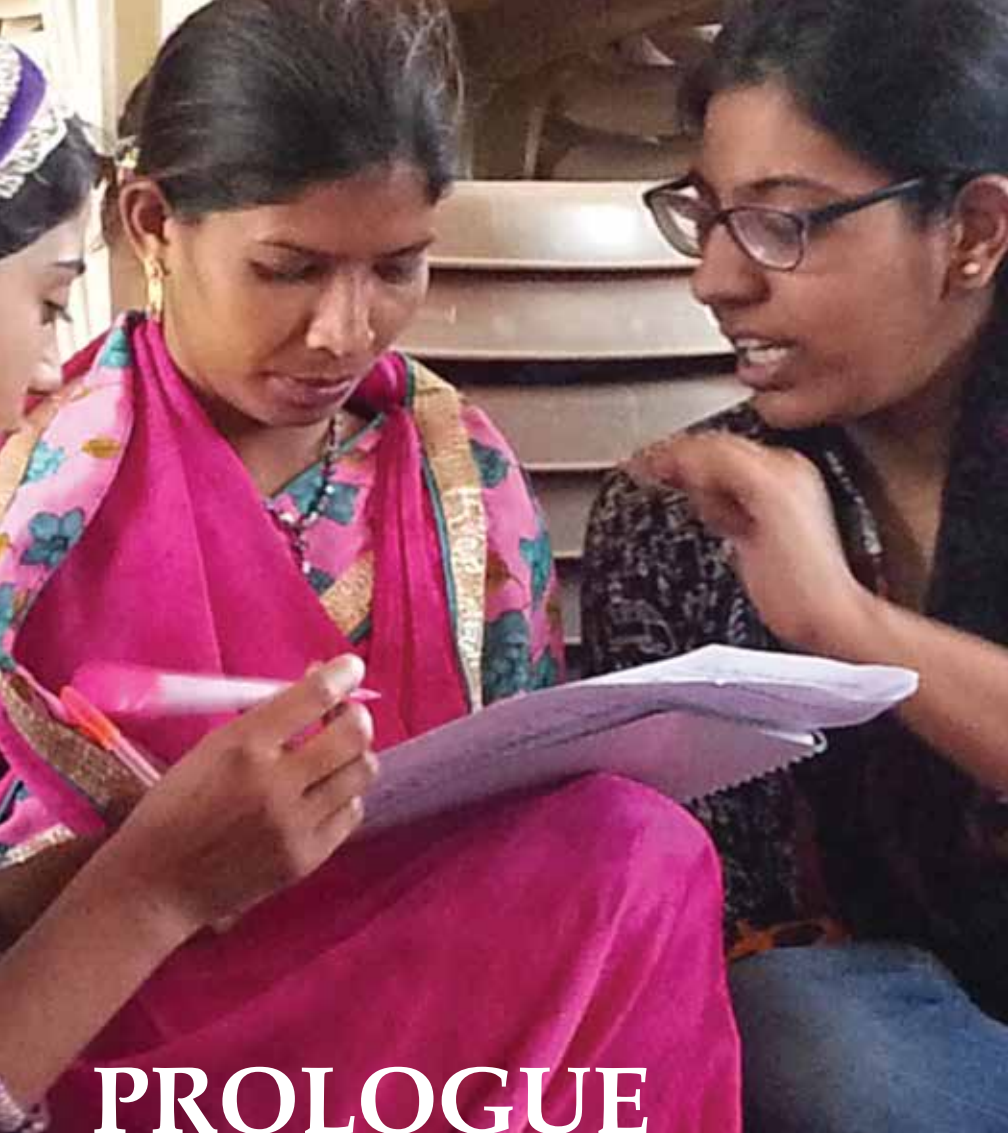
  
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Thinking about  
freedom of  
expression:  
CR reporters at  
Alfaz-e-Mewat in

discussion during  
the *Our Practice*  
training program



# PROLOGUE

DEMOCRACY, MEDIA AND  
THE IDEA OF PARTICIPATION

**F**reedom of expression is a fundamental element of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is widely seen as underpinning democratic freedoms such as the right to form political parties, share political ideas, query the actions of public officials and seek social justice.

Media play a pivotal role in promoting and safeguarding freedom of expression because they provide a public platform through which this right can be effectively exercised. Media, in this context, may refer to all those channels that carry news and public information. The media may be seen as<sup>1</sup> :

- a channel of information and education through which citizens can communicate with each other
- a disseminator of stories, ideas and information



- a corrective to the asymmetry of information between governor and governed, and between competing private agents
- a facilitator of informed debate between diverse social actors, encouraging the resolution of disputes by democratic means
- a means by which a society learns about itself and builds a sense of community - and which shapes the understanding of values, customs and tradition
- a vehicle for cultural expression and cultural cohesion within and between nations
- a watchdog of government in all its forms, promoting transparency in public life and public scrutiny of those with power by exposing corruption, maladministration and corporate wrongdoing
- a tool to enhance economic efficiency
- an essential facilitator of the democratic process and one of the guarantors of free and fair elections
- an advocate and social actor in its own right, while respecting pluralistic values

Imagining such a framework for media carries its own challenges. One of the challenges that has continued to persist over the last decade and a half is how to nurture a framework and practice which contribute to this overarching goal of fostering and deepening democracy.

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**Women CR  
reporters at Radio  
Snehi work with  
visuals to develop  
stories and  
narratives**

One of the ways is to ensure diversity of ownership especially by bringing in diverse and marginalized voices and enhancing the participation of citizens and communities. The UNESCO-debates on the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) helped create a distinction between access and participation. While their definition of access stressed the availability of opportunities to choose relevant programs and to have a means of feedback, participation implied 'a higher level of public involvement [...] in the production process and also in the management and planning of communication systems' (Servaes, 1999: 85, see MacBride, 1980)<sup>2</sup>.

2 MacBride, S. (1980), *Many Voices, One World*. Report by the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, Paris and London: Unesco & Kogan Page

**I**n this backdrop Community Radio emerged as one of the ways in which the principles of democracy may be upheld in and through media. Community radio enables the participation of ordinary people – and in particular, marginalized people - in media. The founding principles of community radio also stipulate a certain degree of ownership and participation in decision making that would foster a more structured and institutionalized form of participation by marginalized communities. Citizen participation in and through media, in public debates and in the construction of public narratives of social political and economic events



3 Servaes, J. (1999) 22. Communication for Development. One World, Multiple Cultures. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press

4 Richstad, J., & Anderson, M. H. (1981). Crisis in international news: Policies and prospects. Columbia Univ Pr:ss Cammaerts, B., & Carpentier, N. (2007). Reclaiming the media: Communication rights and democratic media roles. Intellect Books

5 Community Radio and Sustainability- A Participatory Research Initiative <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/>

has been increasingly recognized as a human right that cuts across societies. This includes voice as a means to create and deepen identities, cultures, folk practices and other similar 'performance' that local media has the potential to support.

**W**hen the right to communicate was originally proposed in 1969 by Jean d'Arcy, it aimed to broaden the Right to be Informed, which is embedded in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Through the several debates around the right to communicate that ensued, it emerged that this right must include the right for active participation in the communication process<sup>3</sup>. A necessary condition to remain an effective and inextricable part of the right to communicate is the protection of participation from reductionisms. These reductionisms try to remove the politicized notion of power balances from its meaning and attempt to conflate participation with interaction. As an endangered species, this key notion of participation needs – more than ever – our attention, care, and protection<sup>4</sup>.

This need to refocus on the first principles of participation also emerged through a recently concluded three-country research that Ideosync Media Combine undertook with community Radio stations in India, Nepal and Bangladesh (V. Arora, L. Fernandez, N. Ramakrishnan, *Community Radio and Sustainability*, UNESCO 2015)<sup>5</sup> The research showed that institution building and strengthening structural participation of marginalized communities was co-relatable to long term sustainability of community radio; but that there were few such processes extant in the South Asian context that enabled such structural participatory practice in everyday decisions.

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**Alfaz-e-Mewat CR reporters work with Hakam, a regular listener who is also disabled.**



**Learning to work with  
mobiles and video:  
Himabindu from  
Ideosync teaches a  
CR reporter at Tilonia**

**Radio, Kishangarh,  
Rajasthan, how  
to edit video on  
a mobile-based  
application**



# BACKGROUND

## COMMUNITY RADIO IN INDIA

Over the last five years, the Indian mainstream media have been losing their hold on the basic principles upon which media ethics are founded. The growing corporatization of media is manifest in the manner in which large industrial conglomerates are acquiring direct and indirect interest in media groups. There is also an increasing convergence between creators/producers of media content and those who distribute/disseminate the content. The inability of mainstream media to provide a space for an alternate discourse on critical social, political and economic issues further exacerbates the dismal situation for media freedoms and diversity in the country. Community Media, although hamstrung by policy provisions that limit its scope by curtailing news and restricting eligibility, have the potential to play a critical role in providing an enabling environment where marginalised voices and the concerns of



disenfranchized communities can be raised (and, indeed, an alternate voice heard).

**I**t is now well over a decade since the first community radio policy was announced in India, enabling educational institutions and civil society to apply for and receive licenses to establish and operate community radio stations. Today over 200 Community Radio stations are licensed across the country. Some of these are licensed to educational institutions (both privately owned and Government-run) while others are licensed to registered NGOs. As per the current CR policy in the country community radio stations cannot broadcast 'news'. This undermines the ways in which community radio in India can contribute to the upholding of the principles of democracy in what is often touted as one of the largest democracies in the world. However several community radio stations have pushed the boundaries in terms of how they can engage with members of the local community to share ideas, cultures, concerns and voices and explore 'participation' in all its complex manifestations.

The first few years of most community radio stations is spent in establishing a relationship with its listening community and understanding the scope and scale of work that everyday broadcast entails. In India, it has also been an uphill battle for CR stations to find a distinct 'sound': One that belongs to the community as opposed to being an imitation of the national broadcaster or the prolific commercial media. It is only after the first settling years are over that community members - those running the CR station on a day to day basis have been able to establish an ongoing working relationship with the production and broadcast technologies and equipment -



**CR reporter from  
Radio Rathinavani  
documents the life  
of factory workers  
and how the**

**local community  
radio station  
provides them a  
space to express  
themselves**

can begin to find the time to reflect on the work they have been doing, and the potential for contributing towards building a community voice based on the concerns of those who were thus far marginalised.

**I**deosync Media Combine has been working with many CR stations for over a decade, participating in their journey of learning and unlearning the many ways in which radio can become a people's media. It is through this immersive engagement that we realised that a time had come to pause for a reflective moment and revisit first principles. It is from this reflection that the *Our Practice* initiative emerged.

Supported through UNESCO's International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC) under the 'Innovation in convergence and integration of legacy media and new communications' priority, the initiative was designed to redress the paucity of information on the role that Community Radio is playing (or has the potential to play) in the overall media landscape of the country. As there is very little by way of documentation regarding the everyday working of community radio stations in the country, there are few images in the minds of the public of what truly constitutes a community radio. The *Our Practice* initiative aimed to try and bridge this gap by building the capacities of community radio stations across the country to reflect on and document their daily practice.

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**(top right) Learning to document field activities: Community Radio Station Snehi**

**(right) Documenting regular listeners and their stories of engagement with the Community**

**Radio Station, Radio Rathnavani, Coimbatore**







**Women's lives:** Karishma from CR Station Waqt ki Awaz, Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh, uses her new found skills to reflect on women and their work – and the role that the CRS plays in their lives



OUR PRACTICE

THE INITIATIVE

**A** total of 119 Community Radio reporters and volunteers from 14 CR stations across the country have been trained through the *Our Practice* Initiative. All the training sessions were held on-site at the respective CR stations in the period between November 2015 and May 2016. An extensive training curriculum was designed to introduce CR stations to the key ideas of freedom of expression and its safeguards within the Indian Constitution, as well as the critical role of media in a democracy. A key question for participants at the trainings was to review their work and reflect on how the CR station is fulfilling its mandate of being a voice for the most marginalised. The capacity building program also equipped CR practitioners with technical skills to produce quality audio and video diaries using mobile phones, and in innovating with participatory storytelling techniques to document local narratives. A free mobile application was used to train participants in editing the video diaries on their mobile phones.

This is the first time CR stations have used video to document their radio practices. The use of mobile phones for shooting and editing makes the process accessible and the Community Media *Manch*<sup>1</sup> ([www.manch.net.in](http://www.manch.net.in)) platform enables community radio stations to share this body of work with each other and with other national and global communities.

The CR stations participating in *Our Practice* have produced over 40 video diaries as part of the initiative. This has also helped CR stations critically assess their own work and understand the gaps and the need to strengthen their role within the overall media environment, where the most marginalised continue to go unheard and voice democracy is yet to be achieved.

**Map showing locations of the CR stations that participated in *Our Practice***

**The initiative involved 14 CR stations spread across the length & breadth of India**

<sup>1</sup> Ideosync Media Combine developed the Community Media Manch Platform in 2013 as an online space for community media





Key objectives of the *Our Practice* Initiative included:

- Enhancing the capacity of community radio broadcasters across India to implement community radio's potential in fostering the freedom of expression of all community members.
- Assisting Community Radio stations to critically assess their daily practices regarding freedom of expression, and reflect on how these could be deepened.
- Use audio and video tools to document and share the practices that enhance freedom of expression.
- Share these good practices with a wider broadcasting community



The process involved putting out an open call for expression of interest by all broadcasting community radio stations in the country. Over 35 community radio stations responded to this call for participation. These stations were then encouraged to share a few stories from their everyday practice that they would like to document using video. This helped the project assess the capacity building needs and levels of engagement that the CR stations had with their communities.

**T**he *Our Practice* training helped us develop a perspective about the work we do, strengthened our ideas about freedom of expression and built ethical standards. We finally got to think about the people in our community for who we have yet to create a space on our radio. We are now able to document better and our photographs have begun to have a life!

**Arti Manchanda**  
Alfaz-e-Mewat  
Mewat, Haryana

---

Due to limited funding available under IPDC support to the initiative, only 14-15 CR stations could be included as part of the current round of trainings. However given Ideosync's long term engagement in the community radio sector, it was envisaged that the stations participating in the *Our Practice* work would become mentors and peer trainers for other community media practitioners in future training iterations.

A three day intensive training curriculum was designed which included working through ideas of freedom of expression, learning to think about stories through images, learning the



**Looking for stories hidden in visuals: Community Radio reporters at Henvlavani,**

**Uttarakhand, work with trainers during a learning activity at the *Our Practice* training.**

vocabulary of images, working with the mobile phone to shoot and edit video. Ideosync trainers visited each community Radio station and worked with six to seven radio reporters at each site. The CR stations were provided with at least one Android-based mobile phone, on a shared basis, on which to shoot the videos. Several community radio practitioners owned an Android device of their own, which they used for creating the video diaries.

The Ideosync technical team researched free applications for the Android platform that were easy to download, and which could be used on the mobile devices to shoot and edit video. A detailed list of such available software was created including the kinds of technical functions that each offered. Finally the application Videoshow Lab was identified as the most appropriate video editing and compiling software that could be used for the initiative.



**(top right)**  
Ideosync trainer  
Himabindu  
explains framing &  
composition to CR

reporters at Waqt  
Ki Awaz,  
CR station in  
Kanpur, Uttar  
Pradesh

**(right) Framing  
the frame: Activity  
during the video  
training**





**Discussing  
Freedoms: Training  
at Mandeshi  
Taranga Vahini,  
Satara, Maharashtra**



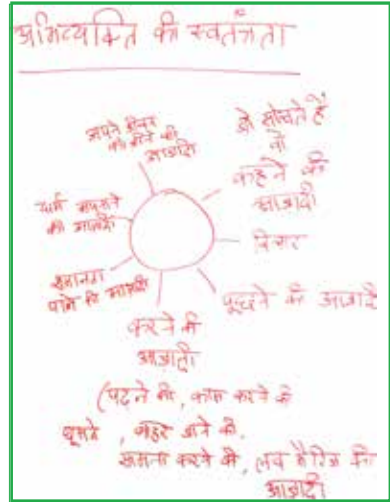
# SHARING CAPACITIES

THE *OUR PRACTICE*  
TRAINING CURRICULUM

## The Idea of Freedom, The Indian Constitution and Article 19

The *Our Practice* trainings at CR stations began towards the end of 2015 and carried on through the early months of 2016. This was also the time when the student protests at a well-known university in Delhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru University (JNU), were taking place. The consequent arrests of students under charges of sedition and the shrill reporting and counter reporting by mainstream media became an unavoidable and evocative backdrop for discussions around freedom of expression, religion, secular beliefs and nationalism. The playing up of these ideas in the larger national context put the trainings themselves in sharp relief and provided a strong context in which to debate the salient ideals of democracy, citizenship and the role of media and of community radio itself.

The training curriculum was designed to familiarise community radio reporters with Article 19 as it is stated in the Universal declaration of Human Rights, and compare it with Article 19 as it stands in the Indian constitution, including its Section 19(b) that curtails



several rights and places restrictions and limits on various freedoms. This discussion provided the foundation upon which Ideosync trainers worked with community reporters to assist them in articulating the role of community radio as well as identifying the opportunities that an operational community radio station provides for the communities within which it broadcasts. The discussion also focused on ways to constructively engage with the challenges in this regard.

**F**reedom of expression became a good point to look for in our work – are we really giving voice to the marginalised? We were able to ask ourselves and look for how we are strengthening marginalised voices.

**Krishna**

Radio Madhuban, Abu  
Road Rajasthan

---

Activities undertaken during the training program helped the reporters explore how they understood terms like freedom, expression, and rights; and what this meant for the kinds of programs that they were making. Simple mapping of words and ideas was done to engage participants with the fundamental ideas of Freedom of Expression in a community radio context.

## Conceptualizing Marginalization

A critical aspect of the work undertaken during the training program was to help reporters identify what creates social, economic and political marginalization. The training program was designed to expand the idea of marginalization beyond the readily understood definition of economic poverty.

**Participants learnt about the concept of freedom of expression through mind maps.**

**The pictures show maps made by reporters at Radio Snehi and Alfaz-e-Mewat.**

Identity, class and caste politics as well as marginalization of perspectives, opinions, ideas, cultures, mythologies and folklores were also discussed.

Participants were taken through several experiential games that helped them understand how marginalization is manifest in everyday lives and how those who are marginalized begin to see themselves at a disadvantage vis-a-vis the more privileged - and learn to cope with it using a wide variety of inadvertent and sometimes well thought out strategies.

The workshop exercises also centered around discussions about the role that community radio can play in reducing voice inequity; and on reflecting about how the CR is fulfilling its mandate of being a voice for the most marginalised.



## Narrating stories through visuals

An important aspect of the *Our Practice* training was discovering a narrative style for a story. Community radio reporters were encouraged to recount their most memorable stories, who told these stories and how they were told. Trainers helped CR station team members understand how real life stories, people's everyday tales and experiences, can be woven into a narrative that speaks to an idea. Structuring a narrative that conveys perspective, emotions, and helps the listener relate to the characters – all these were conveyed to the participants through a series of workshop games and practice activities. Participants began to identify meaningful narratives from the community radio stations' experiences of its listeners; the kinds of calls

We did not have any kind of knowledge on video making before the training. It was completely a new experience for us to shoot and edit videos on a mobile phone. We still apply the same concepts to make our own videos! And the techniques we learnt about photography are really helping us document our everyday work.

We had been broadcasting programs on topics like the rights of women to speak within their households etc. Now that we know a bit more about Freedom of Expression as a right, there is an opportunity to have more direction and detailing in such shows.

**Sheetal Bisht**

Henvalvani Community  
Radio Station Chamba

**Stringing up images to construct stories; Community reporter Shabnam**

**enjoys her narration activity during the training at Radio Snehi, Siwan, Bihar**



they received; and their experiences in the field while making different programs. Participants also made a list of ideas they would like to explore and how these showcased the CR stations' contribution to freedom of expression. Finally, the participants were also introduced to the concept of story arcs; different kinds of shots and narrative styles; and forming sequences in a story to build better storytelling skills.

## Creating still and moving images

Most community radio reporters had used cameras - most commonly, the cameras on their mobile phones - at some point or the other. Using their previously taken photographs, trainers discussed the idea of an image and what it conveyed through the way it frames the various elements and subjects. Through the training, participants recognized that what an image conveys depends on how it is framed and the interplay of several aspects including composition, light, position of elements, and perspective.

Participants enjoyed using a large paper frame to understand how an image can look different when seen from different angles, and what framing through a camera lens entails. The exercises undertaken during the workshop helped participating CR station reporters look for the elements they wanted to focus on, based on the stories they wanted the image to tell and what aspects of the elements in the frame they wanted to emphasize. They were then able to arrange these images sequentially to create a larger narrative that spelt out a more complex idea or theme.

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**Trainers Jaimini  
and Himabindu  
work with CR  
reporters to  
construct stories**



## Working with mobile and video

While participants were familiar with the concept of video, camera movements and the idea of structuring shots within a longer narrative of sequences was new, interesting, and also challenging, for several participants.

During the training, program participants came up with stories they wanted to narrate through their videos and broke their narratives into shots and thematic segments. They learnt about different shot sizes and the craft of ordering shots to construct sequences. They also learnt basic interview techniques; the skill of overlaying audio over images; and the use of voiceovers and a narrator's voice.

Given the paucity of training time, participants worked late into the night experimenting with the many features and editing tools available in the Android application they were using to edit and finalise the films.





A still from Alfaz-e-Mewat's film under *Our Practice*, entitled *Rajeena Ka Radio se*

*Judao* ("Rajeena's Attachment to her Radio"). Rajeena is an avid listener of their station.



**PROJECT  
PANORAMA**

## RADIO SNEHI, SIWAN, BIHAR

1. **Aashayein (“Hopes & Dreams”)**: This film talks about “Mann Ki Baat” a regular show on Community Radio and how it provides a platform for girls in the community to express themselves. There is an instance in the film where a local girl is able to access Government scholarship funds in order to continue studying
2. **Ek Jani Aanjani Prathiba (“An Unknown Talent”)**: The film presents the story of Vidyawati Kunwar who is a child widow and lives alone. The film portrays her musical journey after being identified by the community radio station and the changes this brought into her life.
3. **MGNREGA**: The film portrays how the community radio provides information on people’s rights including the right to minimum wages and how listeners have benefited from receiving such information.
4. **Banjar (“Barren”)**: Banjar is a film about the efforts of Radio Snehi to bring water to a dried canal in Amroli Sarsar, to cater to local water needs.

## WAQT KI AWAZ

### KANPUR DEHAT, UTTAR PRADESH

1. **Meri Perna (“My inspiration”)**: Smita shares her experience about starting



her own sewing business after being inspired by the radio program “Mahila Diwas”. The stories of many inspiring women broadcast on the program and her urge to act on the new information she had heard on radio helped her achieve this.

2. **Mera Haq Meine Jana (“How I Discovered My Rights”):**

Anjali shares her story of being influenced by the men in her family with regard to casting her vote - and how a rights based program on the community radio station inspired her to fully exercise her rights.

3. **Ek Nai Roshani (“A New Light”):**

This is the story of Golu, a tabla player who is visually impaired, and his journey towards self-reliance.

4. **Purvanchal ki Jhalak (“A Glimpse of Purvanchal”):**

The film explores the role of community radio in introducing diverse local communities to each other. Pratibha, a Bhojpuri girl, talks about her community’s isolation - till Waqt Ki Awaaz broadcast their folk songs, and programs about their festivals and traditions.

5. **Waqt Ne Di Pehchan (“How WKA Brought me**

**Recognition”):** This is the story of Rekha who struggled against her family’s resistance before finding her voice on

the community radio station. Rekha, now produces a regular food show called Chatkara which has brought her much local fame.



## RADIO BENZIGER, KOLLAM, KERALA

1. **Dil Ki Awaz (“Sound of My Heart”)**: This film is about a radio program by the same name produced by Radio Benziger. The program is for the migrant labour community from different parts of the country living in Kerala. The listeners of the show share their feelings about having the CR station as a friend and a co-traveler – and as a place where they have a voice.
2. **The Fisherman**: A local fisherman shares his experience about participating in a radio show where he was given the opportunity to share his knowledge about fishing.

## MANNDESHI TARANGA VAHINI, SATARA, MAHARASHTRA

1. **Meena**: The film is about Meena Mangrule - a regular contributor and listener to the community radio. In the film, she shares the strong bond she feels towards the radio, which is like that of a sibling.
2. **Kondabai**: This film is about Kondabai's love for folksongs and her desire to spread the folk sound among her people. She uses the community radio station as a platform to get her music known.



## KUMAONVANI COMMUNITY RADIO STATION, MUKTESHWAR, UTTARAKHAND

1. **Ye Meri Pehchaan (“This is My Identity”)**: The film is about Turan Papna, a local musician who explains how he gained recognition for his music among the people in his community after being broadcast on Kumaonvani.



2. **Kam Hua Aasaan (“Making My Work Easy”)**: Deevan Singh, a local teacher who enjoys teaching mathematics to small children, does a regular math show on the CRS. He talks about how radio can play a game changing role in children’s education



## RADIO MADHUBAN MT ABU, RAJASTHAN

1. **Devilal:** The film is about Devilal, a shop owner and a regular community radio listener who installed a radio in his shop to enable everyone in the community to listen to it.
2. **Umang (“Zeal”):** The film captures the story of Vinod who belongs to a tribal community and his journey from being a tribal boy to a radio producer.
3. **Kavya mein samajh (“Understanding through Poetry”):** A film about a poet and his poetry. The film talks about how the CRS allows communities to showcase its talents.
4. **Ek Avsar (“An Opportunity”):** The film is about Usha, a young widow who regained her strength and hope after joining the radio station. It captures her interest in working for women and their welfare.
5. **Hunar ko mila manch (“Talent Finds a Platform”):** A film about K.C. Jingar, a factory worker who works part time with Radio Madhuban. He expresses his joy at having found the opportunity to do his dream job as part of the CRS.



## RADIO BUNDELKHAND, ORCHHA, MADHYA PRADESH

1. **Dahej Pratha ka Virodh ("Fighting Dowry"):** The film narrates the story of Pannalal who rediscovered his love for writing and singing through his association with Radio Bundelkhand. Pannalal often tries to weave social messages into the songs he writes.
2. **Muje Haq Hai ("I have Rights"):** The film documents the story of Vikesh, a visually impaired participant and a

regular contributor to the CRS. Vikesh talks about "Mujhe Haq hai", a radio show on the station, and how it inspires the differently-abled to access their rights.



3. **Soni:** The film is about Dinesh Soni, a local folk musician who makes music in Bundeli. It describes how he gained popularity after his association with Radio Bundelkhand, which later helped him turn his music into a regular source of income.



## COMMUNITY RADIO HENVALVANI, CHAMBA, TEHRI GARHWAL, UTTARAKHAND

1. **My Friend Radio:** The film is about Harish Kothari who writes the scripts for "Nau Par Vikas Ka" (In the name of Development), a regular show on the community radio station. Kothari is an environmentalist and feels strongly about the degradation of the Himalayas over the years.
2. **Meri Kala Meru Henvalvani ("My Art, My Henvalvani"):** The film features Preamsingh Negi, a regular contributor to the community radio station. Negi talks about how the involvement with radio revived his love for drama.

## JNAN TARANGA GUWAHATI, ASSAM

1. **Sunahre Sapne ("Golden Dreams"):** The film is about Raj Singh, who got a platform to exhibit his talent in singing through the community radio station Jnan Taranga. Raj shares his experience about being heard by a larger audience and the pride it brought to his family.
2. **Santa Kalita:** The film gives us a glimpse of Santa Kalita's life. Santa hosts the morning show "Bhakti Rozor Nizara". He talks about



his childhood dream of working at a radio station - and his current experience of working in one.

3. **Dhan Bahadur:** Bahadur is a watchman by profession and a regular listener of Jnan Taranga. In this film he visits the radio station and shares his thoughts about being a Nepali migrant and what it means to him to have a radio show in his language.

## RADIO BRAHMAPUTRA DIBRUGARH, ASSAM



1. **Pushpanjali:**  
The film is about Pushpanjali who belongs to the tribal community and dreams of creating awareness about her community and their cultural practices in the outside world. Community radio is her voice.



2. **RTI:** The film documents how Radio Brahmaputra uses RTI to help beneficiaries of the Government's Housing scheme for the poor claim their rightful entitlements.

3. **Adda ("Hangout"):**  
Through the eyes of Rumi, a community

radio producer, the film takes us on a journey with the local *chhadri* community and how the community radio station unites them in action through a discussion program, Adda.

## ALFAZ-E-MEWAT MEWAT, HARYANA

1. **Bhajandevi ka Gohna (“Bhajandevi comes of Age”):** Bhajandevi, an ASHA worker in Gohana village, participates in all health related programs broadcast by the CRS. She talks about how she gained her community’s respect through her association with AEM.
2. **Mubeena ka Safarnama (“Mubeena’s Journey”):** A short film about Mubeena, who works with Alfaz-E-Mewat. The film describes how community radio brought about a change in Mubeena’s life.
3. **Rajina Ka Radio Se Judao (Rajina’s Attachment to Radio”):** The film documents how community radio plays a role in a local woman’s everyday life.
4. **Mera Safar (“My Journey”)** is a story of Hakamji and his relationship with the CRS. We see Hakam carry the radio on his wheelchair, a companion for all time.



## HAMARA MSPICM SOLAN, HIMACHAL PRADESH

1. **Madan:** Madan Himachali, a local poet, shares his thoughts on community radio as a platform for local artists, journalists and poets like him.
2. **Manoj:** From a trainee to a well recognized voice on radio, the short film tracks a local boy's journey of achieving his dreams

## RADIO RATHINAVANI, COIMBATORE, TAMIL NADU



1. **Uravugalin Uravidham ("A Relationship"):** The film discusses how the CRS enables otherwise reticent women to have a strong voice.

2. **My Radio, My Voice:** A regular listener of Rathinavani CRS shares her first experience of being recorded and broadcast in a radio program.



## RADIO TILONIA

### KISHANGARH, RAJASTHAN

1. **Tannu:** The film portrays how the local community radio provides young rural girls a way to explore their talents and gain confidence
2. **Mera Haq- Meri awaaz (“My Rights - My Voice”):** The story of Beela Deveji who discovered community radio as a medium to record her struggles and access her entitlements through Government schemes
3. **Durga Singh:** From the classrooms in schools to the radio studio, Durga Singh brings science alive for one and all, making it meaningful in people's everyday lives.





A still from  
Waqt ki  
Awaz's  
Anjali



A still from  
Kumaonvani's  
Yeh Meri  
Pehchan

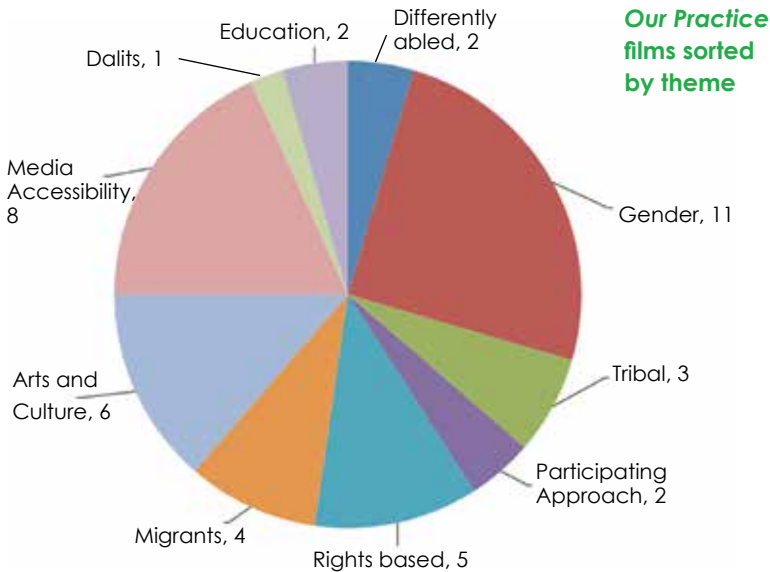


Recording in progress at the Alfaz-e-Mewat CR station, Mewat, Haryana for one

of their regular shows. Our Practice allowed AEM to reflect on their impact.



# PROJECT OUTCOMES



**F**or most of the CR stations involved in *Our Practice*, this was the first time they had used video to document their radio practices. The use of mobile phones for shooting and editing made the process more accessible.

Most of the CR participants found the newly introduced video-making tool very interesting and felt that such documentation brought their work to life.

The CR stations produced more than 44 video diaries in all as part of the *Our Practice* initiative. The pie chart above gives a glimpse of the different themes that the films covered from a freedom of expression perspective.

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**The largest number of films were on Gender (11), Media Access (8) and Arts & Culture (6)**

## Gender Participation

With the training across 14 community radio stations, we observed that there were not many women in the CR teams. There are several reasons behind this sparse participation:

- Travelling to the station poses a challenge
- Many women volunteers struggle to find family support to devote time to the CR station's activities



## Brief Evaluation of Training

The pre- and post- evaluation method was helpful in assessing the learning of the participants around the central ideas discussed during the *Our Practice* trainings. The self-assessment undertaken by participants also reflected their self-efficacy in using a visual medium to narrate stories from the community. Clearly, the training brought their focus back to issues like media freedoms, identifying the marginalised voices in the community and keeping a check on their practices to safeguard freedom of expression within the CR station and with the community - the core values for any CR process.

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**Evaluations of the trainings showed clear gains in understanding of FoE concepts**



**Capturing impact:  
A CR reporter from  
Radio Brahmaputra  
records a video with  
a regular listener**



LESSONS  
THE WAY FORWARD

**O**ur Practice was an exhilarating journey, and also a very instructive one. It showed, in many ways, how a restrictive community radio policy casts an overarching shadow of self-censorship and overriding caution as far as freedom of expression and content design over community radio goes. There was very little experimentation and risk taking by CR partners in terms of the voices and the ideas that the stations would broadcast. The *Our Practice* trainings, and the discussions that followed, pushed the participants to dwell upon certain critical and important questions about what they were doing, and to what end. It helped them reexamine their work in the light of the first principles of Community Media – that of creating voice equity in an otherwise unequal media landscape.

A second challenge was that of adequate time and resources. Community radio stations have few volunteers



and reporters, and fewer financial resources still. Spending three to four full days learning video and discussing freedom of expression when the project offered no direct funding compensation was a difficult choice for CR stations to make. While the active engagement with the CR stations under the *Our Practice* Initiative ended a few months ago, those who were part of the trainings continue to post interesting videos about their community radio work on social media. It is interesting to see the way these videos are evolving - and what aspects of their work the stations are choosing to document in these videos.



All members in the team got trained to take better photos. So many of us have phones, we take photos all the time, but we are never really able to use them because they are not taken with a proper angle, or after understanding of what we want to show or focus on. The training helped team members take better photographs and strengthened our overall documentation at the community Radio station. The training also helped us think about what we were doing at the station and why?

**Sachin Menkudale**

Mandeshi Taranga Vahini  
Community Radio station

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Thirdly, over the years, many stations have begun to think of documentation only as 'success' stories to be provided to donors who are funding development projects related to education, water and sanitation, women's health etc. The initial stories that many reporters came up with would try to shoehorn a direct correlation between a radio broadcast and

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**CR reporters  
of Radio  
Brahmaputra  
recording video  
on a mobile**

a behavioural change or tangible benefit to a community member. When thinking of documenting their practice they found it hard to locate stories where the CR station was a place where marginalized voices and their concerns were being given a space, and a process of dialogue and debate about critical local issues was being fostered. During the course of the project, as this understanding of the kind of role CR could play deepened, several community radio stations came up with ideas for more open-ended program designs that had greater scope for conversation and dialogue with

**E**ven though some of us had prior knowledge about video making, the training helped us refresh our skills and gave us an opportunity to explore these skills for our work in Community Radio. People really enjoyed watching their videos and immediate feedback was given. Some of us still make videos for our personal use even after the end of the project

**Bahadur Singh** and  
**Hema Mehta**  
Kumaonvani  
Mukteshwar  
Uttarakhand

their communities. Alfaaz-e-Mewat, for instance, decided to experiment with a program called **Sun Saheli** (Listen My friend) where women could share their innermost thoughts



and feelings anonymously. Radio Snehi started a program titled **Mann ki baat** (From the heart), an anonymous call in show for adolescent girls. Mandeshi Taranga Vahini started a program for youth called **Yuva Vani** (Youth Talk).

Lastly, the challenge of involving women and enabling them with technology tools continues. The training program was three days in which there was a lot to learn. It therefore had to be residential, as reporters worked on the video edits late into the night. This prevented many women volunteers from participating fully. Under the *Our Practice* Initiative trainers had to come

up with on-the-spot strategies to enable more and fulsome participation by women. This sometime meant repeating portions of the trainings again for the women participants; and spending extra time with them to assist them in learning the skills being taught as part of the trainings.

Even after the project is over, we continue to post the short films that we make on our facebook page. Creating videos using mobile technology is very handy and really useful. We broadcast a program called “Jana Sabtha” where the audience shares their opinions and suggestions on various local issues. But after the *Our Practice* trainings where we received a clear understanding about the concept of Freedom of Expression, there is motivation to work on the program in a more organized way and deepen the engagement with our community.

**Jithu**

Radio Benziger, Kollam

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**First experiments  
with video on  
mobile: Alfaz e  
Mewat reporters at  
Mewat, Haryana**

## The Way Forward

- More such documentation of everyday CR practice needs to be supported, so that there is a body of work that reveals the contribution and the potential of community radio stations towards empowering local communities, and fostering diversity of voice
- Understanding democratic values and freedom of expression needs to become a core part of capacity building for community media if it has to fulfil the promise of being a third tier of broadcasting and a vehicle to achieve communication rights for all
- Training and capacity building initiatives need to be better supported to allow for flexibility so that more women members can participate
- Follow up mentoring and collaboration and sharing programs need to be facilitated to help CR practitioners keep up their video documentation

**W**e got some direction about what to look for in our work and how to document it...what is our purpose as a CR. We can create our own library, create memories that we can revisit

**Rana Pratap Singh**  
Radio Snehi, Siwan, Bihar

- The work produced by the CR stations under the Our Practice and other such initiatives needs to be widely disseminated

All videos made by the CR stations are available at Ideosync Media Combine's YouTube Channel (@ideosyncindia)

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**(near right) CR reporter at Radio Rathinavani shares video with community member**

**(far right) Late night sessions editing video on mobile phone; Himabindu and Neetu at Waqt ki Awaz**

There is so much we do at our Community Radio Station but (we) find it hard to showcase all our efforts. In this sense the *Our Practice* trainings were very useful, as they gave us the tools with which to create video stories. People watch videos more than read documents in local language. While we reflected on our work during the training program and discussed ideas of freedom and community voice, even after the project we continue to use our newly acquired skills to document the impact our radio is having within our communities. We have learnt how to tell stories in an impactful way, The discussions around freedom of expression helped the CR team focus on critical issues that the CR contributes towards. Now we often talk about a rights perspective in other programs and the work we are doing. In the true sense many members of our community do not yet feel empowered enough to share their stories. It will take time for women of our community to truly have the freedom of expression given in our Constitution and our radio will continue to work with them till we reach that milestone!

**Radha Shukla**, Station Director and  
**Neetu Singh**, Station Manager  
*Waqt Ki Awaaz*, Kanpur Dehat





**What is the value that learning to use video brings to community radio stations?  
Reflections from experts**



# EXPERT SPEAK

**Arti Jaiman**Station Director , *Gurgaon Ki Awaaz* Radio Station

**H**ow do we look at, reflect on, and articulate our own work as a community radio? The demands of a round-the-clock broadcast cycle coupled with a perennial shortage of staff and resources typically means that documentation is a rag-tag mix of photographs taken, reports submitted for structured projects, and some feedback programs, again produced for the broadcast cycle.

Training community radio reporters usually focuses on reporting, recording and broadcasting skills for an audio format. Without focussed training in the visual medium, photographs are often grainy, out of focus, fuzzy and badly shot. Most daily programming, such as the morning's live phone-in show, or a listener-contributed and recorded story program or the song request program do not get captured, since it is part of the daily humdrum of broadcasting. We fail to capture how these programs encourage listeners to share their stories, to call in and be part of an on-air community, how being a "name" that is repeatedly broadcast on radio creates a persona that listeners revel in. Against this backdrop, it is wonderful to see the videos produced by community radio reporters from across the country capturing their own communities, their own work. The quality of the videos, hints at what is possible when community reporters are armed with training and tools of articulating their own work. How often we've struggled to convey to partners, stakeholders, potential donors, the community we reach, the work we do, the connect we have built. It is time for community radio reporters to take charge of their own stories, as the reporters have done in Ideosync's IPDC project *Our Practice*.

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## Ramnath Bhat

Member of Maraa, a Bangalore

based media arts collective

Community Radio and ICT enthusiast

Community radio, as a platform, is ideally suited to investigating the strengths and weaknesses of representative democracy. It is highly appropriate that community radio stations deliberate upon the often-unacknowledged framework from which they derive their legitimacy, namely democracy as it is imagined and practiced on a daily basis. Democracy is never a finished concept, but always messy and always in-progress. The dangers of majoritarianism and populism are often in tension with notions of rational deliberative democracy. Community radio stations then perform a synecdochal function, i.e. a part that stands in for a whole. In other words, the stellar work of these community radio stations is a microcosm of what democratic politics needs to look like, at broader levels. In the age of fake news driven by online traffic and advertisement driven commercial mainstream media, community media stations are poised to leverage the unique opportunity of defining the best possible take-away from democratic politics. The use of videos by these community radio stations only highlights the potential that these small media initiatives have to address big issues, and I'm very excited about the potential that is clearly demonstrated for democratic engagement in the present and for the future.



## Jayalakshmi Chittoor Parameswaran

KM4Dev expert, and closely associated with strengthening of the community radio movement. She has authored a number of books and tools for CRS.

The journey of building capacities of community radio stations in India has been varied. It has begun with simple awareness building exercises, to specifically responding to felt needs of each CR Station. The key intermediary agencies that have taken up these activities in the past include – UNICEF, UNESCO, CEMCA, Ideosync Media Combine, One World South Asia, Maraa, Government of India (MIB), etc.

Ideosync has embarked on a very important capacity building exercise that is grounded in the basic principles of community radio and in engaging the marginalised members of the community. Using a rights-based approach to building visual documentation capacities using the now near ubiquitous mobile phone (with smart features), the team has empowered several grassroots community radio practitioners with the capacity to do short video films and tell their stories.

It serves two purposes – first, it enhances the CR practitioner’s own abilities to tell a good story; and secondly, it has the potential to reach newer audiences.

With limited resources the team has been able to reach a fairly wide spectrum of community radio stations, who have, in their own journey, reached different levels of confidence and capabilities. The process must be continued and extended to other CR Stations and these stories must reach global audiences. Ideosync might consider taking these stories of inclusion through the National Broadcaster, Doordarshan.



## Ian Pringle

Community Radio Specialist and Director of Projects and Program Development at Farm Radio International, Canada

**S**tories are best told from real experience. This is as true of community radio as it is of these short films of the *Our Practice* initiative. The films tell some amazing stories and they bring to life the love that so surely develops in the various spaces of community radio.

I've spent some thirty years in these spaces and no matter where they are, what languages they use or how they look, when it has that community radio spark, it never fails to inspire. At the heart of it are people in relationships with other people and whose lives are enriched as result. *Our Practice* does a brilliant job of sharing this.

Alongside the more frequently lauded aspects of community radio - empowerment, accountability, cultural

preservation, all duly represented - one of the things I like about these short films is the starring role played by pleasure and enjoyment, as much behind and in front of the camera as it is behind and in front of the microphone.

Pleasure through sharing and through contribution is so evident in the stories that these films tell and in the way they are told: the pleasure of creating, sharing and contributing: writing, singing, presenting, investigating, giving and taking interviews.

Far from overshadowing the important work that community radio does in terms of empowerment, change and justice, the pleasure of the practice, all too often underestimated, is one of the cornerstones of sustaining community radios into contributing to better future.



## Ashish Sen

Media Consultant and AMARC Governance Council and  
Regional Board Member

Lack of documentation has often proved to be the community radio sector's Achilles heel, undermining its potential impact. While many community radio station trajectories have exhibited transformative stories of change (both at individual and community levels), they have not been duly recognized by the players themselves. Consequently, the sector's self worth and value of freedom of expression has not received due cognizance.

Communication scholar Nick Couldry makes the point when he observes that media is not just a delivery mechanism. "It is not just (about) getting the message across but about sustaining communities in space and time. If people not only feel that they can speak about the problematic realities around them, but also

that they are valued and that their contribution to society is treated as important, they may act differently as economic political and civic agents, enabling a deeper quality of development."

These issues assume relevance in a country like India and underline why an initiative like *Our Practice* is a vital first step to plug this gap. Its fundamental significance, however, lies in terms of strengthening marginalized voices and building repositories of transformative change. In doing so, it has provided important answers not only to the question of whose voice is heard in the media, but why voice - and especially community voice - matters.



## Birgitte Jallov

CR Specialist and Founder, Empowerhouse

Watching the Community Radio Stations in the *Our Practice* initiative use video to document their work is exciting. It is rather abstract for non- or less-educated rural communities to reflect on gaining access to advocate for their rights; and to move from passive audiences to agenda-setters is remarkable.

Personally, I have over the years engaged in documentation of impact of community radio, and worked with ways for the community itself to present the process and the change encountered. In view of this I find that the Ideosync Media Combine project is both ambitious and successful. It is obvious that the stations are documenting practice and change that they, somehow, have not been expecting and reflecting upon, in this manner, before. The struggle for

rights, for the space of women in a community communication platform, in positive change in the community because of collective voice, all stand out very strongly in the videos.

The project is powerful and unveils - by the participants themselves - the power of asking the so far never asked questions - and not least, the even more powerful answers.

This project leaves the participants from the radio stations with an even clearer idea of the overall reason why they are doing what they are doing - and the change their work facilitates in the community. It is important to further focus the attention of the stations on their development and change potential - more clear to some of the stations than others.

Please continue this work. It is important!

#### ARTICLE 1

Right to Equality

#### ARTICLE 2

Freedom from  
Discrimination

#### ARTICLE 3

Right to Life, Liberty,  
Personal Security

#### ARTICLE 4

Freedom from Slavery

#### ARTICLE 5

Freedom from Torture and  
Degrading Treatment

#### ARTICLE 6

Right to Recognition as a  
Person before the Law

#### ARTICLE 7

Right to Equality before the  
Law

#### ARTICLE 8

Right to Remedy by  
Competent Tribunal

#### ARTICLE 9

Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest  
and Exile

#### ARTICLE 10

Right to Fair Public Hearing

#### ARTICLE 11

Right to be Considered  
Innocent until Proven Guilty

#### ARTICLE 12

Freedom from Interference  
with Privacy, Family, Home  
and Correspondence

#### ARTICLE 13

Right to Free Movement in  
and out of the Country

#### ARTICLE 14

Right to Asylum in other  
Countries from Persecution

#### ARTICLE 15

Right to a Nationality and the  
Freedom to Change It

#### ARTICLE 16

Right to Marriage and Family

**The UDHR is a milestone document in the history of human rights. It was**

**adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 as a common standard of achievements**

**for all peoples and all nations. It spells out fundamental human rights that must be protected.**

#### ARTICLE 17

Right to Own Property

#### ARTICLE 18

Freedom of Belief and Religion

#### ARTICLE 19

Freedom of Opinion and Information

#### ARTICLE 20

Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association

#### ARTICLE 21

Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections

#### ARTICLE 22

Right to Social Security

#### ARTICLE 23

Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions

#### ARTICLE 24

Right to Rest and Leisure

#### ARTICLE 25

Right to Adequate Living Standard

#### ARTICLE 26

Right to Education

#### ARTICLE 27

Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community

#### ARTICLE 28

Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document

#### ARTICLE 29

Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development

#### ARTICLE 30

Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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Concept & Text: Venu Arora, Ideosync Media Combine

Editor: N Ramakrishnan, Ideosync Media Combine

The training curriculum and community radio trainings were designed and conducted by the Ideosync team including N. Ramakrishnan, Venu Arora, Jaimini Luharia & Himabindu Chintakunta.

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Cover design & illustration: Priya Kuriyan

## About Ideosync

Ideosync Media Combine is a Communication for Social Change not-for-profit based in the NCR of Delhi, India. It works on creating enabling environments and harnessing ICTs for greater freedom of expression, as well as on building the capacity of communities to create, own and manage their own media. Ideosync designs communication strategies; produces innovative content; undertakes in-depth qualitative communication and media research and evaluation; and conducts capacity building of different stakeholders and local organisations for integrating innovative information, advocacy and communication strategies into their core development activities. Ideosync's work prioritises a gender-sensitive rights based approach to communication for social change.

### Ideosync Media Combine

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The 'Our Practice' initiative (2015-2016) was designed and implemented by Ideosync Media Combine, and supported by UNESCO's International Program for Development of Communication (IPDC) initiative aimed at building the capacity of community radio broadcasters across India to reflect on their work, and document how they are fostering freedom of expression in their communities. Community Radio reporters used Android phones to create short digital stories, with narratives and voices that would have not found a space in the local media landscape were it not for their Community Radio stations.

Through participatory content creation and the use of new media technologies like the mobile and the Internet, community radio stations shared this body of work with each other and with the national and global community.

The Our Practice initiative trained a total of 115 CR members from 14 community radio stations across India. The videos they made can be found on [www.manch.net.in](http://www.manch.net.in), which is a knowledge sharing, learning and collaboration platform for Community Media practitioners. The videos are also available on the Ideosync YouTube channel ([ideosyncindia.com](http://ideosyncindia.com)).

#### Partner CR stations

Radio Tilonia, Rajasthan  
Kumaonvani, Uttarakhand  
Henvalvani, Uttarakhand  
Alfaaz-e-Mewat, Haryana  
Mandeshi Tarang Vahini, Maharashtra  
Radio Benzigar, Kerala  
Radio Brahmaputra, Assam

Waqt Ki Awaaz, Uttar Pradesh  
Radio Madhuban, Rajasthan  
Rathinavani, Tamil Nadu  
Jnan Taranga, Assam  
Hamara MSPCIM, Himachal Pradesh  
Radio Bundelkhand, Madhya Pradesh  
Radio Snehi, Bihar



IPDC

