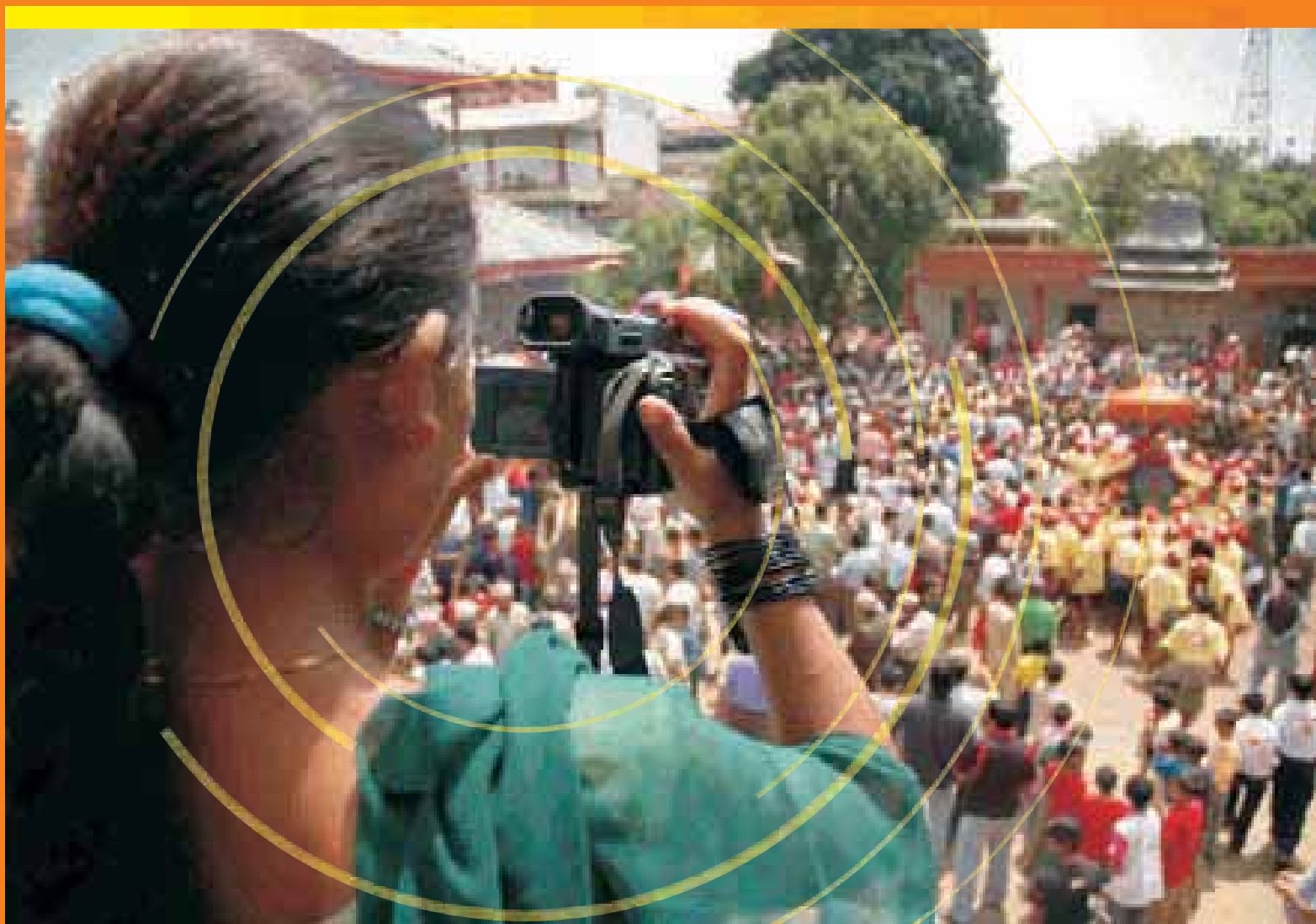


FORGING INNOVATIONS



Community Multimedia Centres in Nepal



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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Karma Tshering Bhutia
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Credits

This book was authored by Karma Tshering Bhutia and Kirsty Martin.

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Foreword

The CMC is a model developed by UNESCO beginning in 1997, for using new information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development, and overcoming barriers to this process. These include lack of awareness of the benefits of ICTs; high cost and lack of access to computers and connectivity; special skills required for content development; and, language barriers mitigating against the use of Internet based information.

Radio, the most penetrating medium is the primary interface between people and internet.

Nepal is the fore runner of community broadcasting in the Asia Pacific region, and community media is fast emerging as one of the key factors in this country's transition towards a Democratic Republic. It is also one of 15 pilot countries where the CMC model has been developed within the framework of a Global CMC Pilot project supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

This collection of case studies on the CMCs in Nepal is intended to showcase the interesting and diverse growth of this new medium in spite of conflict and the lack of community radio regulation. It also illustrates the operationalisation of UNESCO's concept of building knowledge societies in contribution to the Action Plan of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis 2005).

A formal introduction to the CMC medium, it takes the reader beyond the initial exploratory phases into digital and ICT linkages to the creative and practical expansion into hubs for social participatory networks.

A look at the social impact of CMCs in Nepal and the widening access to information and knowledge for ordinary people and particularly the poor and marginalised, is an indication of the vital role that the CMC has to play in expanding these social networks with a view to localising the global and maximising the local in development.

Any remaining limitations relate more to the traditional vertical orientation of development and governmental agencies working at the grassroots level. A partnership with CMCs appears crucial in making their services more efficient as they advance towards their goals of development and specifically those relating to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, once they are willing to establish horizontal linkages with the communities through the space and networks provided by CMC.

Most important in this model therefore is that the community member becomes more aware of what one can do with internet and information, learns to create new knowledge and becomes the centre of his/her development.



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Introduction

In 2003 UNESCO supported the creation of Nepal's first pilot Community Multi Media Centre (CMC) in Tansen, Palpa. Since then, the organisation has supported the creation of two additional CMCs in Nepal, one in Madanphokhara (Palpa District) and one in Lumbini (Rupandehi District). The three CMCs are networked with 5 telecentres throughout Rupandehi and Palpa Districts.

A CMC combines old and new media. In Nepal this includes community radio and local cable television, with new media facilities. The CMC media mix in Nepal consists of FM broadcasting services, office applications, audio equipment, internet, telephone, fax, photocopiers, scanners, video and audio programmes. The CMCs not only offer low cost public access to new media technologies but also run discounted training courses on the equipment and software for local users.

Why Nepal?

Nepal's first independent radio license was granted to Community Radio Sagarmatha in 1997. Prior to this, radio broadcasting in Nepal had been the exclusive domain of the state broadcaster, Radio Nepal. In 1999 and 2000, Community Radio Madanphokhara and Radio Lumbini became the country's first community radio stations outside Kathmandu to be issued radio licenses.

Community media in Nepal is emerging as one of the key factors in the country's transition to a Democratic Republic. Community radio and local television provide social forums for community involvement and also offer useful information concerning economic, religious and political matters. The strength of Nepal's community media is based in part on its ability to collect, produce, exchange and disseminate content for the development of individuals and the community.

The CMC project in Nepal has supplemented the benefits of new media to community radio and local cable television. These communities are now able to access global information and communication technologies. This is especially notable given the regional location of Radio Madanphokhara and Radio Lumbini. In an effort to encourage poor and marginalised people to access ICTs in remote areas, regional locations were considered ideal for the Nepal CMC project.

The costs of running and maintaining these technologies can be high. This study considers the benefits and costs associated with providing new technologies through small non-for profit organisations in Nepal. The sustainability of programmes and services is important to understanding the effectiveness of CMCs in Nepal.

The CMC Study

This document introduces the CMCs and outlines the benefits and challenges that the centres have faced since they were established. Each CMC is discussed in four parts; location and context, organisational structure, programmes and sustainability. The case studies show how local communities access and utilise newly available ICT tools in different ways.

In an effort to understand the social impact of CMCs the authors carried out field visits to the centres. They interviewed managers, staff, local researchers, community reporters, volunteers and community people. Unobtrusive observations of the centres were conducted to gain a sense of the normal daily activities of the CMCs. The authors were provided access to organisational financial and programme-based reports (see annex), internal reports and publications (see references) concerning audience numbers and details about training courses.

By examining three centres concurrently, common themes emerged in the overall functionality of CMCs in Nepal. This study identifies some key issues which can assist CMCs towards their goal of providing ICT access to poor and marginalised communities in regional Nepal.

1. CMC Madanpokhara

Location and Context

Community Radio Madanpokhara (CRM) went on air in 2000 as the first village based community radio station in Nepal. It broadcasts for 11.5 hours a day, 7 days a week. The aim of CRM is to empower local people and encourage local development. Today CRM has several local and international partners.¹

The Madanpokhara CMC was established in August 2004 when telecentre facilities were added to CRM. With a population of approximately 8000 Madanpokhara is a Village Development Committee (VDC) located in the Palpa District in Western Nepal. The CMC is perched on the hillside of the large fertile Madi Valley, 1.5 kilometers from the main highway that joins Palpa to adjacent districts. The main economic activities of the area include subsistence farming of rice, vegetables, coffee, bee keeping, animal husbandry, poultry, livestock and educational institutions. Due to its relatively high literacy rates, above average development indicators, strong educational institutions and history of innovation in fields such as agriculture and forestry, Madanpokhara is often referred to by the government as 'a model rural village'.

The national television service is available via terrestrial broadcast from the district headquarters in Tansen. In 2004 two commercial FM radio stations and one community radio station began broadcasting in Tansen. The national news and other social development programmes produced in Kathmandu are broadcast through the FM stations. The stations are networked through satellite audio channels which receive and distribute audio files.

CMC facilities and media mix	
Media in use	FM Radio, computers, internet and website.
Set up	Telecentre with community radio, four school telecentres, networked in three VDCs in Palpa District.
Number of PCs	6 public access/training, 1 server, 2 radio production, 2 office administration.
Telecentre	Digital cameras (video, still), printer, photocopier, scanner, fax, portable USB drives, recorder and CD writers.
Software	Office applications, Nepali Unicode, paint/drawing, internet browsers, email, chat, digital and audio editing.
Connectivity	Dedicated wireless internet

¹ CRM partners include UNESCO, MS Nepal, Equal Access Nepal, Antenna Foundation, Pro Public, Jagran Media Centre, Association of Community Radio Broadcaster (ACORAB), Radio Sagarmatha, Nepal Forum for Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ), DANIDA (HUGOU), Media Services International (MSI), PANOS South Asia, Rural Urban Partnership Programme (RUPP, Palpa) and Communication Corner.



CMC Madanpokhara is located in the remote hills of Palpa District

Management and Organisational Structure



Village Development Committee Council

Madanpokhara VDC is the legal license holder of the station though the CMC is owned, controlled and managed by the local people of the District.

Radio Assembly

The station's radio assembly consists of 128 members. The members are representatives from different social and governmental groups. More than a third of the members are from Madanpokhara VDC. Other members are from the lifetime members group, the women's communication group, the marginalised and indigenous ethnic community, radio representatives, District Development Committee (DDC), federation of Palpa District VDC, local business people, local farmer groups, the District NGO federation, the listener club network and the network of mothers groups.

Board of Directors

Madanpokhara VDC has the largest number of representatives on the BOD. The members of the VDC are nominated and elected by the community of Madanpokhara. The Madanpokhara VDC chairperson is also the chairperson of

Table 1: Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown of BOD

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	13	1	14
Indigenous	1	1	2
Dalit (Lower Caste)	1	0	1
Total	15	2	17

Members of the Radio Assembly elect the BOD. The BOD is responsible for formulating CMC policy, code of conduct and by-laws. The BOD has a three year term and then a new BOD is elected. Out of the 17 board members only two are female (see table 1). This low number of women in positions yielding decision making power may influence the programmes and activities of the organisation.

Even though the population of Palpa is mostly indigenous there is only one member on the BOD from the indigenous group in the community. This lack of representation has the potential to limit the voices of indigenous people within the organisation and also in the programmes and activities that it produces.

The BOD includes five members (see table 2) of the working committee which is an active group that monitors and overlooks the every day activities of

the telecentre and radio. The working committee is made up entirely of men from the upper caste. This group lacks gender, ethnicity and caste diversity. The lack of community representation could have an impact on the activities that the groups oversee.

Table 2: Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown of Working Committee

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	5	0	5
Total	5	0	5

Radio and Telecentre management

There is one manager, one coordinator and a programme production chief. The manager of the CMC is the secretary of the BOD. Until last year the manager and other staff were appointed by the BOD. Now all vacancies are advertised and all staff, including the managers, have performance based contracts.

Staff

There are 21 paid staff members at the radio station and telecentre (see table 4). The staff are responsible for carrying out the daily activities of the radio station and telecentre, mobilising the community, collecting news, conducting training courses and carrying out programme production work.

Table 3: Paid Staff - Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	10	4	14
Indigenous	3	1	4
Dalit (Lower Caste)	3	0	3
Total	16	5	21

Table 4: Production and Administration/Management

Sector wise	Male	Female	Total
Program Production	11	5	16
Administration/Management	3	1	5
Total	16	5	21

Community Reporters

There are 36 community reporters who encourage community mobilisation, identify community needs and communicate these to the radio station. They also inform the community about a range of activities and assist with the radio's correspondence.

The community reporters provide a channel for communication between the community and the CMC. Without this ongoing dialogue between community and the radio, community participation could wane and this would pose a real threat to meeting ongoing production targets.

Table 5: Non-Paid Staff - Community Reporters Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	24	3	27
Indigenous	4	2	6
Dalit (Lower Caste)	2	1	3
Total	30	6	36

The majority of community reporters are upper caste males (see table 6). There are only six female community reporters in total and only one of the six is from the lower caste. Even though the majority of the reporters are male there are only six community reporters who represent the (male) indigenous or lower caste groups in the community. It is important that community reporters represent the issues facing the whole community and any lack of representation in the community reporters themselves could impact on the nature of 'grass roots' issues raised on CRM.

Listener Clubs

There are 152 active listener clubs affiliated with CRM. These clubs have a total of roughly 3500 members. The main activities of the listener clubs include listening to radio programmes, sharing information with the community and giving feedback to the radio station. They also support the radio staff to mobilise the community people and assist in various local development activities. Listener club members have the right to become members of the BOD. They also have the opportunity to contest a nomination for the post of BOD.

Volunteers

There are currently 99 regular volunteers at CRM. Of these 22 are part paid volunteers. The volunteers research, develop and produce specific programmes. The CMC needs to maintain this high level of volunteerism as all aspects of the

organisation and production rely on them. The issue of volunteers receiving financial incentives for their time and effort would not be viable with such a large number of volunteers. Therefore acknowledgement of the work and effort of volunteers needs to be carefully and largely non-monetarily considered.



Members of Board of Directors at a meeting

Members

There are 192 lifetime members of CRM and 36 of these are members from the women's communication group of Palpa District. This female presence provides one avenue for gender representation within the organisation.

CMC Programmes and Activities

Telecentre Activities

The telecentre provides public access to computer and radio programme production training. In the last three years 150 people have completed the CMC's computer training course (see table 7). This relatively low number of participants shows that the telecentre lacks the strong community participation that has come to define CRM.

The CMC attempts to increase the involvement of housewives, local teachers, people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups in the community, by offering computer courses for free or at a heavily subsidised rate (see chart 1).

Table 6: Community telecentre users including gender ratio

Particular	Female	Male	Total
Housewives	11	0	11
Disabled	3	0	3
Dalit	10	5	15
Teacher	1	8	9
Ethnic	12	8	20
Students	41	51	92
Total	78	72	150

Although the CMC aims to encourage specific target groups to use the telecentre activities as the above table shows, the majority of CMC users are students. The inexpensive fees associated with 'chatting' on the internet are favoured amongst teenagers especially compared to more expensive telephone communication.

“Teenagers are attracted to the internet. When they use the telephone for talking it is very expensive. But chatting on the internet is very cheap. It is very interesting to talk via chatting” (January 2006).

Madanpokhara CMC has extended its telecentre facilities to include four government schools. The school-based telecentres have basic computer training, digital content production, printing and a database for storing school records and accessing educational programmes are being provided.

The CMC is planning to distribute audio content through its network of (government school-based) telecentres. This network would allow anyone in the community to send audio, visual or text files to the CMC using digital technologies. The telecentre network would provide internet access to areas that currently have limited or no connection. Local people who are not able to travel to the CMC to use the internet will be able to access the same facilities in their own village. The local information network would also create a communication channel between the different village communities, the government schools, and the CMC.

The introduction of new media in Madanpokhara has brought changes in terms of social communication. The CMC user in the quote below tells of their reasons for choosing the internet as a means of communication over other methods.

“The internet is effective. The letters you send via the post office can be looked at by others. They may look at your letters. But the letters you send via the internet can't be looked at by others. Others may see your e-mail if they can hack your password but generally it is very safe. I started to use it when I was still a student. If we use the postal service letters may not reach their destination for a whole month. They may even get lost on they way” (CMC user January 2006).

Radio Activities

The CMC's radio sector has more than 70 weekly programmes covering various topics including agriculture, gender, children, health, disabilities, local news, education, folk songs, current affairs, good governance programme and cultural programmes (see annex for the weekly programme schedule).



Live broadcast of Hamro Pathshala

Hamro Pathshala (Our School)

Hamro Pathshala is an educational programme produced by four local school teachers. The programme was launched in August 2005 and airs 7 days a week.

Hamro Pathshala reaches over 36 VDCs and Tansen Municipality. The interactive radio-classroom targets poor, rural and disadvantaged students of classes eight, nine and ten by providing (radio) tuition in the subjects of Mathematics, English and Science.

The majority of young people who attend government schools in Palpa fail their School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam. In 2005 only 26.43% of students in Palpa passed their SLC exams (District Education Office - DEO). According to the DEO 15,000 students from 60 schools in the region benefit from the programme. The programme evaluation is done by an advisory committee consisting of school teachers and authorities from the DEO.

In the below quote one listener explains the benefits of the Hamro Pathshala programme.

“I listen to the programme daily. I feel that you are teaching me alone when I listen to the lessons on the radio. In the case of maths and science the programme helps me to understand the topics which I could not understand in school” (June 2006).

For the first 18 months the teachers ran the programme without receiving any financial incentive. Today the teachers each receive an honorarium of NRS 200 (Approx US \$ 3.1) per programme. The production costs associated with this programme are comparatively high in terms of the time, manpower and equipment required.

Hamro Pathshala is popular in the community and the producers frequently receive feedback and praise from their listeners. The letters, phone calls and emails also allow the students to make requests of the producers which contribute to the improvement of the programme. Below is an example of the feedback the producers receive.

“Hamro Pathshala is really helpful for the students. I hope you will continue the programme in the future. I do feel that the science teacher goes too fast. He never used to go so fast and I had time to write down my notes. I hope the teacher will speak slower so that we can make notes” (Field Note, Damodar January 2006).

Kishan Bolcha (Farmer Speak)

Kishan Bolcha is an agricultural programme run by local farmers. The 30 minute programme airs once a week. The programme provides agricultural information and presenters conduct interviews with agricultural experts. Additional information is gathered from the internet and then discussed in detail.



Community reporter interviewing a farmer for the Kisan Bolcha programme

Kishan Bolcha aims to heighten local awareness about modern agriculture practices to help farmers become financially self sufficient. The programme does this by ensuring local farmers get the best possible price for their produce which increases their revenue. For poor farmers who rely solely on the prices they get from their crops the higher levels of income have brought about positive change in their lives.

“By screening the programme the farmers have learned how to produce and use their own fertilizers, they no longer rely on mediators, they have learned new farming technologies and how to increase honey production. Coffee producers have learnt about the international market, and farmers now pay attention to the quality of their land and products” (Field Note, Damodar September 2005).

Mahila Sansar (Women's World)

Mahila Sansar is a weekly programme which promotes women's empowerment and raises community awareness about gender. The programme broadcasts every Saturday morning from 8:30 to 9:00. In the past the programme has discussed the issues of abortion, family planning, education, citizenship, widowhood, child marriage and the role of women in the (future) constituent assembly.

One worker affiliated with the CMC attended a community meeting about the programme and asked local women what they felt about the programme;

“Mahila Sansar plays a crucial role in helping solve women's problems in the local community. When the politicians and other men announce their speeches to the masses, they talk about the rights of women and how we should help them in their activities. They say we should respect women. They always say things like that in their speeches, but it is not actually practiced” (Govinda, March 2007).

One member of the radio crew who is involved in the production of Mahila Sansar explains the need to change perceptions about gender at the community level;

“If we want to change women's condition and eradicate gender discrimination we should activate women with information and knowledge, and encourage them to participate in activities related to community development such as empowerment, education and health” (Field Note, Govinda March 2007).

The Mahila Sansar programme has been effective in mobilising local people especially the local women's groups. However the challenge remains to find an effective way to empower women from the lower castes and marginalised groups in the community.

Community message and e-POST

Friends and family who live outside Madanpokhara VDC, including family members living abroad, can call the CMC and leave a message. Their message is recorded and later broadcast over the radio. People who live close to the CMC can use the phone facilities at the CMC. Some people send emails to the CMC email address. These are also announced on the radio. Today there is wider access to tele-communication services with the introduction of mobile phones. While some have access to this mobile technology the majority of poor groups in the community cannot afford to buy and use mobile phones.

Radio Browsing

Radio browsing is a 30 minute weekly radio programme which began in November 2004. The goal of the programme is to provide listeners with information, to raise listener ICT awareness and to motivate listeners to use the CMC facilities.

The staff conduct internet based research on a topic and then invite informed local guests to verify the information for the local community. Broadcasters explain how computers (and the internet) work. The programme helps link local communities to global knowledge resources.

The programme production involves researching many web pages. This is often a time consuming process. Finding informed local experts is another concern for the producers. Perhaps it is for these reasons that the level of community participation in this programme has not been as extensive as it is for the other local programmes. A member of the initial programme team describes the training process and background for the 'Radio Browsing' programme.

“In April 2005 we started to make the radio browsing team. We had to learn about radio production and the staff also had to be trained on the internet. We trained 3 males and 5 females including people from the marginalised caste. We provided a microphone for the recording. Then they started recording their voices and they also learnt to edit the recordings” (Madanpokhara, June 2005).

The programme has fueled community interest in ICTs and inspired the use of the internet as a source of information for other programmes including local and international news.

Sustainability

1. Financial Sustainability

CRM has served the community on a self sustainable basis for the last seven years. The contribution of the local people in cash and kind has benefited the station and improved sustainability. Given the comparatively new addition of the telecentre it is important to consider the financial sustainability of the radio and telecentre separately (see annex [1.1 & 1.2] for income and expenditure statements).

A majority of the revenue for the radio is generated through public service announcements, co-production and grants from the external agencies. The Telecentre sector of the CMC earns roughly 97% percent of its revenue from membership fees, training course fees, telephone, fax service, internet access,

and other secretarial services. The remaining 3% is contributed from the radio sector of the CMC

The main expenses incurred by the radio include staff remuneration, programme production costs, administration costs and general operating expenses.

2. Technical sustainability

There is a range of technical challenges that impact on the sustainability of the CMC. The main factors which impact on the CMC's technical sustainability are described below.

2.1 Electricity

Irregular electricity supply, regular power cuts, low voltage and load shedding all impede the CMC's operations. These conditions force the CMC to procure additional equipment including a generator which increases its overheads.

2.2 Internet Costs

The internet connection is expensive and the centre does not recover this cost from the public internet service that it provides. At the moment the high cost of connectivity means higher operating costs for the CMC. These costs ultimately constrain the CMC reducing the funds available to run programmes aimed at empowering marginalised groups in the community.

2.3 Equipment / Maintenance

The CMC has a lack of trained technical staff to take care of equipment repairs and upgrades. With the number of computers and technical equipment utilised at the centre this has a direct influence on programme production and the every day running of the centre. While the CMC has been able to manage with its current technical configurations, concerns about costs of future equipment maintenance are now being discussed.

“The equipment is often imported and there is no authorised service centre nearby to carry out repairs and maintenance. The nearest repair centre is in Kathmandu. The repair centres are not reliable because they are not officially authorised” (Gunakar Aryal, Station Manager, Madanpokhara CMC 2007).

2.4 Audience Reach

The CMC management members raised their concerns about signal

interference from nearby higher wattage commercial stations. They worry this could limit their broadcasting range and reduce audience reach. Reduction in audience size translates to a loss in revenue from advertising opportunities.

3. Social Sustainability

The radio sector of the CMC has enjoyed a high level of community involvement which has contributed to the station's success. Social and community participation is used broadly to include assistance with programme production, financial support/fund raising, volunteerism,



Student completes his classwork listening to the Hamro Pathshala programme educational training, consciousness raising, social mobilisation and any other form of community involvement.

The organisation has strong social networks and works closely with key community groups including; farmers' groups, women's groups, listener clubs and mother's groups. The organisation also has a presence of local government and other local development organisations.

Conclusion

The addition of the telecentre at Madanpokhara has seen the integration of old and new media and strengthened existing production operation. The CMC has witnessed poor and marginalised community people access ICT facilities at the telecentre. In comparison with Tansen and Lumbini the CMC Madanpokhara has had a comparatively low number of people complete the computer training courses. Perhaps the advantages of fusing old and new media have not yet been completely realised in this particular case. On the other hand the geographical location of the centre may have acted as a deterrent for local people to use of the CMC. It is for this reason that the CMC has recently extended its telecentre facilities to include four government schools. By capitalising on the mobility of 'new media' it plans to bring the CMC to the community. Creation of the local information network will no doubt address some of the main issues facing remote and regional communities in the area.

Through its strong community networks the CMC's activities extend beyond the radio and telecentres to include social development for the community and the region. The participatory nature of local content production is demonstrated with the educational programme Hamro Pathshala which sees schools, teachers, students and government institutions working together. This programme is one of the success stories of the CMC and it will soon be available through a national network.

Due to the existing strong community support for radio the CMC has been able to attain financial sustainability and to continue to create local content and activities relevant to the community. The addition of the telecentre in 2004 has increased the efficiency and capacity of the radio without adding much financial stress on the existing facilities.

2. CMC Lumbini

Location and Context

Radio Lumbini was one of the first cooperative community radio stations to go on air in South Asia, in January 2000. Radio Lumbini is a not-for-profit initiative of the Lumbini Information and Communication Cooperative. The cooperative recognised the potential social benefits of combining existing radio with new ICT applications. Providing free or affordable new media facilities increases local public access to global information resources especially for poor and marginalised groups in the community.

Lumbini CMC was established in April 2004 with support from UNESCO. It is located in Manigram, a market area in the Anandavan Village Development Committee (VDC) in the Rupandehi District. Manigram is an agricultural area in the fertile Gangetic plain at the base of the Himalayan foothills. Rupandehi's main cities are well connected crossroads that have brought a relatively high degree of migration from neighbouring hills. The main industries of the area include cement, biscuits, iron and steel and these have brought commerce and educational facilities to the area.

The CMC is situated on a main highway 15 km from Butwal, the headquarters of the Lumbini Zone and Bhairahawa. In 2006 the Lumbini CMC moved into its own building after operating in the radio station's building for the last six years. The building also houses the back up studio, telecentre, audio library, training hall, news and administration section.



The new two-storyed CMC Lumbini

In April 2005 UNESCO set up a satellite telecentre in Buddhanagar, 40 kilometres away in Birth place of Lord Buddha Lumbini. Lumbini has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997. In spite of the its international reputé prior to 2005 there was no public access for information and computer literacy in the area. The nearest internet facility was 22 kilometers away. The satellite centre aims to increase public access to ICTs, provide a platform for community awareness, and raise community awareness about poverty. With the establishment of the telecentre component more than 172 local people have gained access to computers, email/internet facilities and ICT-based training courses. Today there are three computer-training centres and internet cafés in the area.

Main CMC / satellite telecentre facilities and media mix	
Media in use	FM Radio, Computers, internet Website: www.radiolumbini.org
Set up	Community radio station with telecentre facility, satellite telecentre network facility in Buddhanagar
Number of PCs	Main CMC/satellite telecentre facility: 8/5 public access/training; 1 server, 1 in-studio 3 in administration
Library	Audio CDs, English and Nepali books
Other	Main CMC/satellite telecentre facility: Digital cameras: video (1), still (1/1) audio recorders (2/1); printer (1/1); scanner (1), fax (1), portable USB drive (1/1), speakers (8/3), head phones (8/1), telephone (2/1), photocopier (1/1), LCD projector (1).
Software	Office applications and internet browsers
Connectivity	Dedicated wireless
Broadcast	FM Radio: Daily 5–22h
Telecentre	Sunday to Friday 6–18h

Management and Organisational Structure

The Lumbini Information and Communication Cooperative is the main organisational support for the CMC. The cooperative has 222 members of which 207 are male and 15 are female. The members come from a range of socio-economic and occupational backgrounds.

The general assembly is a select group of cooperative members who meet every two years to decide on general policy matters and by-laws. The general assembly also elects the new Board of Directors (BOD) who will remain for the next two years. The board members are not paid for their work.

Table 1: Board of Directors : Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	8	2	10
Indigenous	1	0	1
Dalit (Lower Caste)	0	0	0
Total	9	2	11

Sub committees coordinate the day-to-day activities of the radio and telecentre under the supervision of the BOD. The sub committees head different sectors of the organisation including; social marketing, finance, technical, listener club unit, telecentre and programming. The manager of the radio and telecentre is also the secretary of the BOD and is responsible for coordinating the different sectors of the organisation.

At present the majority of members who yield decision making influence at the board level are males from upper caste groups (see table 1). Out of 11 members of the BOD, two are upper caste women. Only one member of the BOD is of indigenous caste and there are currently no members from a lower caste.

Staff

The CMC employs people from different caste groups in the community however the majority are upper caste males. The centre's full time staff members work eight hours a day, six days a week.

Table 2: Full Time Paid Staff : Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	16	10	26
Indigenous	3	2	5
Dalit (Lower Caste)	0	1	1
Total	19	13	32

There is 32 (paid) part time programme production staff (see table 2). Out of the group 28 are upper caste males. There are only two females on the team. Programme staff are paid based on the programmes they produce. Most of the staff currently involved in programme production started at the CMC as volunteers.

Table 3: Part Time and Programme Based Staff : Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	28	0	28
Indigenous	2	1	3
Dalit (Lower Caste)	0	1	1
Total	30	2	32

Community Reporters

There are 33 community reporters across five districts in Western Nepal (see table 4). Community reporters are 'grass roots' journalists trained in radio journalism. In contrast to the other sections of the organisation, the community reporters have better cross-caste representation however most of the community reporters are male.

Table 4: Community Reporters : Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	15	3	18
Indigenous	10	2	12
Dalit (Lower Caste)	3	0	3
Total	28	5	33

Listener Clubs

Radio Lumbini has 27 active listener clubs and they are supported by the Danish organisation MS Nepal (Danish Association for International Co-operation). Each club has on average 30 members. The members meet once a month to plan upcoming activities and to work with the social mobilisers and community reporters. Five radio staff members work in the listener club unit.

Volunteers

There are 25 programme-based volunteers. Radio Lumbini pays the travel expenses for volunteers working on specific programmes. All other expenses are covered by the volunteers themselves. The costs that the volunteers incur are fast becoming an important issue for the organisation and the volunteers are starting to request financial incentives.

“When Radio Lumbini went to air in 2000 I volunteered for the first six months without receiving any financial incentive. That policy of

volunteerism cannot continue. When I volunteered there was only one radio but today there are many radio stations. There must be some financial incentive to cover the volunteers' costs" (Indra Aryal, Programme Chief of Radio Lumbini 2007).

Buddhanagar Satellite Telecentre

The management committee works closely with local communities and the Lumbini Information and Communication Cooperative. The management committee of the satellite telecentre practices a policy of inclusion and its members are representatives from various ethnic groups. While the management group enjoys strong ethnic diversity the gender breakdown of the committee shows that females are under-represented as there are only two female members of the management committee (see table 5).

Table 5: Buddhanagar Management Committee : Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	1	2	3
Indigenous	4	0	4
Dalit (Lower Caste)	2	0	2
Total	7	2	9

In December 2006 several community groups were invited to nominate members for the general assembly. The new management committee and CMC Lumbini are in the process of drafting the by-laws for the registration of a separate independent organisation. CMC Lumbini supports a complete handover of ownership to the local community.

Staff

There are three paid staff members who work full time at the satellite telecentre. The staff oversee the activities of the satellite telecentre including training, content creation, researching and community mobilisation. The centre cannot afford to pay high salaries and therefore the rate of staff turn-over is relatively high. In the last 2.5 years alone three trainers have left.

Volunteers

There is no fixed number of volunteers at the satellite telecentre. The managers contribute their time (free of charge) by holding meetings and advising the centre on a regular basis.

CMC Programmes & Activities



The management Committee of Buddhanagar satellite centre in Lumbini

Telecentre Activities

Making the CMC's facilities accessible for poor and marginalised people in the community is a high priority. Specialised programmes are developed to meet the needs of marginalised groups including people with disabilities, housewives, low income earners, lower caste groups, teachers and journalists. The below chart displays the different sub-groups who use the CMC and table 7 shows the size of the different groups with specific reference to the CMC target groups.

Table 3: Users of the CMC according to groups and gender

Gender	Male	Female	Total
<14 Yrs	15	13	28
14-18 Yrs (Youth)	139	194	333
Adult	72	82	154
Disabled	29	8	38
Marginalised	96	49	145
Students	209	220	429
Housewives	0	86	86
Journalists	17	5	22
Teachers	13	18	31
Total	590	675	1265

The CMC's telecentre facilities provide public access to computers, internet, content production, archiving and editing. This is complemented by the affordable training courses that the CMC offers. The combination of access and computer training has brought significant changes to the lives of local community people.

“When I first came here I didn't know how to start the computer, but now I have a good basic understanding of the computer. Not only that but now I can browse the internet too” (Field Note, Basu January 2005).

In the last three years 1265 people have taken advantage of this discounted service. Other public users pay NRS 1200 (Approx US \$19) for the 3 month basic computer course. This is less than half the fee that commercial institutions charge for their computer courses. In addition the satellite telecentre in Buddhanagar has trained over 172 community people with the majority being from marginalised and poor groups in the community.

In May 2005, 15 people with speech and hearing impediments completed a 3 month basic computer and internet training course. This activity showed that the CMC is not only a place for learning but it is also a social space where people can discuss various issues, relax and socialise.

The majority of community users have trouble understanding the English language used on the internet. In an effort to remedy this, trainers and volunteers from the CMC were trained in the application and installation of

Nepalinux. This has helped in the use of local language and breaking down the barriers to complete public access to information. The centre continues to encourage the use of free and open source software (FOSS) amongst the community users. Despite the benefits of using this kind of software, the CMC still faces the challenge of finding and paying for staff that will support the software's application.

The installation of telecentre facilities has improved the individual skills and expertise of staff at the CMC while at the same time it has reduced its production costs. Since being trained by the staff of the telecentre in digital editing, programme producers edit their own programmes. This is different from the past whereby programme producers had to rely on technical assistants to edit their programmes for them.

Similarly the CMC had to pay reporters from the regions and Kathmandu for any kind of regional or national news. Today the CMC staff source over half of the national and international news through the internet. There are no longer costs for external human resources and at the same time money is saved on long distance communication including costly phone calls.

Buddhanagar Telecentre

Like the main CMC the satellite telecentre offers free computer training courses for the poor and marginalised people of Lumbini.

“The CMC offers computer education to people from many castes in our society. Some months ago I didn't know what a computer was but I was very interested to learn about computers. The CMC gave me a chance and played an important role in me gaining a computer education” (Interview, Basu January 2005).

Radio Activities

Radio Lumbini runs for 17 hours a day and airs more than 80 programmes each week (see annex [2.1] for programme schedule).

Apanga Awaaz: Disability Programme

One outcome of UNESCO's 2006 training course for visually and physically challenged people was the launch of a radio programme entitled *Apanga Awaaz* or 'voices of people with disabilities'. This programme is produced and developed by people with disabilities. The objectives of the programme are to change society's negative perception of people with disabilities and to raise awareness about the rights of people with disabilities.



Visually challenged members of the Apanga Awaaz production team

The programme is based on interviews with key people and organisations that campaign for the welfare of disabled people. In one episode the team shared information about the transport subsidies entitlements for people with disabilities. During this time disabled people deliberately created a two hour traffic blockade demanding their travel subsidy entitlements. The radio programme was instrumental in opening communication between the community and the local transport association. The programme producers themselves are aware that raising the issues on the radio is only the first step in bringing about important social change for people with disabilities.

“Addressing key issues is important and something the programme is currently doing. Finding workable solutions for these issues cannot happen through the programmes alone but also needs support from the government, wider community and nation's policy makers” (Madan Bhandari, programme producer, Apanga Awaaz).

The Apanga Awaaz programme is a popular programme within the organisation and in the wider community. Plans are in place to train more people with disabilities to be involved in future programming to ensure continuity and support sustainability of production.

Teaching by Radio

In association with the National Teachers Association of Nepal, Radio Lumbini runs an educational radio programme targeted at local youth, called 'Teaching by Radio'. The programme began in February 2006 aiming to help poor government school students prepare for their School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examinations. The programme covered the subjects of Mathematics, English and Science.

The programme soon became popular amongst school students all over Rupandehi and the neighboring districts. Programme producers received letters and phone calls from students and parents requesting the programme continue. A local researcher based at the CMC spoke with some students and asked them their thoughts about the programme.

“The students said that because they are poor and cannot afford private tuition fees the radio programme is very useful for them. The repetition of the answers helps them understand the lessons and makes it easier for them to pass their exams. While the students hesitate to ask questions in class they can ask the teacher by telephone. Sometimes they don't pay attention in class but they pay close attention in their home when they listen to the radio. They also said that because it is free they can utilise it” (Field Note, Deepak April 2007).

A five-day multimedia education training programme was also launched with the support of UNESCO. Teachers from seven government schools across Rupandehi district and two radio programme producers from Radio Lumbini took part in the training. 'Teaching by Radio' resumed in October 2006 and it now runs for the whole year.

“I asked the teachers there about the impact of the teaching and learning process of the radio programme. They said they feel the local radio has done a great job for the students of SLC and that the radio programme has helped the weaker students” (Field Note, Deepak April 2007).

Hamro Lumbini

Radio is used as the vehicle for disseminating local content. Effective collaboration between grass-roots community centres including community radio and telecentres can bring real benefits and create community content sharing networks.

Early in 2007 a weekly radio programme 'Our Lumbini' (Hamro Lumbini) was developed as a collaborative partnership between Buddhanagar Telecentre and the Lumbini CMC. The programme aims to promote cultural diversity and inter-



Community reporter covers the citizenship issue for the Hamro Lumbini program

religious dialogue between local communities and stakeholders of the Lumbini World Heritage site. The format of the radio programme combines local reporting, community voices and interviews with experts.

The staff and community people use the telecentre facilities for the production, editing and packaging processes. The programme is then sent to the main CMC in Manigram via CD ready for broadcasting. At this time community generated content does not attract revenue for the centre. Therefore any future planning of this type of programme needs to balance the aims and goals of the centre with the implications for the centre's financial sustainability.

Radio Browsing

The CMC began broadcasting the weekly 'Radio Browsing' programme in November 2004. The programme presenters and local technical experts collect information from internet in response to listeners' requests. The internet content is then described, explained and discussed on the radio in the local language.

This format has been most successful particularly in the broadcast of the school leaving certificate (SLC) exams results. Previously students had to wait for the results to appear in the newspapers, and waited for the news to travel from Kathmandu to their community by telephone, letter or word of mouth. This would often take weeks especially for those in remote communities. Today they get the news through the radio browsing programmes of Radio Lumbini. Radio Lumbini was one of the first radio stations to broadcast this important information via the Internet.

Radio Browsing and 'Teaching by Radio' are both good examples of how local radio and telecentre facilities can work together for the benefit of the community. The connection between the radio and the telecentre facilities means that local youth can learn through listening to the radio and they can also go to the CMC to practice using the internet and access worldwide information.

"I have been involved with the CMC for seven months. I can now operate the computer and internet easily. The concept that only the highly educated people can have the opportunity of this knowledge has been changed. I have also got the chance to present on the Radio Browsing programme. A few days ago we were introduced to the new Nepali font software 'UNICODE NEPALI' which is very useful for a user who does not have any previous knowledge. It will be very helpful for those people who don't know a word of English" (Field Note, Basu August 2005).

Sustainability

1. Financial Sustainability

The CMC's radio sector has been in operation for 7 years with little financial difficulty. The vast majority of the radio's revenue is generated from partnership based programmes with external organisations and from advertising. The remaining revenue comes from membership fees, public service announcements and training activities.

The main expenses that the radio incurs include staff remuneration, administrative expenses and the depreciation of technical equipment (see annex [2.2 & 2.3] for income and expenditure statement).

With regard to the telecentre, 90% of its revenue is generated from the computer training courses. The remainder is generated from the public internet access and administrative services it offers.

The telecentre's main expenses include staff remuneration, internet connectivity, equipment maintenance, and electricity costs. The telecentre itself

is able to cover its operating costs from the revenue it generates from commercial services. UNESCO supplied the CMC's capital investment including equipment.

The satellite telecentre in Buddhanagar is under pressure to achieve financial self reliance. One way to achieve this would be to stop providing free computer training and create programmes which target only the sector of the population with purchasing power. This would mean that the ICT access would be lost for the poor and disadvantaged groups in the community. The pressure to remain financially viable is increasingly at odds with the original goals of the CMC.

2. Technical Sustainability

Adding the telecentre facilities has resulted in increased efficiency of programme production, increase in staff and community computer skills, and the



The satellite telecentre in Buddhanagar is under pressure to maintain financial self reliance

ability to digitally archive programmes. At the same time technical impede the CMC's overall sustainability.

2.1 Electricity

The area frequently incurs power cuts, load shedding and low voltage. This has in part been addressed through the CMC's decision to purchase a generator. The cost of running the generator is high and therefore its use is limited.

2.2 Internet Costs

Internet connection is expensive. The CMC currently pays NRS 8000 per month (Approx US \$123) for a dedicated wireless network and uses it for public and administrative purposes. The organisation does not recover its connection costs through the fees it collects for public internet access. It uses the revenue from other activities like computer and journalism training to cover the shortfall in internet connectivity.

2.3 Equipment / Maintenance

The CMC has up until now been able to manage with its current technical configurations but it cannot afford to pay future equipment maintenance and general depreciation costs.

Expensive imported equipment like transmitters have a one year warranty. Basic trouble shooting is undertaken in-house. However for major problems the radio depends on the nearest repair centre which is a seven hour drive away in Kathmandu. Spare parts for certain imported equipment are simply not available; therefore some equipment cannot be used once it breaks down.

2.4 Audience Reach

The management at Lumbini CMC plans to increase its transmission from 500 to 1000 watts mainly due to signal interference from the nearby higher wattage commercial radio stations. They claim, this tends to limit broadcast range and increases the risk of losing potential audiences and limited advertising opportunities leading to the inevitable fall in revenue.

Other factors to consider in terms of reach include frequency management and antenna height and placement as the Radio Lumbini technician explains in the quote below.

“With a lack of government regulation regarding radio, the low wattage radio stations are striving for higher wattage. Actually, this does not serve the purpose of coverage. Other factors for coverage depend on the height

and location of the antenna. The defeat of the signal can also be due to use of low quality broadcasting equipments” (Krishna KC, Chief Technician of Radio Lumbini 2007).

3. Social Sustainability

Social and community involvement in the Lumbini CMC extend beyond the organisation's volunteers and members. Community involvement also includes the participants in training programmes, staff and volunteers, listener club members, and the community reporters. All of these groups foster and encourage a culture of community participation. The social sustainability of the centre relies on the sense of social responsibility felt by local people and their active participation. At the same time the long term commitment of volunteers is not realistic as people's life circumstances inevitably change. This is an issue that is faced at the satellite telecentre.

Community participation in terms of lifetime membership is limited to those who have purchasing power. There are no lifetime members from the marginalised groups in the community. On one level this is because lifetime membership costs money and this means that non wage earners are excluded from becoming lifetime members. The barriers for complete social participation need to be considered not only with reference to lifetime members but also at the management and BOD levels of the organisation.

Conclusion

In the case of Lumbini, adding the telecentre facilities has led to greater efficiency in programme production. Out of the 3 CMCs in Nepal CMC Lumbini has had the greatest number of local people (more than 1400) trained in ICTs, either free of charge or at a discounted rate. This illustrates the CMC's success in encouraging poor and disadvantaged people in the community to use ICT at the telecentre. Some of these people have stayed on at the CMC as volunteers whilst others have found paid employment elsewhere.

The benefits of fusing old and new media are clear in the innovative radio programmes 'Teaching by Radio' and Hamro Lumbini. The programmes both utilise the internet and the digital facilities of the telecentre to enhance the depth of the radio content. Combining new media with radio has begun to break down the barriers between those who can and cannot afford to pay to use the internet. By utilising information from the internet, people who previously had no access to the internet can now either go to the CMC and learn for free or continue listening to the radio and learn about the internet via the radio.

The high level of community participation in different programmes has defined the CMC as a community space where people from all groups in the community can express their views and opinions. This diversity is clear with programmes such as the 'Disability Programme' and Hamro Lumbini

The CMC has achieved financial sustainability which supports its ongoing activities. With long-term commitment from the organisation and strong community participation the CMC has the potential to widen its scope and promote development in remote and rural areas.

3. CMC Tansen

Location and Context

Community Development Palpa (CDP) is an NGO established in 1992 from a group of pre-existing cable TV services. The initiation of community television by CDP was ground breaking in its development and production of a local programme for the community.

Tansen CMC was established in April 2003 with support from UNESCO and was the first CMC pilot with a community cable TV network in Nepal. The CMC was set up in an attempt to encourage poor people to achieve self empowerment through gaining access to ICT knowledge and skills.

The CMC is located in the main street of Tansen known as Makhan Tole. Tansen is 300 km west of Kathmandu, approximately 30 kms into the Himalayan foothills and 60 km from the border with India. The town is located 5 kms from the main highway and is the gateway to several adjacent districts. The population of the municipality is approximately 30,000 and is a mixture of ethnic communities and traditional caste groups.

Like other hill towns in the Himalayan belt Tansen is isolated from the fertile plains which enjoy economic growth, trade and mobility. Its geographical location means there are relatively few employment and business opportunities in the town. There are no opportunities for large industry as the area lacks the infrastructure necessary to support them. Though Tansen has a modest tourist industry its tourism revenue is relatively small when compared with other tourist hill sites in Nepal. During Nepal's time of internal conflict, development projects ceased and the town was severely damaged. The period of conflict affected the tourism, business, structural and economic capacities of the town.

Tansen has a wide range of local media for a relatively small, isolated hill town. The town has three local FM radio stations and one nearby in Madanpokhara. The town has a weekly community-oriented newspaper, a local Nepali newspaper, a cable network, a local television producer and the CMC. In 2004 an internet café was established by the local arm of a national ISP which today includes more than six cyber cafes and computer training institutes.

CMC facilities and media mix	
Media in use	Cable TV, video, audio production, computers, internet; website (http://www.tansenpalpa.net), local CMC TV channel, online local newspaper.
Set Up	Telecentre co-located with community video production
Hardware	12 PCs for public access & training, 4 audio-video production, 2 local channel broadcasting, 1 server, printer/scanner unit, 4 portable USB drives, 7 video cameras, 1 still digital camera, 1 LCD projector, 1 webcam, CD/DVD writer and 4 televisions.
Software	Nepali Unicode, paint/drawing; internet browsers, email, media players, digital editing, video, still and image.
Connectivity	Cable internet connection.

Management and Organisational structure

Tansen CMC is managed and supported by CDP. Running the CMC is CDP's main activity. In December 2006 the management committee was expanded to the operating level of the CMC. The Director of the CDP is the coordinator of the CMC and there are now plans to register the CMC as a separate organisation.

The CMC management committee consists of the coordinator, secretary, treasurer, trainer and the programme production chief. These roles include two full time paid staff members and three volunteers. The other (non-management) committee members are representatives from various volunteer groups in the community.

Table 1: Management Committee : Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	0	3	10
Indigenous	1	1	1
Dalit (Lower Caste)	0	0	0
Total	1	4	11

The management committee of the CMC has changed more than three times over the past three years. In the past the management committee lacked organisational skills including inefficient decision making. There was also a lack of transparency and accountability within the management committee which led to speculation over the use/misuse of CMC funds. The running of the CMC has now been handed over to the volunteers.

Volunteers

Tansen CMC currently has 16 volunteers (see table 2) who help with the administration, management and production tasks of the CMC. The CMC works hard to maintain community representation amongst their volunteers. Everyone in the community is able to volunteer. This policy of inclusion in its volunteer culture is different to Lumbini CMC, where only trained journalists are encouraged to volunteer.

Table 2: Active Volunteers : Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Upper caste	5	5	10
Indigenous	4	0	4
Dalit (Lower Caste)	2	0	2
Total	11	5	16

Tansen CMC has an additional 60 volunteers who help with a range of programmes and activities. Volunteers work at the CMC seven hours a day six days a week. The lack of management presence means volunteers carry out their activities without pressure or interference. One of the users of the CMC describes the benefits of the training courses offered by the CMC.

"I came to the centre for training. I've not only done the training but I'm also seeing the benefit from it too. After taking the computer training course I came to know about computers and now I know how to operate a computer. I'm interested in video and I'm also doing an anchoring job as well. I've helped with the shooting of the 'Local Programme' many times and sometimes I go there as the main camera man" (Field Note, Utpal January 2005).

Experienced volunteers leave the CMC in order to take up employment in radio stations, private media centres or computer training institutes. One of the CMC users describes how he has been successful in securing paid computer work in the community.

"All of my family members are very happy that I got this job. I'm very happy I got the job. My parents had no idea that their son could bring in money after going to the CMC for computer training. With this money I will purchase new clothes, books, pens and note books for my study" (Field Note, Utpal January 2005).

Some volunteers have managed to find employment within the CMC. The idea is that when these experienced volunteers leave they will pass on their skills

and knowledge to the new volunteers who will carry on the CMC's activities and work in the community.

After completing their training and their time as volunteers at the centre two, lower caste brothers found work as cameramen and video editors. In the following quote they describe their experience.

“After volunteering at the CMC for three years, now I own a video camera which I use to record wedding ceremonies and other local events in my village. I still continue to use the facilities at the CMC to edit and package the video. The revenue that I generate from this business is shared with the CMC” (Ram Chandra 2007).

At the outset the CMC was not financially sustainable and could not cover any of the volunteers' expenses. It has now started paying for snacks and providing nominal financial incentives to the volunteers. The CMC has also started sharing some of the revenue that it generates from its commercial activities with the volunteers.

CMC Programmes and Activities



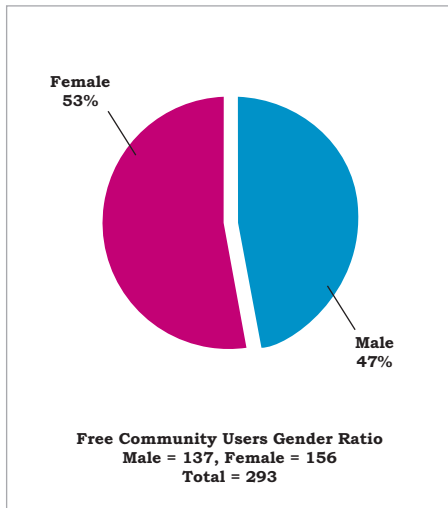
Community members browse Nepali language websites in CMC Tansen

Telecentre Activities

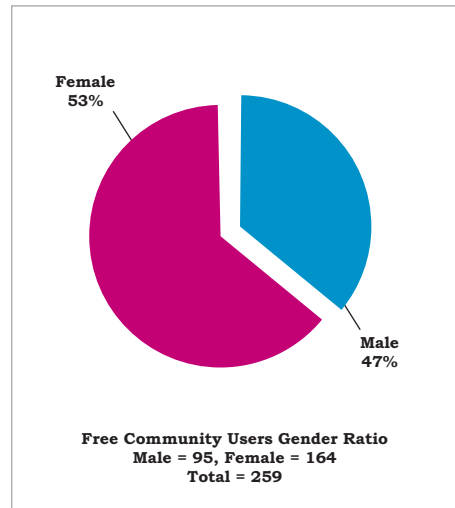
The CMC encourages community people to become involved in the centre. Since 2003 the telecentre has run a basic computer training course which consists of word, excel, power point, email, and general internet. More than 520 community people have completed the three month course at the CMC (see tables 3 and 4). The CMC also runs a media production computer course which includes training in audio and video production (see annex [3.1] for training course schedule).

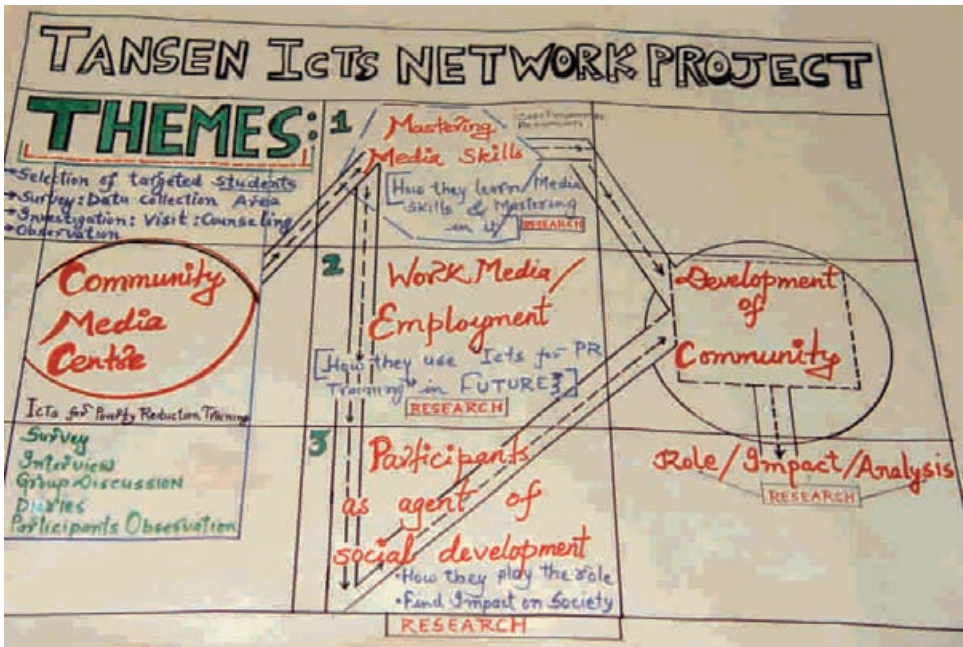
The CMC offers computer training courses free of charge for underprivileged local people in an effort to encourage poor and marginalised people to utilise the telecentre's facilities. In the past all of the computer courses at the CMC were free. However in 2006 the Computer Association of Nepal approached the CMC and insisted they charge a regulated amount for their courses. Since then poor and marginalised people have had to apply to attend the free computer training course. A CMC representative conducts an interview with the applicant and peruses their supporting documents. Based on all the information collected and a visit from the representative, the applicant is identified as belonging to a poor or marginalised group and can enroll in the course for free. The complexity of the process has been a deterrent and the number of poor and marginalised people enrolled in computer training courses has declined as a result.

**Chart 1 Non-paying Community Users
(2003-2007)**



**Chart 2 Paid Community Users
(2003-2007)**





A mind map that identifies the social and technical networks of Tansen produced by the local researcher

Those who received free computer training are expected to stay on at the CMC as volunteers in the production of the CMC's local television programme. These volunteers produce their own multimedia programme using digital video cameras and production software like Microsoft Moviemaker and Adobe Premiere. Their video productions form part of the 'The Local Programme' cablecast on Saturday.

The involvement of women in the training courses sometimes posed a problem. In 2004 the centre held a training course specifically for women. The below excerpt describes the complexities of introducing ICT training for local household women.

"I went to a housewife where her husband had recently opened a communication centre. I told her if she learned how to use the computer she could help her husband in his business. After hearing my plan her husband agreed with me to send his housewife to the centre for the computer training. She told me that there was a small son who she has to take care of. The husband told her that he would look after the baby but she didn't believe him because leaves the home for business. So she told me not to add her name this time" (Field Note, Utpal August 2004).

After months of working hard in the community, informing local women about the course the enrollment numbers finally increased. Since 2003, 66 housewives with no prior computer knowledge completed the computer training course.

“At first the CMC introduced computer training for some housewives and now there are many housewives taking the computer training course. The CMC has done a very important job for housewives” (Field Note, Utpal February 2005).

Some of the women use their newly acquired computer skills in book keeping and secretarial work. Others use the internet skills to communicate with their relatives or browse the internet. Some higher caste women have managed to buy themselves computers, while others have started teaching in local schools. It is still too early to know the medium to long term outcome of the training course for local women. The below quote from a local trainer is a reminder that the course is the first step in bringing about positive social development for women in the community.

“Fifty housewives are now taking the training in the centre and they hope to get a job in the near future. There are many barriers for women due to their lack of academic qualifications and their household responsibilities” (Field Note, Utpal February 2005).

The CMC's programmes also help build ICT skills of young people in the areas of audio/video production and new media. In July 2005 the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST) recognised the CMC's work and granted it the national award for innovative use of cheap and simple technologies for communication development. RONAST is an independent Apex body established in 1982 to promote science and technology in the country.

“The award has not only brought confidence to me and my team, but it also encourages us to work harder to bring about social change at the community level by using information and communication technologies” (Mahesh Ratna Shakya, coordinator of Tansen CMC 2007).

Cable Television Activities

Tansen's community cable television programmes are produced and aired in local languages. The local programme reaches more than 3000 households in Tansen and the neighbouring VDCs. Radio and TV are both popular in Tansen. The cost and accessibility of cable television usually determines the audience. The cost associated with cable television in Tansen NRS 250 (US \$4) means that the majority of low income earners cannot afford to pay and instead they listen to



Sita Pandey (Centre) with the production team of Twakka Tukka

the radio. The local cable television programmes are produced in the CMC by volunteers and distributed using the CMC local cable television channel.

Twakka Tukka

Twakka Tukka, a local programme began 2.5 years ago and now cablecast for 20 minutes once a week. Although Twakka Tukka is a comedy it also contains important social messages about issues such as the environment, health and education. More than 60 voluntary 'actors' from the community are involved in the production of the popular programme. Twakka Tukka provides the community with a platform to voice their views in an enjoyable light hearted manner.

Sita Pandey is a twenty year old volunteer at the CMC and the brainchild behind Twakka Tukka. She came up with the idea for the programme while talking with the other volunteers at the CMC. She feels that people have many problems and highlighting them in a lighthearted way helps people feel happier and forget their worries.

Today, Sita is known as Twakka Tukka in the community and the use of this nick name illustrates the community's support for her.

“I showed the programme Twakka Tukka in Gulmi (a nearby district) and the local viewers loved it and when they said this I realised my success and it is due to the help of the CMC” (Sita, March 2006).

Even with its widespread community involvement, Twakka Tukka relies on one individual to coordinate the production. If Sita does not come to the CMC the programme won't run. The programme has a good reputation in the community but at the same time this discourages other volunteers at the CMC from daring to take over (in Sita's absence) as they don't want to disappoint the audience.

Involving the characters in the programme on an ongoing voluntary basis is another challenge for the production team. To date the programme has been produced on a volunteer basis but the team is now requesting financial benefits to acknowledge their time and effort. The management of the CMC is considering providing these benefits from the revenue it generates from its commercial activities.

TV Browsing

The TV Browsing programme is cablecast on the local cable television



The live TV browsing programme in CMC Tansen in action

channel every second Monday for 20 minutes. The programme combines television and internet technologies. The programme team chooses an important social issue and they then conduct televised internet research. As the internet information is usually in English, the producers translate and call upon local experts to reaffirm the web-based facts. At the end of the programme the audience is encouraged to write, phone or email their comments and questions to the producers. TV Browsing allows viewers to see (via their television) what the internet looks like and how to use it.

One episode of TV Browsing went on air when students were completing their school leaving certificate (SLC) examinations in April 2007. The TV Browsing team organised a meeting at the CMC and decided that the next programme should help students' through their difficult exam period. During the programme they browsed the internet for support documents and study guides to help students solve mathematical and scientific problems. The production team then authenticated the data by interviewing local teachers.

The day after the programme aired a student approached a local researcher based at the CMC.

"I have seen other people use the internet but I haven't used a computer before. I didn't know there were different uses for the internet. I thought it was only used to send messages. After seeing the TV Browsing programme I realised that the internet is a house of information. I like the idea of sharing information in this format" (Field Note, Govinda April 2007).

The television images of browsing the internet bring the internet into the homes of people who do not otherwise have access to a computer. The programme's connection to the local CMC means that those who want to try out their computer skills can come to the CMC and use the computers at the telecentre. The programme acts as an ICT introduction kit in the local community.

The TV-Browsing programme first began in 2004 but stopped when one of the staff proficient in English left. A new team of volunteers took over the programme in January 2007 and they face the same (language) challenges.

Local Activities

The 'Local Activities' programme runs for 15-30 minutes every week. It provides news and information on community activities. The programme addresses issues such as water scarcity, the environment, pollution, roads, accidents, government and social activities.

In 2006 volunteers from the local CMC recorded their story about the

destruction of Tansen's Royal Palace in the form of a digital story called 'Tansen Burning'. Their digital narrative captured the political events which changed the face of Tansen. The documentary was telecast through the cable television network and later used to mobilise national and international support for the reconstruction of the historical palace.

Folk Song Programme - Deurali

This programme is the entertainment section of the centre and is hosted by volunteers of the CMC. This fortnightly programme includes screening music



Volunteers covering a community festival in Tansen

videos some of which are made at the CMC. The programme displays the skills of local artists and musicians. The CMC video tapes and edits the music videos of the local artists, which are then broadcast through the CMC channel. The CMC charges a fee for the production and promotion of the music.

Sustainability

1) Financial

The CMC has recently begun documenting its financial transactions (see annex [3.2] for income and expenditure report) and is working towards financial sustainability. In the meantime it continues to receive support from UNESCO for infrastructure and training. Over the last five months the CMC has managed to cover its operating costs and overheads. The majority of the CMC's revenue is from the fees associated with computer and audio/visual training courses.

The income from music and wedding videos is intermittent. There is also competition from ex-volunteers from the CMC have opened up their own video production businesses. While this adds pressure to the CMC at the same time it is an indicator of the CMC's success in creating employment opportunities for local people.

The CMC owns an LCD projector which it uses to display local content in remote and rural areas where there is no access to a cable network. It also plans to hire out the projector to community organisations for a nominal fee.

The major expenses for the CMC include staff remuneration, internet connectivity, equipment maintenance and electricity costs.

2) Technical Sustainability

Adding the telecentre facilities to the existing video production system has transformed the pre-existing facilities and has increased the efficiency of programme production. The inclusion of the telecentre has also brought new technical challenges which impact on the CMC's overall sustainability.

2.1 Electricity

The area experiences frequent power cuts, load shedding and low voltage which impact on the day to day running and programme production at the CMC.

2.2 Internet Costs

The (cable) internet connection is unreliable and alternatives are expensive. The cable internet connection is very slow when more than three computers are connected simultaneously.

2.3 Equipment / Maintenance

There is a lack of trained technical staff to maintain the computer, audio and video equipment. If the CMC could secure better equipment including a quality

video camera, the production quality would be higher. This would attract more paying customers and even allow the CMC to increase their fees.



Volunteer team meet with CDP, the local NGO to discuss day-to-day operations

3) Social Sustainability

Despite its inefficient management structure, the CMC continues to encourage strong community involvement. This is exemplified by the quantity and diversity of community members who take part in the CMC's activities and programmes.

A range of local experts offer their time and knowledge in the production of specific programmes. One example of this was in April 2006 when a programme was produced on water conservation. The programme went on air at a time when the town was experiencing significant water shortages. The dilapidated state of the water source was video taped by the CMC and broadcast through the local channel. This coverage led to increased social awareness in the community about water conservation and resulted in community mobilisation for the conservation of the town's drinking water.

Conclusion

The Tansen CMC study has shown that combining new and traditional media can bring about benefits in local, remote and poor areas. By facilitating community access to ICTs it is possible to break down existing social barriers including language, access, affordability and education. More than 500 people have gained skills through the training courses at the CMC. In spite of the decision by the Nepal Computer Association to charge fees for all computer training courses in Nepal, CMC Tansen continues to offer free training courses to poor groups in the community. The Tansen study has shown how access to technologies and training has created opportunities for paid employment for local people beyond their traditional caste expectations.

The media mix in Tansen (the telecentre and cable television operations) has enticed local youth to become engaged in content creation and programme production. Community people continue to support the centre through their active involvement in all aspects of the local cable television programme. The community groups' commitment and support, including their involvement at the decision making level, has led to greater transparency and the overall stability of the organisation.

By addressing important social issues and providing information from the internet, the CMC has been able to disseminate a wide range of information to its audience. This has led to the CMC being perceived as an inclusive community centre where anyone in the society can access ICT knowledge and gain skills.

Annex 1

1.1 Annual Income and Expenditure Statement of Radio Sector of Madanpokhara CMC July 2005 – 06

Heads	Expenditure	Heads	Income
Salary and allowance	873,760.00	Balance carried forward	852789.48
Meeting allowance and tea	18,826.00	Cash	17786.62
Meeting allowance	10000.00	Saving at Rastriya Banija Bank	835002.86
Tea and Breakfast	8826.00	PSA (Nrs 100 per 10 sec)	246,065.00
Service	248,981.61	Income from co-production of audio content	454,810.02
Office operating	35,361.00	Donation and grants from local organisation	1,241.00
Contingency	1,000.00	Local VDC annual grant	104,000.00
Capital programme expenses	367,848.00	International Organisation support	394,003.45
Miscellaneous	14,416.00	Lifelong member	35,000.00
Discount	7,110.00	Radio' fixesd deposit	56,475.00
Balance		Income from sale of fruit and other secretarial services	34,392.00
Cash	47,166.91	Visitors contribution	12,980.00
Rastriya Banijya Bank	306,512.41	Miscellaneous	91,148.00
Advance payment	92,960.00	Provident fund	71,164.96
Share	100,000.00	Outstanding	13,373.00
Nepal Investment Bank	48,500.00		
Post office saving	204,999.98		
	2,367,441.91		2,367,441.91

1.2. Monthly Income and expenditure of Telecentre Sector of CMC Madanpokhara

S.No.	Particulars	Expense	Particulars	Income
1.	Salary of trainers	3000	Fee from 2.5 month basic Computer training	15600
2.	TADA (Linkage and Co-ordination with community ICT centres, Research, Trainings and Meetings)	1200	E-mail, Internet	175
3.	Internet connectivity	1017	Document: Type and Print	150
4.	Resource materials (Printing and copying Cartidge, CDs, Diskettes etc.)	500	Scanning and Copying	300
5.	Telephone	2000	Phone and Fax	100
6.	Electricity	2200	Income from other sources	75
7.	Stationery	500	Expense over income	517
8.	Monthly maintenance	1500		
9.	Incentives for programmers (Volunteer)	500		
	Total	16917	Total	16917

Annex 2

2.1. Radio Lumbini Weekly Programme Schedule

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
05:00	Spiritual Programme						
05:00	Community News and Activities						
06:00	News from Radio Sagarmatha, Kathmandu						
06:45	News from the local newspapers						
07:00	Atmik Yatra (Christianity Programme)	National Songs	National Songs	Current affairs	National Songs	Educational Programme	Atmik Yatra (Christianity Programme)
07:15	New Nepal : Peace Building						Listener Club Programme
07:00	Panchakanya Sugam Sandesh: Message	Shama Shanti	Apanga Awaaz voice of Disable	Inside the Curtain	Labour Program	Ethnic Voice	Literature Programme
08:00	Nepal Chautari (From Antenna Foundation, Kathmandu)						
09:00	Community News and Activities						
09:30	Modern Songs	Health Programme	Jiwan Chakra	Water and Life	Low Caste Program me	Agricultural Programme	Lumbini Quiz
	Folk Songs						Programm on Magar Ethic Language
11:00	Community Activities						
11:15	Hello Lumbini			Afanto Ko Sandesh : Relative's message	Hello Lumbini		
12:00	Community News and Activities						
12:15	Bhojpuri Songs						
13:00	Folk Songs			Ghar Aagan: Home Garden	Folk Songs		
14:00	Community News and Activities						

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
14:15	Suggestion From Audience	Voice of Youth	The Mirror: Woman Programme	Folk Songs	Our Songs Your Message	Goal Post	Bhojpuri Programme
15:00	Neppal Khabar (Communication Corner, Kathmandu)						
15:15	Phone in Programme						
16:00	Community Activities (News in Bhojpuri Language)						
16:15	Folk songs						
17:00	Community Activities						
17:15	Sodhi Khoji	Quiz	Beautiful Nepal Equal Access		Dedicated Songs		Beautiful Nepal Equal Access (Kathmandu)
18:00	Children's Programme						
18:30	Proverbs	District Dev Committee Program	Our Voice : Listeners Club	Science and Technology	Current Affairs	Radio Browsing	Our Environment
19:00		Naya Bato Naya paila	Business & Finance	Naya Bato Naya paila	Agricultural Programme in Bhojpuri Language		
19:30		Hamro Kapilvastu		Sports			
19:40	Community Activities						
20:15	Teaching Through Radio : Formal Distance Education		Our Lumbini	Hamro Avhiyan	Teaching Through Radio : Formal Distance Education		
19:40	Community Activities						
20:45	BBC Nepali Service from BBC London						
21:15	Speech of OSHO						
22:00	Communities News and Activities						
22:15	Good Night Musical Programme						
23:00	Station Closed						

2.2. Annual Income and Expenses of Radio Sectors: 2006-07

Income		Expenditure	
Advertisement	1,123,667.00	Staff Salary	1,414,674.70
Co - production with other organisation	1,754,532.00	Administrative cost	1,222,478.50
Membership fee	23,400.00	Royalty	52,557.00
Public service announcement	147,071.37	Depreciation of equipments	743,771.37
Donation and Grants from Donors	526,500.00	Income over expenses	218,286.25
Income from Training	56,000.00		
Interest (Media Development Fund)	181,513.98		
Income from other sources	39,083.47		
Total	3,851,767.82	Total	3,851,767.82

2.3. Annual Income and Expenses of Telecentre Sector : 2006-07

Income		Expenses	
Stationery	1,029.00	Grants and support from donors	229,899.80
Salary	230,249.00	Income from Internet access	5,140.00
Internet Connectivity	52,250.00	Income from computer training	115,015.00
Travel	474.00	Income from printing	200.00
Maintenance	4,272.00		
Depreciation	45,902.80		
Total Saving in Bank (Income over expenses)	16,078.00		
Total	350,254.80	Total	350,254.80

Annex 3

3.1. Tansen CMC Training Schedule

S.N.	Course Content	Duration
1.	Orientation class (Overall concept of the project and Description of the Programme)	2 Days
2.	Basic Computer Concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mouse Function (Theory + Practical: Paint) • Keyboard Function (Theory + Practical: Typshala) • Windows Xp and General Windows Properties • File Management 	15 Days
3.	Basic Internet Concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail: 5 Days • Google Search: 6 Days 	11 Days
4.	General Usages of Computer	8 Days
5.	Microsoft Word/ Excel	7 Days
6.	Microsoft PowerPoint Xp	7 Days
7.	Basic Internet Concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail: 2 Days • Internet search and information: 5 Days 	7 Days
8.	Computer Based Video Editing Concept <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows Movie Maker 	8 Days
9.	Narration, Anchoring, Interviews and Video Shooting	8 Days
10.	Video Production Concept and Video edit	2 Days
11.	Video Program Production (Field Work)	4 Days
12.	Internal Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory = 1 • Practical = 1 Days 	2 Days
	Total Training Days	81 Days

3.2. Tansen CMC Income and Expenditure from April - July 2007

Income			Expenditure		
S.No.	Details	Nrs	S.No.	Details	Nrs
1.	Fee	29000.00	1.	Telephone	2858.00
2.	Membership Forms	4050.00	2.	Electricity	8655.00
3.	Certificate	200.00	3.	Connectivity	3162.00
4.	Secretariat	0.00	4.	Volunteer support	18925.00
5.	Videography	43410.00	5.	Production materials	7163.00
6.	Video Mixing	1650.00	6.	Stationary	9750.00
7.	CD burning	720.00	7.	Space Rent	5750.00
8.	Previous Balance B/F	3945.00	8.	Miscellaneous	2669.00
9.	Equipment hire	500.00	9.	Tea & snack	2760.00
			10.	Transportation	700.00
			11.	Recompense	1000.00
			12.	Remuneration	11000.00
				Income over expense	9083.00
	Total	83475.00		Total	83475.00



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