

PROJECT IMPLEMENTED BY THE ISLAMABAD OFFICE

NATIONAL PROJECT

PAKISTAN: BASIC JOURNALISM SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR DISTRICT CORRESPONDENTS

BUDGET CODE: 354 PAK 5002

US\$ 30 000

TYPE OF PROJECT

The liberalization of the broadcasting and print media sector in Pakistan over the past two decades has led to an explosion in the number of circulating newspapers and magazines, with over 850 publications in circulation today. Historically this growth began in the main metropolitan centres, however the devolution of power to local governments across Pakistan has led to increased pressure on the media sector to mirror this change and provide support to district correspondents. At present this support is largely unavailable, with district correspondents often poorly educated, underpaid, and working in isolation.

This project seeks to build the capacity of 180 Pakistani district correspondents, in order to increase their proficiency in basic journalism techniques and freedom of expression issues, and resulting in the creation of a network of rural journalists for the monitoring of press freedom violations and Human Rights abuses. Small level district correspondents; who has no formal training in journalism and have very low competencies and skills as in basic reporting, coverage, news writing and giving full-length analysis in feature will be trained through mentoring and hands on experience learning techniques. From the small areas the low skills among journalists is evident when there is a complete absence of human angle and community level issues on the mainstream media, as the eyes and ears of the people in these areas are not able to fully comprehend the situation back to urban broadcast audience in complete detail.

The aim of this training is to train the journalists and also to establish an effective network of journalists to monitor and defend freedom of expression. There is also trainings for how women can become informants of society and have basic training to narrate and if possible write the news which is related to their areas and communities.

IMPLEMENTATION

According to approved work plan, the implementation of this project is done through series activities:

1. Nine workshops to be organized in the remote areas of South Punjab, out of which six for male district correspondents and three for women contributors.
2. Two sessions in total nine workshops to be reserved, including 3 workshops for women to form a network of journalists to monitor Press Freedom in the country.

The contractor has purchased Multimedia Projector for presentations in three days long training workshops along with laptop; digital camera, scanner and printer will also be purchased.

Experienced trainers including senior journalists working for national and international media are hired by contractor as resource persons for the programme. The participants are selected from local media organisations and also among the journalists working for national newspapers. The skills development training includes basics of journalism, techniques of information gathering, practical exercises of news reporting, the art of interviewing, feature writing, ethics of journalism, the law and the journalist and maintenance of reference record. So far four workshops has been concluded.

RESULTS

During the workshops for women, it has been observed that the social restrictions and taboos persist in small areas to report on gender and even women journalists are not very keen on their competence for knitting gender perspective in their basic journalism skills. It has been also noted, that the lack of facilities at press clubs and unorganized press clubs in small areas, lead of lack of access to information, Internet.

CONCLUSION

The project aims to significantly improve the level of journalism skills among the small district correspondents, who are mostly working as part time stringers due to limited capacities to work as journalists. This project aims at bringing more news from the small areas in to the mainstream news.