

# Shubh Kal

We change with climate change

**From Information to Knowledge and Action**  
**National Workshop Proceedings**



## Background Information

Development Alternatives has been running the Shubh Kal Campaign (a climate change communication campaign for a better future) since 2008 in the Central Indian Region of Bundelkhand. The campaign informs and educates the rural community regarding the risk of climate change and possible adaptation options. With over 80% of the population dependent on agriculture, climate change is posing an increasing threat to the livelihood security of the rural community in this extremely drought prone region.

As part of the ongoing Shubh Kal Campaign, a pilot initiative 'From Information to Knowledge and Action' was launched last year in Bundelkhand to test an innovative communication model using community radios. Supported by the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) - UK and partnered by the Environmental Planning and Coordination Organisation (EPCO) – the climate change cell of the Madhya Pradesh Government, the London based Institute of Development Studies, King's College and thethirdpole.net; this action research project aimed to:

- Strengthen community knowledge and voice on climate change impacts and adaptation by enabling communities to share their experiences in coping with and adapting to climate change
- Increase awareness of the scientific community and government authorities on how climate change is impacting local development

This pilot project has created a new space for dialogue between scientists, communities and local government authorities using community radios as a medium to exchange information about climate change impacts and advocate responses which address local communities' needs.

## About the Workshop

"Climate Change Communication - From Information to Knowledge and Action", a one day national workshop was organised by Development Alternatives (DA) with support from the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2013 at the Development Alternatives World Headquarters in New Delhi. The workshop aimed to share findings of the CDKN pilot project (Shubh Kal - From Information to Knowledge and Action) with scientists, policy makers and the larger climate change and communication community. The one day workshop was divided into three sessions to discuss the following topics:

- Information and communication needs for climate change
- Role of new and innovative media such as community radios for communicating climate change
- Policy imperatives for strengthening community based communication at the grassroots

The workshop was attended by government officials, representatives of sectoral ministries, policy makers, researchers, journalists, film makers, academicians, professionals from community media, civil society organisations, donor agencies and experts from scientific institutions. The deliberations among diverse participants facilitated strengthening of existing networks for sharing information leading to strategising on how to reduce existing knowledge gaps in the area of climate change communication. Total number of participants at the workshop was about 70. Agenda and background note for this workshop is attached at the end of this report.



## Introductory Session

Dr. Ashok Khosla - Chairman, Development Alternatives gave the opening remarks and initiated the workshop by welcoming the participants. Discussing the increasing sensitisation of climate change issues across the world, he commented on how the climate change debate has intensified over the years. He added that rural communities have made the least contribution in terms of greenhouse gases however they are the ones who are the biggest victims of climate change. To help them adapt and cope with climate change variabilities, Development Alternatives chose to work in Bundelkhand – an extremely drought prone region in Central India suffering from extreme poverty and poor human development indices.

In order to address climate change sensitivities in the most vulnerable and weakest sections of the society, it is imperative to communicate climate change in messages which are locally relevant and easy to comprehend. Therefore the focus of Development Alternative's Shubh Kal campaign strategy (the climate change communication campaign for a better tomorrow) has been to communicate with rural communities using regional language and local metaphors. Development Alternatives launched a community radio by the name of Radio Bundelkhand in 2008. Climate change adaptation options such as rain water harvesting, sustainable agriculture practices, agroforestry, organic farming etc. were communicated using locally customised simple messages. In order to increase the outreach of the Shubh Kal campaign from 100 villages to 400 villages, Radio Bundelkhand partnered with three other radio stations in this CDKN funded pilot project (Shubh Kal – From Information to Knowledge and Action). Dr Khosla stated that the CDKN Shubh Kal pilot project has proved that community radio can be an effective medium to bridge the climate change knowledge gap that exists between communities, scientists and local government authorities. Drawing from the lessons learnt from this action research project, Dr. Khosla highlighted the need for policies that mainstream climate change communication to bridge the knowledge gap between various stakeholders at the grassroots, state and national level.

## Session 1: Information and Communication Needs for Climate Change

This session discussed the importance of communicating climate change in messages which are locally relevant and easy to comprehend. The session was first introduced by Ms. Zeenat Niazi, Vice President Development Alternatives. Her talk primarily focussed on three key aspects:

- **Mainstreaming climate change communications** - The need for integrating climate change thinking into current planning systems
- **Demystifying current climate change knowledge** - The need for demystifying climate change knowledge into simplified language which can help motivate behaviour change among communities
- **Networking and partnership development** - The need for developing strong partnerships to make a regional campaign into a national campaign



The 1<sup>st</sup> session was chaired by Dr. K.R. Viswanathan, Deputy Head, Climate Change and Development, Embassy of Switzerland. He took the opportunity to congratulate Development Alternatives and its partners in the Shubh Kal pilot project for the successful implementation of the Shubh Kal campaign across 400 villages in four districts of Bundelkhand. He stated the importance of community radios as excellent tools for stakeholder involvement and mass mobilisation at the grassroots. He also mentioned the need for a solution based approach for combating the risks of climate change.



**Speaker 1: Joydeep Gupta - Director, [thethirdpole.net](http://thethirdpole.net)**

**Topic: Community Radio for Climate Change Communication**

Mr. Joydeep Gupta is a New Delhi-based journalist and media trainer. Mr. Gupta has extensively reported on environmental issues which include climate change, biodiversity, food and water security, wildlife and pollution for over 30 years. For the past five years, he is also involved in training journalists on climate change issues. He was the lead trainer in the capacity building workshops in the CDKN Shubh Kal pilot project for training community radio reporters in climate change journalism.

He stated that journalists need to bother about climate change because it is the biggest news of this century. It is not only changing our environment but is also influencing our society, politics and economy. The Shubh Kal pilot project touched a completely new space of the media spectrum. It worked with media which is directly involved with the community. However training community radio reporters has its own set of challenges. He mentioned how explaining even rudimentary climate science to the reporters was a huge challenge.

Despite all the challenges, Mr. Gupta stated that community radio is a very impactful communication channel as it reaches out to communities at the grassroots like no other medium. The radio reporters belong to the local communities, speak in the local dialect and are well aware of the social issues of their areas. Community radios are successful in creating grassroots level participation and circulation of ideas among rural communities.

The CDKN Shubh Kal pilot project utilized the community radio very effectively to meet the climate change communication needs of the communities. The project has been successful in improving capacities of the radio reporters to make effective stories on climate change issues. He concluded by mentioning that he felt glad to be part of the Shubh Kal pilot initiative which proved that community radio reporters can be excellent information intermediaries for communicating climate change at the grassroots and bridging the information gap between scientists, policy makers and communities.

**Speaker 2: Ms. Ferzina Banaji - Head of Program Development, BBC Media Action**

**Topic: Role of Communication in Building Climate Resilience among Communities**

Ms. Ferzina Banaji is the Head of Programme Development for BBC Media Action in India—the international charity arm of BBC. In addition, she also oversees several projects on climate change communication. Her presentation focused on the role of media and communication in building climate resilience amongst communities. She emphasized on the importance of media and communication for providing information and knowledge to vulnerable communities for creating awareness about climate resilient options such as early warning systems, coping mechanisms, alternate livelihoods and sustainable practices. She further explained that media and communication can support climate change and disaster risk resilience among communities by:

- Improving confidence
- Building skills
- Sparking innovation for new adaptation options
- Exploring social norms for redefining hidden indigenous knowledge
- Enabling interpersonal discussion for prompting practical learning through exchange of dialogue and experiences
- Promoting public dialogue
- Enhancing accountability

Ms. Banaji appreciated Development Alternative's work in climate change communication at the grassroots. She concluded by mentioning BBC Media Action's work on a research project called 'Climate Asia'. This is the largest research study into people's understanding and experiences of climate change in Asia. Over 33,000 interviews have been conducted across seven countries: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam. Using this data, a range of tools have been designed for governments, donors, media and NGOs to use so they can better support people to adapt to climate change.

**Speaker 3: Mr. J. Srinath, Principal Scientist, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation**

**Topic: Use of ICTs to Foster Climate Resilience among Rural Communities**

Mr. Srinath, Principal Scientist at MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) has in-depth knowledge on water resources development, management and governance.

He discussed the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) as a driving engine for socio-economic development in vulnerable parts of the world. He shared his organisation's three tier knowledge model (Hub and Spoke's Model) consisting of national level hubs, block level hubs and village resource centres. MSSRF has set up 15 Village Resource Centres (VRCs) and 75 Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) in the southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Kerala. The village knowledge centres are managed by the local rural communities. Knowledge services are provided across various thematic areas such as agriculture, animal husbandry, education, health, fisheries,



due to high temperature beneficial insects die which leads to more damages to crop

horticulture, disaster management, microenterprises and civic services. Use of fisher friend mobile application and regional fish calendars for ensuring sea safety for fishermen along with ICT based advisories for farmers are some of the ICT based initiatives undertaken by MSSRF at the grassroots level. Mr. J. Srinath emphasised that since no single ICT solution can deliver all the necessary capabilities required for human development, multiplicity of ICT solutions are required.

**Speaker 4: Mr. Girish Jathar, Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR)**

**Topic: Communication Needs for Climate Change Adaptation - WOTR's Perspectives**

Mr. Girish Jathar is a member of WOTR's Climate Science Team. He is a skilled facilitator helping communities understand the science of climate change. He conducts trainings, workshops and courses for rural communities along with national and international trainings on climate change adaptation, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction.

Mr. Jathar shared that the Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) works with the vision of 'water for all'. The organization established in 1993 is currently working in six states in India with the aim of empowering vulnerable communities alleviate their poverty through participatory watershed development and management. WOTR has developed a climate smart strategy for sustainable development using the watershed approach. The Climate Change Adaptation project of WOTR is being implemented in 65 villages of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh covering an area of 40,734 ha (407 sq. kms), directly benefitting 63,282 people from over 11,979 households.



The organisation's 'CoDrIVE – Visual Integrator' is a community mapping tool that combines indigenous spatial knowledge with topographical and other geophysical information to produce a scaled relief model of the local domain. CoDrIVE – Visual Integrator has emerged as an effective tool for indigenous community-based resource conservation and planning, territorial conflict mediation and disaster risk reduction, among other uses pertaining to land and natural resources in developing countries. Mr. Jathar also mentioned the community based agromet advisory services that WOTR has established for information dissemination on locale specific weather conditions to the farmers. He emphasised that his organisation believes in communicating at the local level using local language and providing simplified information to the communities.

## Session 1 Summary

The session chair Dr. K.R. Viswanathan congratulated both MSSRF and WOTR for their commendable efforts at the grassroots level. He said that such efforts opened new gateways for communication and information dissemination. He added that new and innovative ideas like agro met advisories are required for impactful climate change communication at the grassroots level.

The panelists emphasised the need for scientific information to be simplified in ways that can be easily understood by the communities. It was stated that media needs to communicate climate change adaptation options in ways which leads to behaviour change. In order to achieve this, pilot projects being conducted in different parts of the country should be scaled up using the power of community media tools such as community radios.



## Session 2: Community Radio - An Effective Medium for Communicating Climate Change at the Grassroots

The 2<sup>nd</sup> session was chaired by Ms. Ravina Aggarwal, Program Officer, FORD Foundation.

This session advocated the importance of community radio in meeting the information needs of local communities for climate change risk reduction and disaster management. Currently community radio is at a nascent stage. It requires support and handholding for building alliances and strategic partnerships.

### **Speaker 1: Neelam Ahluwalia - Knowledge Communication Manager, Development Alternatives**

#### **Topic: Presentation on the CDKN Shubh Kal Pilot Project - 'From Information to Knowledge and Action'**

Ms. Ahluwalia started her presentation by highlighting the importance of communication in motivating communities to adapt to climate change. She stated that climate change communication at the grassroots is crucial on account of the following factors:

- Rural communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change have extremely low adaptive capacities to deal with climate variabilities
- Lack of information about climate change adaptation options
- Resistance on the part of communities to change
- Challenges in communicating scientific knowledge to the community in a simplified manner
- Inadequate influence of voices from the ground in policy development



She talked about the Shubh Kal campaign, the climate change communication campaign launched by Development Alternatives in the year 2008 with the aim of helping rural communities build their resilience in the face of change. This campaign for a better future has used the community radio along with traditional forms of rural communication such as street plays, painting competitions, folk songs etc. to provide information regarding adaptation options to the rural communities. The strategy has been focused on using an infotainment approach to communicate so as to keep the audience engaged. She shared the current focus of the campaign in which Development Alternatives has scaled up the Shubh Kal campaign from 100 villages to 400 villages. The CDKN Shubh Kal pilot initiative – 'From

Information to Knowledge and Action' has seen Radio Bundelkhand partner with three other radio stations in Bundelkhand to:

- Build capacities of local community radio journalists in climate change reporting
- Pilot a communication model using community radios for bridging the gap between communities, scientists and government officials

Ms. Ahluwalia shared a short 6 minute film on the capacity building process of the radio reporters in climate change journalism and then shared a short two minute audio clip on one of the radio programmes made on water conservation measures to give the workshop participants an idea of how the radio reporters used the infotainment approach to communicate climate change messages in simple, easy to understand ways.



Ms. Ahluwalia explained the climate change communication model that was piloted on the ground in this action research project. She talked about how 35 community radio reporters trained in climate change journalism from four radio stations produced and disseminated more than 50 radio programmes on different aspects of climate change reaching out to more than 4,00,000 rural communities in 400 villages across four districts of Bundelkhand. These radio reporters served as an effective two way communication link at the grassroots between farmers, government line department officials and scientific experts from agriculture extension agencies such as Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). She mentioned how this model has proved to be a real success on the ground by:

- Strengthening community knowledge and voices on climate change impacts and adaptation by enabling communities to share their experiences in coping with and adapting to climate change
- Increasing awareness of the scientific community and government authorities on how climate change is impacting local development
- Addressing concerns of the farming community by bringing their queries and concerns to the scientists and line department government officials
- Disseminating information from the scientists and the government officials on adaptation options and relevant government schemes to the farming community



Due to the efforts made under this pilot project, voices from the ground have been communicated through radio reporters to state and national level scientists and policy makers during various regional and national climate change workshops. KVKs and agriculture line departments have signed formal partnership letters with radio stations for further collaboration beyond the pilot project to use community radios for disseminating information regarding adaptation options and government schemes to the rural communities. Ms. Ahluwalia stated that this pilot project has resulted in the beginning of the sensitisation process of climate change adaptation among the communities. She shared success stories

of some listeners who have got motivated to use organic fertilizers, build farm ponds for water conservation and avail government schemes on biogas.

She mentioned some of the lessons learned from this pilot initiative. They are mentioned as under:

- Capacities of village panchayats (local governing body) and local level authorities in understanding complexities related to climate change need to be built
- Capacity building process of radio reporters in climate change journalism has to be a continuous process of guidance and training
- Enabling behavior change of the community for climate change adaptation requires the production and dissemination of more shows for a longer time period

Ms. Ahluwalia also invited community radio representatives (reporters and station managers) from the four participating radio shows during her session to share their experiences regarding this pilot initiative. Ms. Baby Raja, station manager of Radio Dhadkan mentioned that prior to this project, her reporters did not understand the concept of climate change properly. The climate change workshops and the guidance and constant feedback given by the CDKN Shubh team in making the radio programmes has helped her radio reporters in improving their knowledge on various themes related to climate change. Ms. Baby Raja also mentioned that she has seen a marked improvement in the journalism skills of her radio reporters which is reflected in the better quality of programmes being made in other thematic areas as well. She stated that the magazine format that was adopted in the making of the Shubh Kal shows is being used by her reporters for making other shows as well.



Mr. Sitaram – radio reporter from Lalit Lokwani shared the success story of how villagers in Aaravni village in the Lalitpur district got motivated to build farm ponds after listening to radio programmes on water conservation measures. He mentioned how they had established very strong links with the KVK scientists in Lalitpur during the making of the 12 episodes of Shubh Kal.



Mr. Rampal, radio reporter from Radio Bundelkhand shared some of the challenges faced by radio reporters during the production of radio programmes such as difficulty in getting appointment with the scientists and government officials. He also mentioned that these challenges have helped him become a better reporter and learn more about the impacts of climate change at the local level. Being from a farming family, he applies many of the adaptation measures suggested by the scientists in his own fields.



Mr. Rampal stated that the Shubh Kal pilot project gave him the opportunity to take the indigenous knowledge of his community to the scientists. He shared the experience of taking Prakash Kushwaha, one of his farmer friends who had learnt how to make amrit mitti (a type of organic compost) listening to a Shubh Kal programme to do a live demonstration of the same to a group of farmers in two Krishi Vigyan Centres (agriculture extension centres) in different districts – one in Jhansi and the other in the nearby Shivpuri district. Mr. Rampal expressed that he felt very happy when Mr. Bhargav, the Krishi Vigyan Centre head scientist at Shivpuri said that the KVK scientists would promote this indigenous knowledge of the farmers regarding organic fertilizers in all the villages in Shivpuri district.

Mr. Swadesh, station manager, Chanderi ki Awaaz shared that working with three other radio stations in the region was a great learning experience for his team. Initially in the making of the first 7 - 8 episodes, the station managers and reporters from all the four radio stations would meet once a month for a feedback and review workshop with the CDKN Shubh Kal team from Development Alternatives. These feedback sessions were very useful as they would get feedback from their fellow radio reporters from the other radio stations as well which helped improve the quality of the radio programmes made. The suggestions given to make the radio dramas more interesting were very useful.



Mr. Swadesh also expressed that during the making of the Shubh Kal shows, his reporters learnt how to make the scientist-community-government connect effectively. His radio reporters had not interviewed experts before for any other radio shows. The Shubh Kal pilot project has given his team a chance to develop strong ties with the local line department government officials. On the other hand, the broadcasting and narrowcasting of Shubh Kal

programmes have helped increase their radio's popularity and listener base in the community.

The representatives from all the four radio stations admitted that the popularity of Shubh Kal shows has convinced them to continue the production and broadcasting of radio shows even after the closure of this pilot project.

Ms. Ahluwalia ended the presentation by sharing a short film titled 'Voices from the Ground' in which the stakeholders involved in the project – the radio reporters, farmers and experts expressed their views on the pilot initiative. She talked about the way forward by:

- Building on the partnership established with local scientific organisations and government departments to continue production and dissemination of the Shubh Kal shows
- Scaling up this communication model in other climate sensitive regions in the Asia Pacific through capacity building of other community radios in climate change reporting
- Using this communication model for other themes – water & sanitation, governance & entitlement, health & nutrition

**Speaker 2: Mr. Ashish Sen - President, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)**

**Topic: Community Radio, Climate Change and Disaster- Experiences and Challenges from the Asia Pacific region**

Mr. Sen has been actively involved in communication for development for the past 30 years as a media consultant, educator, practitioner and independent journalist. Mr. Sen is also the editor of CR News, a newsletter produced by the UNESCO Chair on community media. Mr. Sen discussed three core factors which are extremely important for strengthening community radios across the world.



**Existence:** This aspect focussed on the sustenance of community radio in today's world of advanced technology.

**Content:** Community radios need constant and continuous support in terms of capacity building for reporting on complex issues such as climate change and disaster management.

**Impact:** The impact of community radio has to be multiplied by using the power of networking. This can be made possible by providing community radios with sharing and learning platforms. The efforts can also be upscaled by combining community radio with new technologies of mass communication. Using examples from the Asia Pacific region, Mr. Sen elaborated on disaster management strategies which can utilise community radio for

emergency relief during disasters. There is also a need for more collaboration with meteorological stations.

He also emphasised on the provision of emergency relief funds for community radios during disasters. He talked about the need for special programs on women, children and elderly during disasters. Lastly, he concluded by saying that in order to cope up with disasters there is an additional need of programmes on trauma healing.

**Speaker 3: Mr. Osama Manzar - Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation**

**Topic: Integrating Mobile Phones in the Communication Strategy of Community Media**

Mr. Manzar started the Digital Empowerment Foundation in 2003 in an attempt to overcome the information barrier between India & Bharat. He is the Chairman of the Manthan Award and the mBillionth Award. Mr. Manzar shared his experiences of working with community radios in the South Asian region. He shared that climate change is deeply rooted in our lives and affects us disproportionately. Its impacts are amplified at the grassroots level. In order to minimise the risks associated



with climate change and disaster, we need to bring together different sectoral departments of the government. Community radio can play an important role in providing this link between local communities and the government officials. Mr. Manzar emphasised that community media should integrate mobile phones in their communication strategy. Mobile phones can easily be used to replicate and transfer information within minutes.

**Speaker 4: Tom Tanner - Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex, United Kingdom**

**Topic: A community radio initiative from Ghana**

Mr. Tom Tanner could not be present personally but shared a video based power point presentation. His video based presentation focused on the work done by IDS in testing the role that community radios can play to bridge the climate change knowledge gap between rural communities, scientists and government officials in Ghana, Africa. He described how the focus of



their pilot project was to make the communities feel ownership and involvement in the knowledge sharing process. The project created a space for the members of the community to challenge existing ideas and power structures that impede their ability to adapt to climate change. The presentation also highlighted the gender awareness approach adopted by them in Ghana to strengthen capacities of rural women.

Mr. Tom Tanner talked about the importance of building institutional capacities and not just providing skills and information. The final part of the presentation focused on how to adapt to local needs while simultaneously going global with the project. Mr. Tanner described the importance of making climate change programs and information in locally appropriate terminology. The team in Ghana developed a climate change glossary in the local language which was critical for the community engagement process. He commented that in Ghana the radio reporters did not manage to make strong connections with the local scientists as has been done in Bundelkhand under the CDKN pilot initiative.

## Session 2 Summary

The second session was summarised by the chair, Ms. Ravina Aggarwal. She stated that in order to inform rural communities, it is important to strengthen and support alternative and independent community media. We also need to record the indigenous knowledge of the communities. This will help us protect the traditional knowledge at the grassroots level. The participants also gave their suggestions and emphasised on the need for networking which gives opportunities for knowledge sharing and horizontal circulation of ideas among various stakeholders. It was recommended that in addition to content sharing, it is also important to focus on process sharing.



### Session 3: Policy Imperatives for Strengthening Climate Change Communication

The session was chaired by Dr. B.P. Singh, Head - National Council for Science and Technology Communication, Department of Science & Technology (DST). The session discussed the policy imperatives for the use of community radio in climate change communications. Policy recommendations were suggested by different speakers to support the sustenance of community radio.

**Speaker 1: Gazala Gulamhussain Shaikh**  
**Manager - Policy Advocacy, Development Alternatives**

**Topic: Mainstreaming Climate Change Communication into Planning Processes**

Ms. Sheikh highlighted the key points for mainstreaming climate change communication into the current planning processes. She expressed her apprehension that even today climate change communication is low on priority in the development agenda due to which budget allocation for climate change communication issues is taking place in silos. She explained that the object of her policy research is to identify information gaps in linkages between grassroots action, scientific knowledge and policy making in order to address issues of climate change. Limited and unreliable data is a barrier to recommending robust adaptation options. To allow for better outreach of climate adaptation information and schemes, she recommended that additional Rural Agriculture Extension Officers (RAEOs) should be made available to reduce the number of villages and area each officer is currently responsible for. She also emphasized that there is an urgent need to incorporate climate change capacity building modules for Technical Support Groups (TSGs) into state planning guidelines. This will require bringing in investments by government & donors to strengthen & expand the ability of existing institutions.



**Speaker 2: Dr. B.P. Singh, Head - National Council for Science and Technology Communication, Department of Science & Technology (DST)**

**Topic: Collaborations between DST and the NGO Community for Strengthening Grassroots Communication**

Dr B P Singh mentioned that science and technology is a major vehicle for the development of the country. In 1958, the Science Policy Resolution was accepted in the Lok Sabha. After realizing that science popularization is a one way approach as no feedback is received from the audience, the word popularization was changed to communication. He added that in order to engage the common people with science, Jathas were established which spread information directly to the people by word of mouth. Eg. Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha.



Some of the other efforts made by DST include Children National Science Project, Flagship Programmes for communicating adolescent health and nutrition. He also added that community radio is one of the strongest means to reach out to rural communities. Dr. Singh announced that DST would like to collaborate with Development Alternatives for strengthening community radio for climate change advocacy at the grassroots. The association would help to:

- Train radio reporters for reporting on issues relevant to local needs of communities
- Design models to sustain community radios

He also mentioned that when it comes to developmental work at the grassroots, speed of response is much faster in NGOs as compared to government organizations. Therefore collaboration between NGOs like Development Alternatives and government agencies like DST needs to be strengthened for effective implementation at the ground level.

**Speaker 3: Ms. Venu Arora – Director of Projects, Ideosync Media Combine**

**Topic: Strengthening Communication Strategy for Community Radios**

Ms Arora is the Director of Projects at the Ideosync Media Combine Communications. She has extensive experience in innovating for participatory communication for social change and evaluation. Besides being a consultant and development communication trainer, she is also a filmmaker and specialist in planning, design and execution of integrated communication strategies for multi-sectoral development initiatives with special emphasis on health and gender related work. Ms. Arora elucidated that development is all about hearing voices from the grassroots. Community radio is the vehicle for these voices. The process of explaining climate change to communities is difficult because of the complexity of the issue. She made the following recommendations to strengthen climate change communication at the grassroots:

- Training of community radio journalists in knowledge of their rights and panchayats(village level governance bodies) who facilitates these rights
- Developing and implementing policies that look into vernacular vocabulary for climate change
- A bottom-up approach for community radio wherein the linear progression of scientific findings takes place by community radio reporters
- Strengthening of infrastructure for existing community radios and subsidizing alternate infrastructure is needed in case of disasters and emergencies

**Speaker 4: Ms. Rukmini Vemraju, Programme Officer (Livelihoods and Health), Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)**

**Topic: Policy Recommendations for Strengthening Community Radios**

Ms Vemraju with a background in communication and educational technology comes with vast experience in educational technology design, development and research. At CEMCA (Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia) she is the Programme Officer for Livelihoods and Health. She stated that community radio has a huge role to play in communicating climate change at the grassroots as the information gap that exists in rural areas is huge. NGOs like CEMCA and Development Alternatives can play an effective role in capacity building of community radio reporters in understanding and communicating climate change information in simplified ways. Some of the policy suggestions made by Ms Vemraju are as follows:

- Relax geographic policies
- Allow interest based radios to flourish
- Relax time frame for renewal of licenses

**Speaker 5: Ms. Supriya Sahu, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting**

**Topic: Policy Changes for Strengthening the Community Radio Movement in India**

Ms. Sahu has been actively driving the community radio policy in India. She is well aware of the challenges faced by community radios. She stated that we under estimate the capacity of communities to understand scientific terminologies. The terminologies of science aren't holding communities back, the policies are. It has been experienced that given the opportunity, communities have the inherent capacity to do anything. Also, the engagement with communities needs to be on a continuous basis, not as it is in the culture of tokenism. She also added that authoritative communication (top down communication) is not the right way of communicating to the communities. These barriers can be easily broken by community radios. The 12<sup>th</sup> plan has a new scheme for community radios (CRs) which includes the following components:

- 50% financial support will be provided by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to NGOs wanting to setup CRs. The idea is that the communities and ministries will have equal contribution in financial sustenance of the community radio
- There will be allocation of funds for innovative projects for grassroots communication

She welcomed Development Alternatives to be a partner in information dissemination on various issues using community radios. She also responded to the comments from the participants and gave the following clarifications:

1. Subsidy on transmitters' taxes: The taxes are high on imported transmitters, not locally made transmitters. However, if there are any taxes which can be reduced, they may be pointed out for revision.
2. Free messages on private owned radio stations under 'Corporate Social Responsibility': Radio guidelines specify that all radio stations need to air 1 hour of public service messages in 24 hours.
3. Radio for emergency situations:
  - a. The working group has suggested an allocation of Rs 100 crores for 5 years for setting up community radios in disaster prone areas
  - b. A committee is working on benchmarking equipment which can be picked from a catalogue during disaster situations

4. Mobile Transmitters: Provisions are being made by the Ministry to allocate one frequency which can be used by individuals during disasters
5. Technical issues: (mobile & radio sets getting affected in disaster situations) - Locate a radio in a safe place away from impact of disasters for times of emergency which can serve as the focal point of information for people
6. Government ministries can only give the theme of the content and not the content itself if they fund a programme.
7. Around 152 community radios are running in India and 400 are lined for licenses. 50 new community radios will be running by the beginning of next year.

#### **Closing Remarks: Mr. George C. Varughese - President, Development Alternatives**

Mr. Varughese stated that the discussions at this workshop have highlighted that there is need to link content in ways so that it reaches the classes and masses equally well. Vernacular terms for science are not required as graphics today are replacing terminologies, which is eradicating the mammoth language barrier and demystifying science for the illiterate. The technology solutions that we have can help us greatly in overcoming challenges of explaining complex global phenomenon such as climate change by using the right kind of technology at the right time, and blending new technology and older solutions. He also emphasized on the need to design a delivery model which can scale up Information to Knowledge and Action. The partnerships can be multiplied by networking with CSOs, NGOs, government bodies and community radios. There is need to create an ecosystem with this network to back up communication with services. He also mentioned the financial and technical support required by community radios. He also expressed that the key highlight of this workshop's learning is that in order to create awareness about climate change concerns the messenger has to effectively communicate the message - an issue which needs to be delicately addressed through climate change capacity building at all levels. He concluded by thanking the participants for making this workshop a huge success.

## Background Note for the National Workshop

The impacts of climate change are already occurring around the world and are likely to pose greater threats in the future. Local communities from vulnerable regions in particular need to adapt to increase their resilience in the face of change. While many research initiatives are studying impacts of climate change on



communities and packaging adaptation models in India and other developing nations in South Asia, studies suggest that research being conducted has had limited success in being taken up at the local level, partly due to challenges of communicating scientific research in ways that are appropriate for local stakeholders and failure to meaningfully engage existing local institutions and cultural practices. Another concern is that vulnerable communities in climate sensitive rural areas are poorly linked to scientific researchers and policy makers. Limited research currently exists on how to develop strong communication models for multi-stakeholder engagement and exchange of information on climate change adaptation.

A pilot initiative 'Shubh Kal (for a better future) - From Information to Knowledge and Action' was launched last year in Bundelkhand, an extremely drought prone and climate sensitive region of Central India to test an innovative communication model using community radios. The project has created a new space for dialogue between scientists, communities and local government authorities to exchange information about climate change impacts and advocate responses which address local communities' needs.

The one day national workshop on climate change communication being organised by Development Alternatives with support from the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) aims to share findings of this pilot project with the larger climate change and communication community.

The workshop will discuss:

- information needs for climate change
- role of new and innovative media such as community radios for communicating climate change issues
- policy imperatives for strengthening community based communication at the grassroots

The deliberations among diverse participants will facilitate strengthening of existing networks for sharing information and practices leading to strategising on how to reduce existing knowledge gaps in the area of climate change communication.

In order to address climate change sensitivities in the most vulnerable and weakest sections of the society, it is imperative to communicate climate change in messages which are locally relevant and easy to comprehend. Up scaling locally designed adaptation measures and indigenous knowledge of communities requires the involvement of climate change communication in relevant policies and institutional mechanisms. Another concern that needs to be addressed is the facilitation of association between communities, scientists and policymakers so that voices from the ground can be integrated into research and policies. It is imperative to maintain the right balance of top-down and bottom-up approach in the planning process.

The challenge is not only to deal with existing vulnerabilities but also to cope with additional threats posed by climate change in the coming future. This can be facilitated by:

- Connecting (with the communities directly facing the brunt of climate change)
- Communicating (to inform the decision makers about experiences of communities dealing with the impacts of climate change)
- Collaborating (between the government departments for effective knowledge management thus streamlining adaptation options)

Additionally to cope with climate variability in the vulnerable regions, new investments by the government and donors are needed to strengthen and expand the ability of existing interface institutions. This will help the existing networks and institutions to integrate a wide range of information for climate change adaptation and translate this information into more decision-relevant forms. In places where such institutions are absent, there is need for government and donors to consider creating interface institutions to fill this niche.

Lastly to facilitate implementation of adaptation measures, it is important to communicate appropriate and relevant climate change information to the right audience at the right time. Climate change communication thus forms the backbone of climate change adaptation and adaptive planning. Therefore, there is strong need for climate change communications which will not only create awareness but will also prepare communities to increase their resilience in the face of change. Community radio has proved to be an effective medium to bridge the climate change knowledge gap that exists between communities, scientists and local government authorities. The inclusive yet localised approach of community radio makes it an important tool for meeting the information needs of local communities and supporting communities in adapting to climate change.

## Agenda for the National Workshop

Time	Theme	Resource Persons	
9:20 - 9:30	<b>Introduction to the day</b>	Mr. Anand Kumar	Associate Director, Development Alternatives
9:30 - 9:45	<b>Opening Remarks</b>	Dr. Ashok Khosla	Chairman, Development Alternatives
<b>1st Session: Information and Communication Needs for Climate Change</b>			
9:45 - 10:00	<b>Introduction to Climate Change Communication Needs</b>	Ms. Zeenat Niazi	Vice President, Development Alternatives
10:00 - 11:00	<b>Media and Community Perspectives</b>	Mr. K.R. Viswanathan (Chair)	Deputy Head, Climate Change and Development, Embassy of Switzerland
		Mr. Joydeep Gupta	Director, thethirdpole.net
		Ms. Ferzina Banaji	Head of Programme Development, BBC World Service Trust
		Mr. J. Srinath	Principal Scientist, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai
		Mr. Girish Jathar	Manager, Climate Science Team, WOTR, Pune
11:00 - 11:30	<b>Tea</b>		
<b>2nd Session: Community Radio - An Effective Medium for Communicating Climate Change at the Grassroots</b>			
11:30 - 12:15	<b>Presentation on the Shubh Kal Pilot Project</b>	Ms. Neelam Ahluwalia	Knowledge Communication Manager, Development Alternatives
12:15 - 12:30	<b>Radio Reporters Perspectives</b>	Ms. Babyraja, Mr. Swadesh, Mr. Rampal, Mr. Sitaram	Radio Station Managers and Reporters
12:30 - 13:30	<b>Community Radio as a Communication Medium</b>	Ms. Ravina Aggarwal (Chair)	Program Officer, FORD Foundation
		Mr. Osama Manzar	Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation
		Mr. Ashish Sen	President, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)
		Mr. Thomas Tanner	Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), London
13:30 - 14:30	<b>Lunch</b>		

<b>3rd Session: Policy Imperatives for Strengthening Climate Change Communication</b>			
14:30 - 15:00	<b>Policy Recommendations for Climate Change Communication</b>	Ms. Gazala Gulamhussain Shaikh	Manager - Policy Advocacy, Development Alternatives
15:00 - 16:45	<b>Policy Framework for Community based Communication</b>	Ms. Supriya Sahu (Chair)	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB)
		Dr. B.P. Singh	Head, National Council for Science and Technology Communication, Department of Science & Technology (DST)
		Ms. Venu Arora	Director, Ideosync Media Combine
		Ms. D. Rukmini Vemraju	Programme Officer (Livelihoods & Health), Commonwealth Educational Media Centre For Asia (CEMCA)
16:45 - 17:00	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	Mr. George C. Varughese	President, Development Alternatives
<b>17:00</b>	<b>High Tea</b>		

## About the participant groups



**Environment Planning and Coordination Organization (EPCO), Government of Madhya Pradesh** is registered under the Housing and Environment Department of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. It connects government as well as non-government agencies in solving environmental problems. <http://www.epco.in/>



**The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, UK** is a leading global organisation for research, teaching and communication on international development. It acts as a development research and knowledge hub, connecting and convening networks throughout the world. <http://www.ids.ac.uk/>



**Kings College London, Humanitarian Futures Group** - The Humanitarian Futures Programme (HFP), works to support organisations with humanitarian roles and responsibilities to effectively anticipate and prepare for long term future crises. [www.humanitarianfutures.org/](http://www.humanitarianfutures.org/)



**Third Pole Project** is a joint project of the Internews Earth Journalism Network and the bilingual environment news website chinadialogue.net that seeks to improve coverage of climate change issues in the Himalayan region and downstream. The Third Pole – based in New Delhi, Beijing, London and San Diego – designs curriculum and carries out media capacity building and training workshops for local and regional groups across Asia. [www.thethirdpole.net/](http://www.thethirdpole.net/)



**Development Alternatives (DA)** is India's leading civil society organization engaged in research and development. DA set up the first Community Radio in the Central Indian region of Bundelkhand. <http://www.devalt.org/>

### Supported by:



**Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)** supports decision-makers in designing and delivering climate compatible developments by combining research, advisory services and knowledge management in support of locally owned and managed policy processes. [www.cdkn.org](http://www.cdkn.org)

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