

APPENDIX C – INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT (REPORTING TEMPLATE)

Interim Narrative Report: Community Network Learning Grant & Peer Grant

Name of Organization: Gram Marg, IIT Bombay and BAIF Development

Date Submitted: 26/10/2019

Country: India

Name of person who completed the report: Sarbani Banerjee Belur

Please answer the following questions briefly and submit the **interim narrative report no later than 31 October 2019**. Please limit your report to a maximum of 8-10 pages. If you want to send any additional information attach it as appendices. We also understand that you might not have all the information needed for this report, therefore it would be helpful if you can answer as best you can, and specifically on the two sections: 1) Objectives and 2) Activities.

A. Administrative information

Community Network name: Gram Marg and BAIF Pathardi Community Network

Name of two community network learning grant members:

- 1) Sarbani Banerjee Belur
- 2) Ramprasad V

Project period: 18 March 2019 – 31 October 2019

B. Project report

1. Objectives

Please write down the objectives of your community network learning grant and explain briefly how you think the project contributed to achieving your objective. Provide any evidence that you have that your objective was (partly or wholly) achieved.

The two objectives of the Pathfinder peer grant are the following:

- To stabilise the network connectivity in Pathardi village comprising of 5 hamlets.

This objective has been partially achieved. The Radio Frequency planning is complete and we now know the exact location where we are going to set up towers and the devices. We are in the last stage of this and we are hoping that by the week of 10 Nov we will be able to start the network deployment.

- To train the women in the community about digital skills and they in turn would go around the village to train the others in the village. The main aim of this objective would be to adopt a women driven approach to bring about digital ecosystem in Pathardi village.


PRASANNA CHAPORKAR
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY
POWAI MUMBAI-400076



We have achieved this objective in totality. I will share pictures of Anjali as well as a video. Anjali as a banking correspondent is doing very well. The links to the photos and videos about Anjali's banking activities in the village is shared below. After she has become the banking correspondent, people in the village do not have to travel long distances to withdraw cash, check their bank balance. Anjali generates her income by charging a certain amount from the services like mobile phone recharges, bill payments, cash withdrawal etc. The total turnover from banking transactions in the months of July, August, September is INR 2,287,72 or USD 3,188 and she has generated a total income of INR 8115 or USD 114 in the three months. We are also inducting Ms. Monica Pawar as a Village Level Entrepreneur. Both of them are known as E-Dosts in our community network. E-Dosts are digital friends in the village.

Please also list any objectives and those which are still to be met within this period. Feel free to attach or refer to your monthly monitoring reports.

Objective	Project contribution
<p><i>Strengthen the community networks movement through peer learning and capacity building</i></p>	<p>We contributed to this objective through the following activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visited Janastu community network and learnt a lot about intranet mesh network, the relevance of community radio and community entrepreneurship models that can help in sustaining the network. - We also conducted a technical training of women from our community network. This was a two day training in which the local women learned about how the network can be set up, what entails for the operation and maintenance of the network and how people in the community can contribute to the upkeep of the network. This was a part of our activity on capacity building. - We learnt a lot from Janastu community network and want to implement a lot of things from our learnings. We are planning to implement the community radio in our community network at Pathardi village. The backpack version of the community radio can be used by the digital correspondent Anjali to broadcast to the village where she would be stationed for that day in the village. This will reduce her walking from house to house and asking if people in the village need any assistance with egov services. She is also enabling the banking facilities in the village. The community radio will help her in this. We are also going to use the application built by Janastu for the local access server. Through this application the contents in the server can be viewed as well as shared by people in the village through their smartphone. Janastu will also help us in the offline intranet mesh network and train the villagers about the operation and maintenance.
<p><i>Enable the creation of new community networks via awareness raising and</i></p>	<p>In the course of time that we are working in Pathardi, we are also building a blue print of how to seed the growth of community networks in such type of villages like Pathardi which are located in remote corners. This will help us in replicating this model in many</p>



 PRASANNA CHAPORKAR

 PROFESSOR

 DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

 INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY

 POWAI MUMBAI-400076

<p><i>movement building.</i></p>	<p>more villages.</p> <p>As a part of the movement building, we are constantly communicating with the village administration and the tribal department to help finance connectivity in the village local self government office.</p> <p>Many more villages are now coming forward to understand how their villages too can seed the growth of community networks and use the connectivity meaningfully. In this direction, we are creating eDosts (or digital friends) within the village. These eDosts are youths from within the village who have some IT training. We are giving preference to girls for a basic reason that they can help the women in the village in learning digital skills. We found that most of the women in the village are hesitant to learn digital skills from men.</p> <p>We are also discussing with the district administration to begin funding the connectivity at the village local self government office. We are also discussing with the local ISPs to reach the last mile. Other options like cable TV operators, local youth in the village are being asked to become entrepreneurs who can take the connectivity to the villages and communities.</p>
<p>Support innovative technology use and approaches that enable scaling and sustainability of community networks</p>	<p>We are supporting innovative technology use by adopting a mix and match of technologies like community radios, offline intranet mesh network, online support center for the use of the village community, developing applications for sharing and accessing content from the local access server.</p> <p>On the sustainability of community networks we are working on the Public-Private-Panchayat partnership model in greater detail. We are working with private telecom operators to enable connectivity in the remote rural villages as well as local ISPs. For sustainability of the network income generation through online and off connectivity is very essential. We are working on enabling various entrepreneurship models. These entrepreneurship models will help us in making the network sustainable. We looked into the ground realities and have developed the entrepreneurship models based on them. We found that the community artisans and crafters face the problem of marketability of their art and craft and lack of resources to make the art and crafts. So Gram Marg and BAIF called for a meeting and discussed with the artisans how we can help them in becoming entrepreneurs. From the discussion we came out with two different models which we are rolling out on the field currently. One model is the family run entrepreneurship model and the other is the group entrepreneurship model. In the family run entrepreneurship model, families which are involved in the domain of art and crafts are selected and they are asked to make things which are bought by us. In the group run entrepreneurship model, many like minded people gather in a</p>

PRASANNA CHAPURKAR
 PROFESSOR
 DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
 INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY
 POWAI MUMBAI-400076

	group and make the products. The reason why different types of models are adopted, is to see how each model fares and what are the pros and cons of adopting such models. It is also observed that most of the arts and crafts being traditional are passed down from one generation to the other. Thus the secrets are not shared with others. Thus the family run model of entrepreneurship model is being tested on the field.
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2. Activities

Please list the activities that were planned for the year (including monthly online dialogue, travel exchanges, country policy profiles, for example) and explain (one by one) the results of each activity. Highlight positive and negative aspects of the activities. Highlight ways in which what you did was different from what was planned. Give reasons if you did not do the activity or you changed the activity in any way.

Activity	Results	Comments & changes
Actively participate in the peer online dialogue between grant members in Asia region and across grant members in the other two regions.	Positive	<p>We have not visited any other peers except Janastu. This is because of the fact that we had such a lot of things to do in our own project itself that travel was just not possible. Both IIT Bombay and BAIF has a lot of processes to follow for releasing funds for the project. We need to follow up each day which has made it difficult for us to travel to other CNs.</p> <p>The online peer meetings with Talant has also been a good way to share ideas and see convergence with other Asia peers.</p>
In the case of self-identified women on the team, actively participate in peer online dialogue with the global group of women within community networks.	Highly positive	<p>Sarbani from the Gram Marg team has been actively collaborating with Janastu to work on women and access. She is also participating in the Gender and access BPF at IGF 2019. She has also written an article for GenderIT. This article has been written based on case studies of women entrepreneurs in Gram Marg and Janastu villages.</p> <p>The telegram group set up for the CN women has been a good gesture for sharing our thoughts and activities around gender in community networks. It has been very interesting to be a part of this group and see commonalities between women from different parts of the world. One thing that I have felt being in this group is to see how we think similarly and face similar situations in our own</p>

		work and community interactions.
Engage intravel peer exchanges with other grant members in Asia region. This entails both participating in travel visits to the community networks of other grant members, as well as hosting regional grant members.	Highly positive	<p>Yes both the members i.e Sarbani and Ramprasad have visited Janastu community network. Janastu members have also visited us.</p> <p>We are going to hold a multistakeholder meeting on the 7-8 of Dec in our community network at Pathardi. This meeting will be held along with the community, the district administration, the tribal department, relevant ground partners such as NGOs etc. APC Peers are invited for this event. Talant, Gustaff, Michael and Shalini will be participating. This is going to be a two day event. In the first day, we will be This would be an event where we are inviting all the stakeholders from state and district administration to the tribal administration, the NGOs and other organisations working in the field on various projects related to rural development. This event is going to be more of the local community talking about their needs and how their needs are being catered to by the connectivity enabled to them.</p> <p>The second day of the event i.e on 7th Dec is going to be fieldwork where we are all going to be involved with the people in the community and helping them in some way or the other in their day to day lives. We will be making mud huts, helping them in paddy threshing, drawing water from the well, herding cattle, cooking after collecting firewood, learning their local culture like Warli painting, paper mache masks, bamboo crafts etc. We plan to have a bonfire in the night, star-gazing and cooking together.</p> <p>Gram Marg and BAIF will also participate in CNX and multistakeholder event to be conducted by Janastu.</p> <p>After the CNX, we plan to visit Myanmar Community Network (ASORCOM). This visit was scheduled to be in the first week of November. But then we postponed it as we needed to apply for the German Visa to attend IGF at Berlin. Now the visit is scheduled to be after the CNX ie after 17th of Dec, 2019.</p>
Engage in grant writing and future planning activities and prepare a final proposal	Positive	GramMarg is continuously working to plan for future project activities. The APC peer grant and the BAIF catalytic grant are some of the outputs of

PRASANNA CHAPORKAR
PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY
POWAI MUMBAI-400076

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in order to access Pathfinder grant funding.		this. We aim at going deeper and deeper into understanding the sustainable model for community networks. We aim at bringing in the local government and ways by which community involvement and ownership can come about. Enabling meaningful connectivity by making a difference to the community is something that we are aiming towards.
Convene a national multi-stakeholder event to discuss community networks.	Highly positive	Gram Marg is partnering with APC, Mozilla, IIM TCOE to hold a workshop on the 2-3 Dec, 2019 in Delhi. In Pathardi we are going to hold a multistakeholder event with the local community, district administration, NGOs, tribal department on the 7-8 Dec, 2019.
Work collaboratively with the policy and regulation team to create a 'Policy and Regulation' country profile.	In progress	I am working on the Wiki page and trying to contribute as much as possible. Also, the workshop which is going to be held on the 2-3 Dec in Delhi 'Regulating for Inclusion' will bring together regulators, policy makers, advisors, academia, NGOs etc to throw light on the challenges of reaching the last mile in India.
Support the development and dissemination of learning resources that are created by community networks, in respect to recordings or media contributions.	Positive	We partnered with DEF and helped them hold a 3 day training at BAIF, Jawhar for the women in the community. This training was very enlightening for the community as they understood about the connectivity and what entails for connectivity to reach the remote village that they live in Pathardi.
Contribute to overall movement building in the Asia region, including travel for movement building activities in one national, regional or international event	Highly positive	I will be representing at IGF 2019 as one of the community network members and also as a panelist in Women and access. In the Delhi workshop on the 2-3 Dec, I will be talking about the on ground challenges of seeding the growth of community networks, how sustainability of the CN can be ensured and enabling women to become an important part of the CN.
Enabling women empowerment in community networks	Highly positive	One of the major things that our project focused on was on how women in our community network can be empowered. These women being illiterate, it was challenging. But continuous interaction with them resulted in our understanding that they can

PRASANNA CHAKRABARTY

PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY

POWAI MUMBAI-400076

Phd

		<p>work with the skills that they have. Thus began our journey to understand their skills, harnessing those skills and helping them to convert such skills into products which can be sold online.</p> <p>We have also enabled Anjali who is the banking correspondent of the village. We are also enabling Monica to become a Village Level Entrepreneur.</p>
Pathfinder peer grant activities?	Highly positive	<p>Some of the activities that we undertook as part of the pathfinder peer grant are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical training to women and girls of Pathardi community network. This training was given by DEF and it was a 3 day training. 12 women participated in the training and 5 men participated. This was a very nice training focusing on basic understanding of the connectivity from a lay man's perspective and alongside usage of connectivity. The sessions focused on both technical knowhow of the connectivity both online and offline. Shalini and Girish from Janastu too participated in this workshop and they guided the participants about Community radio and offline mesh network. • In a similar manner we also did training of identified skills amongst women related to art and craft. We conducted a one day workshop with women on Warli painting and how women can paint and sell their painting online. We did a detailed training of how to be innovative in making designs in the painting, clicking the right photos and selling it online. We also discussed with them how they can sell the paintings online, selecting the right website, how to price products and how to maintain standards. 8 women participated in this workshop. • We also identified eDosts for taking ahead the digital ecosystem work in Pathardi. 4 eDosts have been identified from 4 hamlets of Pathardi. Amongst them 2 are women and 2 are men. We gave them training and also discussed with them how they will take ahead their work in the respective hamlets from which they come. The eDost model is for the first time implemented as part of this project.

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PRASANNA CHAFUKKAR
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY
POWAI MUMBAI-400076

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After selecting the eDosts, we did a detailed Radio Frequency planning for setting up the network in Pathardi. This was a crucial achievement as this gave us an idea about how we will be setting up the connectivity in Pathardi. • Deployment agency was then contacted and quotations from them were called for. Detailed discussion about how to set up the network etc was done. • Anjali was identified as the banking correspondent in Pathardi village. Anjali was given training, facilitated with a biometric reader through Aadhar Enabled Payment System. BAIF handheld her for the initial months and slowly and steadily she picked up her tasks very well.
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4. Overall reflection

Please write a few paragraphs (300 words or less for each question) of general reflection. Write about:

* What went very well in the project - what are you especially proud of?

Overall the project is going on very well. We are happy that Anjali is the banking correspondent in the village and she is empowered. Though the online and offline network is not set up yet, the people in the village are made aware of how they are going to create and share content through the offline local access server.

The CN peer exchange has been a very good initiative too. Not many projects have this included in the project. I feel that it is an important part of any project and yet overlooked. I am happy that this project has that component within itself. I myself learned a lot from the only peer exchange that I did. This was visiting Janastu community network. Many of the learnings from Janastu has been implemented in Pathardi community network as the requirements were very similar. I wanted to undertake one more peer exchange, but could not due to paucity of time.

I am also proud of making the villagers understand how connectivity can be made sustainable by their own initiative and involvement. Also the relevance of local resources and local infrastructure has been imparted to the community of which I am really proud of.

* What did not go very well, and why? What would you change or want to do differently if you were to do this project again?

The one thing that did not go well was the disbursement of funds by IIT Bombay. There are too many things to adhere to which makes it very difficult to keep the activities ongoing. Sometimes I had to put the money from my own pocket and get reimbursed for it later. Also rains played havoc for the past 4 months. During those months we would check the weather forecast and leave for the field. In the field, we would be drenched

PRASANNA CHATURVEDI
 PROFESSOR
 DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
 INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY
 POWAI MUMBAI-400076

and work. It has been inspiring but challenging as well.

* What aspects of gender or women's participation have you explored during the project period or still have plans to do? What about people with disabilities, climate justice, indigenous people or land rights?

In this project we are focusing a lot on women's empowerment through rural livelihoods. We have enabled Anjali to become a E-Dost. In the similar way, we will be enabling Monica as a Village Level Entrepreneur. In addition to this we are also working with women in the self help groups to make art and craft with the available skills that they have with them.

We are also focusing on indigenous knowledge of the community. The community being a Warli tribal community we have appreciated their local knowledge about biodiversity and are trying to preserve the same through local knowledge creation and sharing. This is a part of the Catalytic intervention grant project.

* What activities still remain incomplete for the duration of this project and will be completed by 31 December 2019?

The activities that remain incomplete in this project are the following:

Pathfinder peer activity which needs to be complete in this project is the network deployment. We will be doing the same in the 2nd week of November after IIT Bombay has cleared all the bills and the devices have been procured. By the end of November 2019, we will have the entire network deployed both online and offline. For the entire month of December we will be able to show how the network is being used by the people in the village, how much of local content is generated and shared, how has connectivity impacted the lives of the people in Pathardi.

Peer exchange visit to Myanmar. This is scheduled to be after the CNX i.e. after the 17th of Dec, 2019.

Multi stakeholder event which is scheduled to be held on the 7-8 Dec in Pathardi.

The country wiki page is also an incomplete activity. I will be working on this soon.

Outputs & Documentation

Please include links to: videos, blogs, reports, manuals, press releases, applications and any other result of the project that are available online.

Blog: sarbanibelur.blogspot.com

Videos and photographs: To be shared in the google drive

<https://www.genderit.org/articles/new-age-women-women-and-their-approach-towards-internet-connectivity-rural-india>

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PRASANNA CHAPORKAR
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY
POWAI MUMBAI-400076