



**FINAL REPORT FORM
for
WACC-SUPPORTED PROJECT**

This document is for end-of-project reporting. It has two parts: a) Narrative Report; b) Financial Report.

You will need to refer to your Project Application Form, the Agreement with WACC, and your bank statement when completing this form. Please return it with supporting documents and materials to WACC. Please answer the questions as fully as possible.

THE NARRATIVE REPORT

1. Project Title: (as appeared in the Agreement)	The Transforming Word: Media Involvement in Poverty Alleviation
2. Project Reference Number: (as appeared in the Agreement)	930
3. Full Name of Project Holder:	Siddhartha
4. Full Address:	Pipal Tree Fireflies Intercultural Centre Dinnepalya, Kaggalipura Post Bangalore – 560 082
5. Name of Country:	India
6. Period the project was implemented: (from month/year to month/year)	June 2010 to June 2011
7. Project Grant received: [You must include any bank charges deducted]	Amount in local currency: 382707 Amount in Euros or US\$ (circle as appropriate): 5850
8. Date(s) Project Grant(s) were received: (as in your bank statement) 1 st remittance 2 nd remittance	15.01.2010

9. Activities

Give a summary of the major activities carried out during the reporting period in comparison with those planned. In case of changes from the original objectives, please explain the reasons.

Please describe in detail the activities of the project that were implemented such as content of production, programmes, workshops or training

9.1 If the project is a workshop, seminar, or consultation, please attach the list of participants, the themes/topics of their speeches/papers, and any statement, declaration, or book published.

9.2 If the project is primarily purchase of equipment, please describe what kind of impact / change the equipment is bringing to the beneficiaries.

The long-term objective of the project was to build an alliance between the organisations of the rural poor and the media to put pressure on the government to effectively implement programmes that could provide a safety net to marginalised and oppressed agricultural labourers and small farmers.

The project was implemented in the context of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which aims at reducing poverty by providing 100 days of guaranteed employment to each rural household in a financial year. The Act came into force in 2005. However, the level of awareness about the potential of this Act to improve the rural milieu and the rights it confers to the villagers is considerably low in many parts of the country.

Our effort in this project was to involve the Kannada print media from the south-Indian state of Karnataka, which has a readership of several millions, to create awareness on the potential of NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) and bring into light issues hindering the effective implementation of the Act.

The project involved fourteen journalists and about hundred social activists in an interactive communication-campaign. The journalists travelled to NREGA work sites and interacted with the stakeholders and reported significant stories of change from the field. They looked at various issues in the implementation of the Act and gave voice to the concerns of people.

Eleven papers were written by journalists on different aspects of the NREGA. The papers were focused on how far the state government was successful in realising the potential of NREGA, which include ensuring food and livelihood security through the creation of productive assets; reducing migration; empowering women, dalits and tribals; unionising agricultural wage labourers; mitigating climate change; and strengthening local self-governance institutions.

These papers were distributed to social activists from all over south India. The articles were published by different newspapers, reaching a readership of tens of thousands of people. In addition a workshop was held in April 2011 where the conclusions of the journalists on the achievements and failures of the NREGA programme was discussed at length in lively sessions with nearly a hundred agricultural union leaders, social activists and stakeholders representing a few hundred thousand agricultural labourers and small farmers.

A compilation of the articles written by the journalists has also been published in the form of a book. Another organisation, FEDINA, has expressed interest in translating the book into other south Indian languages (Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu).

10. Was the project successful? (If possible, please give measurable indicators)

The general understanding of the NREGA is that it is just another wage employment programme of the government. Its emphasis on strengthening the livelihood resource base through the creation of durable productive assets, decision making power to the community, equal wage for men and women and right to unemployment allowance, etc. are not known to the majority of the beneficiaries of the Scheme. This is one of the reasons why much of the potential of this Act is not being realised. In areas where people are aware, NREGA has been able to prevent suicides of indebted and impoverished farmers, improve the socio-economic situation of millions of poor families, empower women, dalits and tribals and enhance local governance. This communication campaign hence aimed at educating the general public, using the Kannada print media, on the relevance of NREGA.

The articles published in the Kannada print media were read by several million people who are the direct beneficiaries of NREGA. Moreover, the journalists who were part of the project got an opportunity to deepen their understanding on NREGA through the interaction with various stakeholders of the scheme.

11. Project Beneficiaries

Please describe the actual direct beneficiaries and indicate the number of women and men. Please also mention any indirect beneficiaries.

Although this project was a media effort that directly involved 14 journalists it left an impact on the lives of many millions of men and women who are marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, a good number of whom are living below the poverty line. The 'direct' beneficiaries of this project were therefore these millions of excluded people, although the media was the apparent enabling mechanism.

12. How have the beneficiaries reacted to the programme activities? What were the impacts of the project and different effects on women and men in the project?

This 'Transforming Word' communication project gave a fillip to collaborative efforts in poverty alleviation, as it networked journalists, NGOs, social movements and agricultural union leaders. All these stakeholders directly benefited from this communication project to achieve their goals of social justice and sustainable development.

Many beneficiaries came to a better understanding of their rights under the project and how to deal with corrupt government officials who tried to cheat them off their correct wages. In addition the beneficiaries realised the importance of their own involvement in the planning process, which would result in the creation of productive assets and not merely any kind of work being realised.

13. Outcome and Outputs of the project: What has your project achieved and what has changed?

If your project produced media, please send a sample copy of audio/video cassettes, CD, VCD, or DVD and label it with title, duration, language used, and date of production. If you can, please send photos with informative captions (digital photos, if possible), newspaper/radio clips, homepage links, etc.

- Articles on twelve different aspects of NREGA were written and these were published in the Kannada newspapers, apart from making them available in a book form allowing easy access to thousands of individuals who are active in the field of sustainable development.
- The compilation of the articles, which looks at the achievements and failures of an important programme that has the potential to benefit hundreds of millions of poor agricultural workers and small farmers, was distributed to social activists.
- The media dimension of the programme helped to foster a sense of social and environmental responsibility among journalists, editors and publishers of newspapers and journals.
- This programme has been a shot in the arm for all the journalists who worked on it, as they grew in awareness themselves and were able to renew their social engagement in a meaningful manner. The journalists also established solidarity with agricultural workers, NGOs, and other stakeholders.
- Since NREGA is still relatively new the newspaper articles, and the book containing the longer versions of the articles by the journalists, will continue to play a significant role in devising new strategies and correcting old ones to strengthen the programme particularly in relation to tribals, dalits and women.

14. Evaluation

14.1 What were the results of evaluating the project?

This was the first time an Indian language media project brought together all the beneficiaries of the NREGA to interact together to clarify several key aspects of the programme. All the journalists expressed their satisfaction in participating in this programme.

Some journalists and activists did feel that the project should have covered more states and more languages as this would have given them a larger canvas to compare their work and extend the mutual learning possibilities.

14.2 What were the challenges, difficulties, and/or failures in carrying out the project? Please explain how you addressed these issues.

Due to shortage of resources the journalists could not travel around sufficiently. We also could not have local workshops with all the local stakeholders at the beginning of the project.

Given the extreme corruption of the government machinery the project has made a dent and created the potential for remedial action. However the rot is deep and much more needs to be done.

15. Other comments, if any.

The fact that we will discontinue the project after just one year may prevent the development of an effective follow-up.

16. Name of the person submitting the report: Siddhartha

Position: Executive Director

Date: 11.11.2011

Signature: 