



USAID | NEPAL
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TRIP REPORT: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM WORKSHOPS 24 JUNE – 8 JULY 2006

PAUL RADU, CONSULTANT

14 July 2006

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Paul Radu, Consultant

Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development, USAID Contract Number 367-C-00-04-00097-00, Strengthened Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights in Nepal. This Trip Report is submitted in accordance with the requirements of ARD, Inc.'s contract and covers activities set forth in the ARD Work Plan for the period of 1 October 2005 to 30 September 2006.

Frederick G. Yeager
Chief of Party

Implemented by:

ARD, Inc.
P.O. Box 1397
Burlington, VT 05402



STRENGTHENED RULE OF LAW AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL

TRIP REPORT: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM
WORKSHOP
24 JUNE – 8 JULY 2006

14 JULY 2006

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

TRIP REPORT

1. Executive Summary

The two “Investigative Journalism against Corruption” workshops have been, in my opinion, successful. I believe the journalists in both locations, Pokhara and Godawari, gained insight in investigative journalism techniques that they could use when uncovering corruption.

The fact that investigative journalists shared their experiences in the field of investigating corruption further enhanced the participants’ knowledge regarding the issue. On the other hand, the participants’ different experiences and different backgrounds and geographical locations developed a good dialogue among them. They were able to confront opinions and ideas and to share knowledge.

As part of the experience and skills sharing, I have offered the participants a directory of on-line tools they can use in their investigative work. I also handed them a database of United Kingdom and Switzerland based companies in which Nepalese citizens are shareholders or officers. I have also provided them with data on other on-line tools like Lexis-Nexis where they could find worldwide company records. These tools are very effective when tracking down corruption and following the money.

I have shared this information with the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority (“CIAA”) officials, as well. I was invited to their headquarters in Kathmandu and I made an on-line presentation of the tools they can use when tracking down corruption.

I believe that one of the main factors for the workshops being successful was the coordination between the trainers participating in the workshop. This exchange of ideas on presentations in advance of them being shown led to the workshop being effective and coherent. It also led to the audience comparing and questioning different experiences on the same subject (for example on trafficking in human beings and financial fraud).

Participants were quite active, especially when confronted with practical presentations. The level of involvement depended on the journalists’ backgrounds and interests and was higher in Godawari.

The participants were challenged by both national and international examples of investigative journalism products and I hope they will soon get in touch, via e-mailing lists, with investigative journalist worldwide.

The presentations made by the CIAA representatives helped as well as they highlighted common points and differences between journalistic and law enforcement investigative work.

As a conclusion, I believe that most of the participants gained from the workshop by enhancing their journalistic standards and at least few of them will apply the techniques they were presented which will enhance their reporting.

2. Progress and Observations

From the very start I tried to design my presentations as graphical as possible so that participants with different backgrounds could relate to the presentations. I tried to show them that investigative journalism is a common language and uncovering corruption requires the same journalistic tools and skills everywhere.

I tried to start with a general example of the investigative process that would highlight various techniques and skills used in investigative journalism and later go into more detail on skills and situation that they may confront the investigative journalists.

I also tried to relate for the participants journalists and journalistic experiences in other geographical areas in order to tell them that they are part of a global community.

I had to assess the level of knowledge of the participants during the very first hours of the workshops so that I could shape up my presentations accordingly. I had, however, prepared in advance a number of alternatives ranging from computer assisted reporting (CAR) to field-work related investigative journalism techniques.

A few of the participants showed interests in advanced techniques during the breaks. The majority of them were challenged by presentations of real cases or by ethical dilemmas proposed by the trainers.

During both workshops I tried to coordinate my efforts with the Nepalese journalists so that the presentations would be coherent. The T&D representatives made efforts to steer the workshop this way as well.

I believe the participants were quite stimulated by the cooperation between trainers and the fact that trainers inter-reacted during most presentations. This led to the journalists trying to inter-react as well and trying to present their different views on various subjects.

Most of the workshop, especially in Godawari, developed as a useful debate.

3. Significant Issues

I think most of the journalists were quite open and were ready to acquire experience and skills during the workshops.

The practical presentations/examples were more successful than the theoretical ones.

The program was designed quite well, but I think, at times, especially when presented with too much theory, the participants lost their concentration.

4. Follow-on Activities

I believe that a type of hands-on training would further help the participants in the two workshops in enhancing and applying their investigative skills.

I suggest that ARD should ask the participants to submit investigative projects proposals. The proposal should briefly mention the subject of the investigation, the minimum and maximum expected from the project, timeline and budget.

Investigative journalists like Shiva Gaunle and Akhilesh Tripathy could assess the projects and decide which ones should be sponsored by ARD. I believe the projects should have regional impact so that journalists in different locations could contribute.

After the completion of the projects they should be published in local and national media and journalists should make presentations on the skills applied when they investigated the proposed subjects.

Coordinators of the projects should permanently assist and check on the projects' participants work and should impose deadlines for each stage of the projects.

If required, I could present you with examples of projects that worked in other geographical areas.

ANNEX

No non-USAID related business was conducted during this USAID fully funded visit.

U.S. Agency for International Development

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20523

Tel: (202) 712-0000

Fax: (202) 216-3524

www.usaid.gov