THE POWER OF GRASSROOTS VOICES Annual Report 2022 - 2023



Letter from the Founder

20 Years of Impact



I am proud to look back over the last two decades of work and reflect on how we have influenced others. We have helped numerous organizations to involve citizens more directly in creating advocacy strategies or articulating their message, and helped them to communicate back to the community effectively. By utilizing our training methodology and materials, more than 650 people from marginalized backgrounds have been able to earn a livelihood from this work, with a particularly strong impact on women.

Our example has inspired many people in the content industry (including media and journalism) to think differently about how power dynamics have shaped their sector, and provided an example to many who have sought to make the sector more diverse, whether they are students making career decisions or media companies thinking about how to improve their coverage of rural areas. This is evidenced by the numerous awards we have won in the media space for the success of our media innovations (such as the Knight News Challenge and the Google News Initiative, The Laadli Media Awards and Women's E-News) as well as by the many news organizations that have invited us to speak at their conferences & events on how to correct the various shortcomings in the media ecosystem. It's also evidenced by the number of times they have approached us for advice on their own citizen journalism initiatives. Over the years we have partnered with TV stations including Link TV, Pangea Day and MTV Iggy out of the US, as well as NDTV, NewsX,MTV, CNN IBN, Rajya Sabha TV and Doordarshan, Quint and IndiaSpend in South Asia, to bring community-created content onto their platforms and thereby giving huge visibility to community issues.

Read on to see what we accomplished in 2022-2023 to build on this legacy -- particularly as we have worked to transform voice into data, and to advance the field of citizen-generated data.

Jessica Mayberry

Founding Director, Video Volunteers



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106 out of the 226 indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals have insufficient data, according to UN Stats. When people are invisible in the data, they are invisible in the world.

There are also insufficient channels for citizens to share their narratives and for stakeholders to access community knowledge.

This leads to ineffective representation of citizen voices, an accountability gap between citizens and government, and missed opportunities for improvement in government services and community development.



Our mission

Amplify community voices

To achieve more citizen visibility in the data systems that measure poverty alleviation

To enable lived experience insights to meaningfully shape international development policy



Our year in numbers

Community Content Creators

233

Female

116

Male

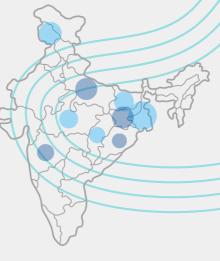
114

Others

03

Content Creators in India

West Bengal	40
Jharkhand	32
Bihar	29
Uttar Pradesh	28
Jammu and Kashmir	26
Maharashtra	19
Madhya Pradesh	16
Odisha	15
Chhattisgarh	13



Assam, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand have 1-4 CC's each Issues Covered 1703

Impacts Achieved

585

increase from the previous year

Top six themes covered by CCs

Crumbling Infrastructure



Anti Poverty Programs



254
videos
produced

Education



Water



Health



Agrarian Crisis



Lives affected per issue video

39,137

Lives impacted

12,595,252

290 %

increase in lives affected over the previous year



bulandbol

Buland Bol (BB) is a free, online course that teaches marginalised communities video production, editing, storytelling and creating positive change with the help of social media.

It is an empowering movement that aims to amplify the voices of marginalized communities by equipping them with the skill to effectively communicate their stories, concerns, and insights to a wider audience.

LAUNCHED DECEMBER 2021

Our goal is to teach and guide active citizens who can serve as digital changemakers and champions.

Social Media Promotion for Buland Bol Attracts Hundreds of Applications and Sparks Real Change



In February 2022, a social media campaign was launched to promote Buland Bol. The participants trained in this course shared their stories and experiences through social media posts and videos with the #bulandbol hashtag.

The impact of this course was felt in remote areas such as Alipurduar tea gardens in West Bengal and small villages in Madhya Pradesh, where individuals created digital content about their communities.

applications were 1600 received through social media.

142 (21%) out of 658 participants have produced content

Trained 658 under BB course

442 video content

Posts and videos shared on social media by participants with #bulandbol:



43 posts



48 videos



132 posts



100+ posts including videos

and photos

BB Video Sparks Change in Chhattisgarh: Efforts recognised by a national daily

In April 2022, Biraj Nag visited Kilam village in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region and made a video on the villagers' struggles. He uploaded the video on Twitter and shared it with district officials, bringing attention to their hardships.



Empowering Grassroots Organizations for Effective Communication and Meaningful Change





Buland Bol training modules has become a great tool in enabling grassroots civil society organizations to become better communicators. Numerous organizations have used it to ensure that the transformative power of their programmes reaches a wider audience, nurturing a collective force that can drive meaningful change.

Networks, Organizations and Colleges that were benefited by the course:

- Tezpur University
- Rajiv Gandhi University
- Sewa Bharat
- Malda Sahyogita
 Samity
- CMS Vatavaran
- Bailancho Saad
- Vartaleap

bulandbol The road ahead

Here's a sneak peek into the future version -**Buland Bol 2.0**



The strategy for Buland Bol 2.0 is now ready. To make it more organized and interactive, we collaborated with Ooloi Labs, a digital communication technology company. They assisted us in redesigning the curriculum and communication structure. Going forward Buland Bol modules will be available for all on an interactive and easy-to-use platform.

Organizations engaged with in 2022-2023:

from receiving training by the Buland Bol Initiative, to conducting sessions for content creators, to spreading the word about community media initiatives, many organizations have helped to strengthen the community voice movement.

- Adivasi Lives Matter (ALM)
- Adivasi Seva Sanrachana Sanstha Madhya Pradesh
- Anti Corruption Foundation India
- Bachpan Bachao Andolan
- Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti Madhya Pradesh
- Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh
- Centre DIRECT
- Citizens for Justice and Peace
- ComMutiny -The Youth Collective
- Girls Count
- Goa Green Brigade
- GOONJ
- Human Rights Law Network
- Jan Sahas
- Jana Swasthya Abhiyaan
- Justice Ventures International
- Logical Indian
- Lok Chetna Samiti Uttar Pradesh
- Madhya Pradesh ASHA/ASHA Sahyogini Shramik Sangh
- North East Network
- Paschim Bangel Khet Majdoor Samity

- Pravah
- PUCL, Patna
- Rajiv Gandhi Central University (Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh)
- RTE Forum on Education
- Right To Food & Work Network
- Sahbhagi Shikshan Samiti
- SANJOG
- Seher Network of Centre for Health and Social Justice
- Shakti Vahini
- Shri Badri Yuva Mandal Samiti
- Strandard Workers Action Network
- Tenants Association of Camarcasanacho Bund
- Tezpur Central University (Assam)
- The Action North East Trust
- Unicef and Save the Children
- Uttar Pradesh Journalist association
- UVA and Accountability Initiative
- WAYVE Foundation
- World Vision India
- Youth for Climate India

BUILDING PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES IN RURAL INDIA



Our Partner for Sourcing Content: Introducing Voicelogue



Voicelogue is a production and communications company playing a critical role enabling Video Volunteers to realise its vision.

Voicelogue's team of producers and editors oversees the sourcing of the content from marginalised citizens that one sees on Video Volunteers' YouTube channel. Thanks to their work thousands of extraordinary pieces of community-produced content are created each year.



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"I am proud of the work my company does for Video Volunteers.
Rural India is full of media dark areas where there is lots of talented and motivated citizens, and they now --thanks to the spread of cell phones -- have access to the tools of production.
One area of expertise of our company is to get great content from these communities that can help brands in the cities in many ways, such as marketing their products to these audiences or simply creating a more cost-effective video.

"My team's collective efforts have led to impressive results this year. To effectively service our contract with VV, we conducted a total of 80 online training sessions and mentoring meetings with the content creators, and more than 90% of them are now capable of editing their videos proficiently. The VV YouTube channel got 18,000 new subscribers and got around 5 million total views."

Manish Kumar, CEO, Voicelogue

Capacity Building of Content Creators: Empowering Growth and Reach

Over the past year, significant strides were made in capacity building resulting in empowerment of individuals and communities.

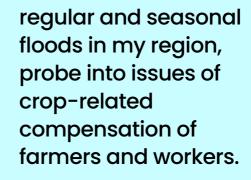
I was very influenced by the training and what can be done with the power of the camera and video storytelling...The training increased my awareness of patriarchal issues.

Shikha Paharin, CC





The high-quality training I received... gave me the insight and courage to handle a wide range of stories in my region. I've make stories on various wide and nuanced issues caused by the



Shah Faisal, CC and deputy editor of 'Main Media', a vernacular news website in Bihar

Aiding Solutions Work of the Content Creators

The CCs are not satisfied with just the storytelling aspect of the work but are also keen to find solutions to the issues. So, we create comprehensive learning modules the CCs can use to improve their skills and knowledge – like, using social media for change and using government grievance redressal platforms that are aimed to help communities.

Learning modules on using the Bihar Public Grievance Redressal System



Learning modules on the Anti Human Trafficking Unit, applying for Victim Compensation, Grievance Redressal Platform

Created 5 short Handouts which organizations conducting the training give out post trainings:

- 1. Working with Anti Human Trafficking Unit,
- 2. Victim Compensation
- 3. Reporting : human trafficking cases,
- 4.MH GRP
- 5.How to solve cases of Human Trafficking

Work in the Tea Gardens of West Bengal

The network of content creators in the tea gardens of West Bengal is well-established and strong. This year, they focused on building the capacities of the community members around them as active citizens.

Land Rights and Right to Information trainings for 1431 people.



23 group discussions on preventing human trafficking



9 awareness camps on Provident Fund in 9 tea gardens



Solved 71 matters with active collaboration of community members and officials of local administration



Career counseling and citizenship awareness camps covering 1210 young adults

Inspiring content creators with new-age skills and a dash of fun

In December 2022, a Reels competition was held for communities to create short videos of no more than 90 seconds and share them on social media. The response was encouraging, with 16 people creating 45 reels on diverse topics such as art and culture, education for children, and tribal festivals.

The competition not only showcased the CCs' talent in creating engaging content but also highlighted the collaboration between CCs and government officials to address community issues.

The impact of the competition was seen in the increased followers and engagement on social media platforms, with Instagram account getting 8.5% more reach and 40.2% engagement, and Facebook seeing a significant increase in new followers. Overall, the Reels competition empowered the participants to embrace a popular social media trend and produce compelling content that resonated with their communities.



Quality of Content Produced by Communities

Ensuring the quality of content is critical. Each video is reviewed according to strict parameters of quality control. It's a numerical system according to which each video is evaluated for its visuals, audio, storytelling and potential to inspire change and be useful to research on an excel sheet. This sheet is used to determine payment to content creators and fairness across the network.

Often critics of ordinary citizens creating their own content are disbelieving of people's ability to create good quality work. However, because of our strict quality control measures, we put those fears to rest.

Storytelling and video making are surely acquired skills. With simple and creative training modules and a passionate team of 'mentors' to guide, the most uninitiated person can also go on to make meaningful, useful and aesthetically pleasing content.

High-Quality Video Production:

In 2022–23, there was a **9% increase**

in high-quality video production compared to the previous year.

CCs with High-Quality Videos:

89% of CC's

have created at least two or more high-quality issue videos.*

*We rate our videos on multiple parameters; a score above 45 is considered a highquality video.



Catalyzing Entrepreneurship in "Social" Media

Harnessing the power of storytelling, we enable individuals and communities to make sense of their lived experiences so that they can advocate for change. Many CC's move on to become entrepreneurs in their own right starting their own socially conscious media companies:

Meet Amir Abbas, a young entrepreneur who runs his own web news portal, 'Democratic Charkha'. DC focuses on hyperlocal news and events in Patna, the capital city of Bihar. Aamir has secured funding from some of the most prestigious media funders in India.

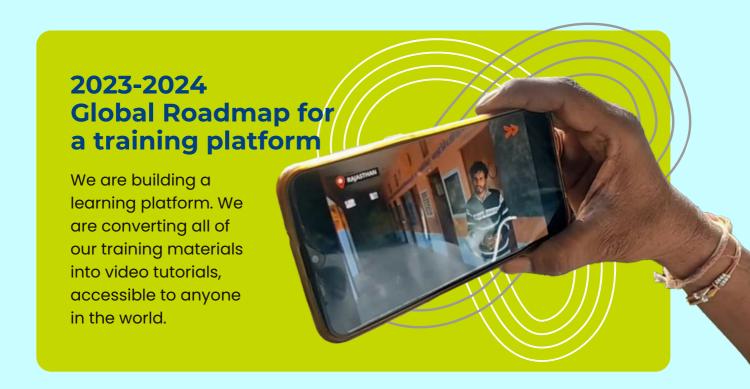
My association with VV gave me a medium to voice concerns about local issues and I experienced how strong media pressure can be on any administration. The word 'interview' opens doors.



After his three failed attempts at starting a YouTube news channel, in 2020 Aamir founded his own media venture the Democratic Charkha, along with two other Patna University students.

It's a mixed-medium platform that features written articles and video stories. The platform aims to bring attention to under-reported issues and give a voice to marginalized communities, just like Amir's experience with VV.

At present, the Democratic Charkha website attracts a monthly traffic of 1,50,000 viewers and readers and their Youtube channel registered 1,00,000 views per month.



Empowering Youth to Champion Climate Action:

Envi-Mojo Shines at Goa's LiFE Film Festival & Forum

Our partner CMS VATAVARAN, in collaboration with the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), organized the first-ever Film Festival & Forum on LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) in the state of Goa from March 4th to 6th. This event underscored the critical role of awareness and education in combating climate change.

As part of this initiative, Video Volunteers introduced the Environmental Mobile Journalism (Envi-Mojo) Youth Leaders program. Voicelogue's senior producer Purnima Damade facilitated a two-day workshop on mobile journalism for 24 participants. The training during the workshop encompassed topics such as the fundamentals of environmental /conservation filmmaking, how to create environmental/conservation films, the language of visual storytelling, and effectively representing data in films.

The Envi-Mojo program is an important initiative that seeks to engage young people in the fight against climate change by providing them with the necessary skills and resources to raise awareness and inspire

Sabyesachi Bharti, Deputy Director, CMS Vatavaran.

change.



SWASTH+1 ASPATAAL

COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN FOR HEALTHY HOSPITALS



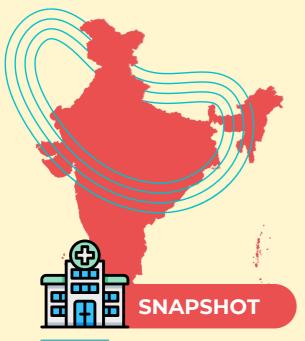
SWASTH+1 ASPATAAL

HEALTHY HOSPITALS

Approach to
Approach to
Healthcare: How
Swasth Aspataal is
Fixing India's
Healthcare Centers

Swasth Aspataal is a transformative endeavor by the CCs and their communities aimed at fixing the broken healthcare system and show the world how they did it through the stories they create. The deplorable state of primary health centers (PHCs) and other local public hospitals is a consequence of insufficient manpower, deteriorating infrastructure and bureaucratic challenges.





COMMUNITY CONTENT CREATORS

35 ACTION TEAMS LED BY CCs

35 DISTRICTS

350 MEMBERS

- 35 CCs from 35 districts across 10 states carried out this endeavor.
- Each CC conducted a baseline survey of the healthcare centre they had chosen.
- About 30 parameters surveyed in each centre.
- The baseline were done on video so to document the conditions 'before' community intervention
- Each of the 35 CCs created an Action Team comprised of people like lawyers, ASHA workers, journalists and social workers. A total of 350 people joined in.
- Each Action Team created a Whatsapp group to coordinate their efforts to fix the problems.
- Action Team members work as an advisory committee for CCs and help them to solve the issues.
- Updates of their work posted on social media to inspire officials and community.

 Successful efforts turned in powerful video stories. 27 'success' stories recorded in the year.

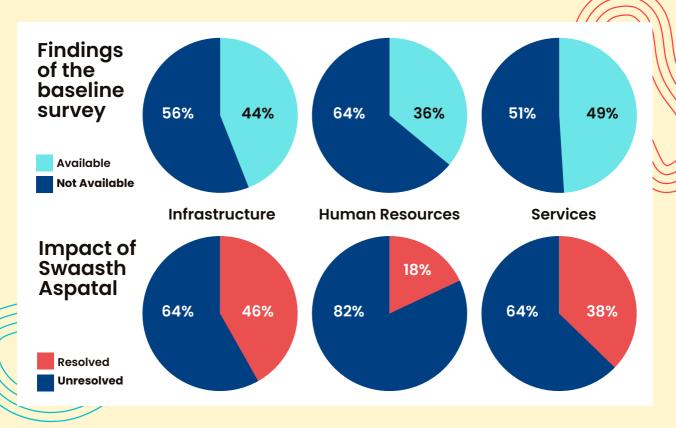




How Swasth Aspataal Got Started

The first round of baseline surveys was conducted in 2021, according to IPHS (the government's Indian Public Health Standards). We discovered 35 hospitals that fall short of the Standards. They started by making compelling videos on the prevailing infrastructure challenges in 22 Primary Health Centers, 11 Community Health Centers, and 2 District Hospitals. We prepared CCs for the project by training them, and and a lot of coordination was done on WhatsApp groups for this.





Each healthcare center was assessed on the following parameters:

- · Condition of building
- Condition of boundary wall
- Ramp walk
- Sign Board of hospital.
- Seating facility
- Drinking water facility
- Toilets for patients
- Separate toilets for men & women
- Cleanliness of premise
- Sign board of health schemes
- Vaccinations facility

- Name of Dr. and time table.
- Specialist doctor in DH.
- Number of doctors
- Number of nurses
- Number of beds
- Conditions of beds & bed sheets
- Facility for dressing and surgery
- Facility for normal delivery and C-section
- Residential Facilities for Doctors and nurses

- 6 hour OPD facility
- Vaccinations facility
- X-ray facility
- Sonography
- Ambulance
- 24 hrs emergency
- 24 hrs electricity
- Pathology Lab facility
- Free medicines
- Wheelchair/Stretcher
- Free food for patients
- Fire extinguishers



Doctors' response to Swasth Aspataal

Swasth Aspataal team's constant efforts made a significant impact by getting an OPD working in our District Hospital in Badohi that had been operating without one for 12 years. This hospital did not have basic facilities, but after a survey, they discovered that they have a sufficient number of beds, an X-ray machine, and 7 doctors. People in Bhadohi are overjoyed because they now have access to quality health care.

Dr. Vivek Kumar Pandey (physician), CHMO Bhadohi district hospital:



Citizens' response to Swath Aspataal

The condition of our PHC was very bad, around 30,000 people did not get good health service, but when we saw our CC working for the government hospitals, our hopes brightened.

Sunil Kumar Yadav is an active citizen of Makroli village, Bewana.



The PHC in Bewana now has clean water and 6 additional beds.

> Pooja Verma, a lawyer from Bewana

IMPACT IN SHORT

With the assistance of the print media, government officials, and other social workers, positive response were received from **35 health** centers and a significant impact from **32 health centers**. Health centers ramped up free medicine, ambulance service, and X-ray and sonography machines. ANMs (nurses) and doctors were recruited.



Laxmi Kaurav Elevates Health Workers' Concerns Through Pivotal Meeting with Rahul Gandhi

In a significant stride, Laxmi Kaurav, a steadfast Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker and also a Content Creator, met Rahul Gandhi to voice the challenges faced by ASHA workers.

During the Bharat Jodo Yatra (Unite India march), Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition party, was visiting Madya Pradesh, Laxmi's home state. After much struggle, Laxmi managed to meet Rahul Gandhi, only to be told that she has only 2-minutes to convey her concerns. Overcoming initial apprehensions, Laxmi concisely conveyed the struggles

of ASHA workers, encompassing inadequate compensation, job insecurity, and the absence of recognition for their unwavering commitment during the pandemic.

Despite the allocated time being only 2 minutes, the outcome exceeded expectations. Rahul Gandhi's engagement extended beyond this limit, as he interacted actively with Laxmi for a substantial 10 to 15 minutes. Delving deep, he sought insights into the intricate aspects of ASHA workers' challenges, inquiring about historical and current wages and the predominant demographics within the workforce.



Laxmi astutely noticed Rahul's personal assistant meticulously documenting notes, underscoring the gravity of the exchange.

Following this impactful conversation, Laxmi and her ASHA colleagues remain optimistic about potential transformations. With nearly 70,000 ASHA workers in Madhya Pradesh grappling with neglect and a lack of recognition from state authorities, their aspirations stand resolute. Their demands encompass fair remuneration, essential amenities, and job security that mirrors their indispensable contributions to community well-being.

Laxmi and her compatriots firmly believe that it is the democratic duty of the opposition to champion their cause, securing the acknowledgment and respect they rightfully deserve.



ACCOUNTABILITY





Total 230 CCS Content creators are paid per video, and there is a big variation in how many videos per year each content creator produces. They all belong to socially and economically marginalized communities and so it is not fair that they be expected to volunteer their creative work. Our experience in India says that if a CC is able to earn at least Rs.64,000 (771 \$) a year they are more likely to continue seeing value in this work.

175 CCs

were active during at least one quarter

77% of CCs

have earned an average income of Rs 49,377 (595 \$)

50 CCs (32%)

have earned greater or equal to Rs 64K (771\$) in 2022-23

Building Community, Closing Feedback Loops and Enabling Peer Learning:

Monthly Local Language Newsletters for those who contribute content to the VV YouTube Channel



The Results of the Annual Accountability Survey

106

People participated in this survey.

The participation of women and men was almost equal

Survey results

The higher the score, the better.

Year - Over - Year Change

The scores for the last four years on each question are given in the chart below.



The questions asked in the survey were:

1. Does your organization treat you with respect? | 2.Does your organization do what it says it will? | 3. Is it likely that the organization will respond to your concerns? | 4. Do you understand what your organization does and does not do? | 5. How likely would you be to tell others to engage with your organization? | 6. Taking all these things into account to what extent do you feel that the organization is accountable to you?

The Council: Where Community Content Creators Lead the Way

Community content creators operate an Advisory Council of all the freelance content creators who create content for the VV YouTube channel. Their goal is to advance the community voice movement.

This year, the Council held a two-day in-person meeting to discuss the network's health. The content creators discussed critical issues, including gender issues, enhancing collaboration with government officials, strengthening communication between content creators at state-level, and facilitating face-to-face meetings between CCs and the leadership team.



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We strive to create a flexible and resilient institution capable of overcoming any challenge, big or small. One goal of the council is to ideate new ways of organizing freelance content creators in India. We seek to create great communication amongst creators where each person feels heard. In the coming year, our goal is to foster increased engagement between the Council and the entire network of CCs, ensuring that every CC recognizes the value and actively participates in the Council's activities.

Rohini Pawar, former CC and advocate for accountability

Safeguarding: Ensuring a Safe and Respectful Workplace

- VV wrote and implemented a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy and ensured undertaking from service partners that it adopts this policy.
- Our agreements with consultants, contractors and service partners in India require them to abide by the POSH Act.
- Service partners are required to conduct regular activities focused on gender sensitization, including bi-annual training of its ICC members and report it back to us.
- New staff, consultants, interns or associates who join VV or its service partners are oriented to the Safeguarding Policy.
- Community Content Creators have access to the ICC established at the service contractor.

GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATIONS





Each content creator can run their own content outlet. And to do so, they don't need investors or a broadcast licence They just need a cell phone, a YouTube channel, a Facebook page, an Instagram handle and effective WhatsApp groups. Since several years, CCs have been building a deeper understanding of how to build their hyperlocal audience.

Amplifying Community Voice through Innovative Distribution Methods

We employ innovative methods for community distribution, ensuring that the stories and messages reach the intended audiences. In May 2021 **select CCs** were enabled to set up and run their own YouTube channels. The goals were to help CCs become successful hyperlocal YouTubers, build networks of change-makers, and attract collaborations and projects.

The first 18 months of the project saw the participation of 34 content creators with 21 remaining active as of November 28, 2022. The training focused more on publishing and distribution, and the progress of active participants was tracked with some becoming independent.



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Video Volunteers gave me the greatest motivation to start my own YouTube channel in the year 2021. In spite of my initial reluctance, I eventually started my YouTube voyage with some confidence, although I wasn't sure what to do with it. I finally gained a bit of understanding about YouTube in the middle of 2022 and began to recognize my own potential as a YouTube creator,

Rubi Saha, a passionate advocate, uses her YouTube channel to highlight the difficulties faced by people in Jalpaiguri tea estates. Her videos raise awareness about labor issues and human trafficking.

She wants her YouTube channel to provide a platform for tea garden residents to learn about their own problems.

Rubi Saha's YouTube channel

Support provided by Voicelogue to content creators to build their grassroots distribution networks.

Training: Equipping CCs with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their digital endeavors.



Motivation: Inspiring and encouraging CCs to actively engage and contribute to the grassroots communication.



Dedicated Content
Creation: The talented
production team at
Voicelogue creates
engaging and relevant
content tailored to the
needs of language
specific audiences.

Consistent Follow-ups: Providing support and guidance to CCs, nurturing their skills and enhancing their effectiveness.

Outcomes

120 CCs actively
engaged in grassroots
communication
through platforms
such as Facebook,
Twitter, Instagram,
and Telegram.

140 are now able to post videos on their social media platforms. Successful outreach campaign targeting grassroots audiences to enlist participants for the Buland Bol course, and generating a significant number of applications.

Aapti research study
conducted on
grassroots social
media, with a primary
focus on WhatsApp,
documenting numerous
positive use cases.

34 CCs initiated their own YouTube channels, and 21 of them actively utilize their channels.

Pilot to explore the use of WhatsApp Bots for content sharing.

Instagram reels competitions organized.

Newsletters on successful distribution campaigns written for the content creators and shared virtually.

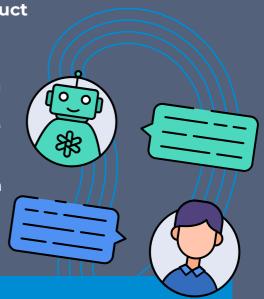
Conducted 36 online trainings to enhance CCs' social media skills.

Telegram channel started in March 2022, with 257 subscribers to foster communication and engagement between CCs and citizens.

From Neighborhoods to Headlines:
Pilot for a WhatsApp-based storyshare Product

Can a WhatsApp chatbot be a compelling way to deliver local stories and information in rural India? That was the question we sought to answer through two pilots carried out in partnership with Glific, an American tech company that makes the WhatsApp chatbot API easy to use for NGOs.

People who received a message from us were given the opportunity to sign up for local weekly updates delivered via WhatsApp API. We called this our StoryShare Product.



In Pilot 01

- Over 600 subscribers from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.
- Customized weekly content was provided for a month, and a user survey was conducted.
- Around 40% of users consumed content on a weekly basis,
- 80% of users rated the service 4 out of 5 or higher.

In Pilot 02

- In addition to hyperlocal content, we offered a service of positive and inspirational videos made by locals.
- About 20% of users engaged with the weekly content. User survey revealed YouTube as the most popular platform for news consumption, followed by Facebook, WhatsApp, TV, newspapers, and others.
- Users demanded information on government schemes and desired a daily or 2-3 times a week frequency of service.

RESEARCH







Aapti Institute conducts research and develops solutions related to our digital lives, so as to embed these solutions into policy.

Video Volunteers is one of a handful of organizations that they intensively studied this year. They did this primarily through in depth interviews of content creators as well as by joining several WhatsApp groups started by the CCs.

They wished to understand the CCs' strategies, barriers, and points of contact with government machinery, both physical and digital, to understand how storytelling, WhatsApp and social change intersect.

Findings of Aapti

Aapti's finding show that topdown pressure is the most effective way to make a strong claim and get officials to respond to important issues.

It also turns out that CC forming a Whatsapp group doesn't necessarily lead to active citizen participation. Each group functions differently, with different push factors that motivate their members to take action.

How do pre-existing networks and connections contribute to successful claim-making?

After establishing themselves in the field for a few years, CCs often get approached by community members to cover a particular story in their area. As one CC Rafiqa Bano explains,



Earlier, I would go to the villages and talk to the people to know the place and stories that need to be told. But now I get phone calls! After years of work, everyone has my contact and they call me directly.



CCs believe the existing relationship with the community play an important role. As one CC Avijit Adhikari explains,



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It helps that I have a strong existing network because I also work for a mainstream media. I get some benefit from it. Others may not have these networks to tap into. Basharat Amin also highlights the importance of building relationships, stating







And the impact of community storytelling can be incredible, as Tanju Devi shares,

After watching my videos, a lot of people got to know me. They call me even from Delhi and Mumbai after seeing it! People from the block also call and tell me that they have seen my video and that I'm doing very good work."

What strategies are CCs using to make a difference and bring attention to critical issues in their communities?

First, there's the approach of escalating the issue with higher officials. As Brahmjeet notes,



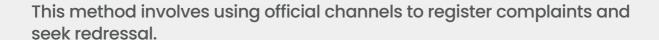
When higher officials put pressure on the lower officials, the authorities in the Agriculture Department were obliged to work [on the issue I made a video on].

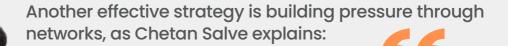
This tactic leverages the established hierarchy of officials to get results.

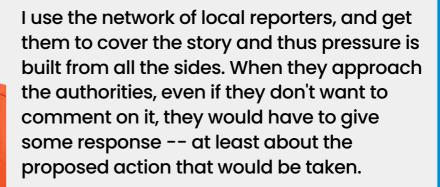
If that doesn't work, there's the route of filing a formal complaint. Tanju Devi explains,



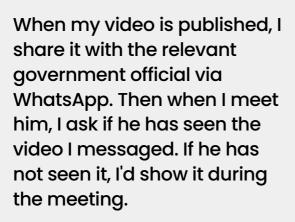
If a story covered in the video remains unresolved, then I register a complaint on the grievance platform started by our Chief Minister called Lok Shikayat Nivaaran. After 3-4 meetings, the matter is usually resolved.







For those who prefer a softer approach, there's the option of using diplomacy and personal connections. Anil Kumar shares,





And finally, there's the policy of thanking people after they help and creating continued pressure. As Chetan notes,





We have a policy of creating pressure on the person until they help us, and then thanking them once they do. There can be different ways to solving community issues.

How do CCs effectively utilize WhatsApp for targeted communication and coordination for claim-making?

According to Rajesh Gupta, a CC from Chhattisgarh, WhatsApp allows for quicker and more targeted communication.



We live in far away villages, so it is difficult to go to the city. Now we have a WhatsApp group where there are around 20-25 journalists and various government officers. They get the information more quickly now and take action on it."

Social media also puts pressure on authorities. As Basharat notes,





Even though posting on social media increases the audience for CCs, it doesn't necessarily lead to action. But it acts as pressure for authorities when we tag them.



"Voice and Response: Citizen journalism and bureaucratic responsiveness"

Update on VV's Research Collaboration with Dr. Gabrielle Kurds-Wisner of UVA

Before COVID, the MIT GovLab approved a grant to Dr. Kruks-Wisner to work with Video Volunteers to study the impacts of community media on other stakeholders such as the government or citizens, as a follow up to phase 1 of the research, which focused on how the Correspondents are able to create change. In early 2023 we completed the research study pilot. The researcher interviewed approximately 50 officials in Jharkhand about their views on information flows and their interactions with citizens. They also observed the Correspondents interacting with officials.

The Research Brief: Under what conditions can citizen voice increase bureaucratic responsiveness? Appointed officials are important gatekeepers to government programs and resources, but often operate in information and capacity gaps; they are ill-informed about local needs and work under conditions of bureaucratic overload. The same officials, moreover, are not directly answerable to citizens, but rather to higher-ups in the bureaucracy or to political patrons. How, then, can citizens hold appointed officials to account? This project takes up this question in partnership with Video Volunteers, to explore the conditions under which local administrators are most likely to respond to citizens' grievances, captured and presented by local citizen journalists. Our aim is to explore the interplay between information provision in the form of citizen reporting and bureaucratic motivation. Through a combination of qualitative research, surveys, and experiments, we ask: What knowledge gaps and other obstacles do officials face, and when and how might citizen reporting assist officials in overcoming these? What drives bureaucrats to not only hear but respond to information about local needs?

BUILDING A COMMUNITY VOICES PLATFORM:

Progress and Partnerships



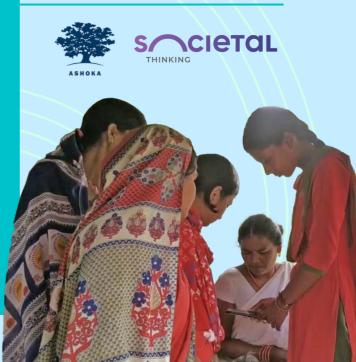
ASPIRe Project: Empowering Communities Through Platform Innovation

We were selected as a participant in the prestigious ASPIRe Project. This initiative, led by Ashoka and Societal Platform, aimed to harness the power of platform thinking and technology to scale the missions of non-profit organizations. By using platform thinking, we wish to enable the community, government and non-profits to come together, via data and stories.

As a part of the project:

- Conducted eight sprints with a peer group to conceptualize our platform, involving activities, discussions, and writing.
- Interviewed over 40 individuals, including community content creators government officials, and citizens, to understand their needs.
- Conducted secondary research on problem areas like data gaps and grievance redressal platforms.
- Participation in three Huddles, connecting with funders and experts in the field.
- Engaged in talks and interactions with inspiring individuals and organizations like AtmaGo, Sunil Abraham, and Agami.
- Attended ASPIRe Meetup, learning and networking with Nandan and Rohini Nelikenini - ASPIRe funders -- at the EKstep office.





Piloting AI Projects: Leveraging Technology for Social Impact



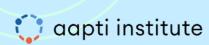
VLab Exploration

We were selected to participate in VLab, a space created by Societal Platform, to develop our platform Minimum Viable Product (MVP). Our focus was on leveraging AI for data analysis and creating an app prototype. Throughout the process, we conducted extensive interviews with CCs and other stakeholders to gather valuable insights.



Exploring AI Chatbots

In collaboration with renowned expert Rohini K Srihari and her students from the University of Buffalo, New York, we developed two AI chatbots. These chatbots were designed to train individuals and provide answers to general queries, serving as valuable resources for community.



Partnering for Insights

Aapti, a valued partner, coded over a hundred community videos to extract insights. We are working to templatize these manual codes to potentially train an AI system for extracting insights from the community produced videos. This collaboration has great potential to enhance our data analysis capabilities.



Harnessing AI for Chatbot Solutions

We collaborated with Dara.network to create a video and audio Al chatbot featuring an avatar interface.

Additionally, we subscribed to Glific, a platform enabling seamless community interactions. Leveraging these technologies, we conducted a pilot with 100 volunteers to understand their grievance sharing patterns.

Subsequently, we explored the use of chatbots as a hyperlocal storyshare solution. We are currently focusing on developing chatbots to respond to frequently asked questions from the community content creators.



Joining Open NyAl

We had the privilege of joining Open NyAI, a community of makers and innovators exploring AI for social justice. Within this community, we utilized Jugalbandi, another AI tool, to develop a chatbot supporting a network of active citizens. This initiative enhances engagement with communities and promotes social impact.

Forging Partnerships around Community Genderated data and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

We initiated discussions with the core team of the Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development Data and connected with partners such as Civicus and Wada Na Thoda Abhiyan in the Data for SDGs space. Our aim is to leverage citizen-generated data to address data gaps and accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Building Civic Tech from the ground up

Last year, we piloted various civic tech initiatives to mark our commitment to leveraging technology to drive positive change and empower both government officials and community content creators.

Here's an overview of our key initiatives:



Apps for Government Officials:

- Block Official Video and Data App (built with Glide)
- District Official Video and Data App (built with Glide) These user-friendly apps provide local government officials with access to video stories and data dashboards of grassroots citizens. By facilitating better decision-making and workload management, we aim to enhance their effectiveness in serving the community.



State Data Dashboard:

- Collaborated with Civic Data Lab
- Developed the State Data Dashboard (VV Data)
 This comprehensive platform enables officials
 to analyze and visualize data related to public
 service delivery. By leveraging data-driven
 insights, officials can make informed decisions
 for positive impact.



Dashboard and Apps for CCs:

- CC Data Dashboard (built with Metabase)
- CC Video and Data App (built with Glide) These solutions empower content creators by providing a hub for video access and maintaining online profiles. CC can now seamlessly interact with officials, contributing to efficient governance.



Local government officials often face numerous challenges, including being understaffed and overloaded with grievances from citizens that they struggle to address. With limited time for community visits and filtered information, they lack comprehensive knowledge of community issues.

We worked on the idea of a video and data app that leverage the power of stories. The primary objective of this product is to provide officials with access to video stories and a data dashboard showcasing the perspectives of grassroots citizens. By leveraging valuable information from the app, officials can enhance their work processes, streamline their workload, and ultimately improve the quality of services provided to their communities.

Tony D'Souza, Product Manager

66

"I've known this government official for more than a year. Today, I showed him my data and my work in the community using the Community App.

I felt that the way the official viewed me changed. He began to address me as 'Madam,' almost as an 'equal.' He considered me to be a senior personnel now, as my data showed that I had worked on over 200 issues in my community! He was also intrigued that I'm not a typical 'media journalist,' but rather someone who solves the community problems I bring to light, with the assistance of officials.

He asked me to take a seat and started excitedly talking about how he feels I could help his office create better impact in the community, and asked how he can help me."

Shabnam Begum, a community content creator, sharing her experience after using the dashboard for the first time.



Community App:

All content creators now have their own individualized app, presenting all the videos they have made and data they have gathered in one place. In 2022, over 50 officials explored the first version of the prototype. Multiple feedback calls were done to gather insights for further improvements. The next iteration of the app will launch in late 2023.



IMPACTS AND SOLUTIONS



A CC goes beyond highlighting problems in their videos and follow up each story, leading to what we term as an 'impact'. Last year, they undertook numerous change campaigns and achieved impact in **585 videos**, benefitting over **12 million** people.

By sharing videos on platforms like Facebook and Twitter and tagging relevant officials, the CCs successfully resolved various issues and made these significant impacts.

Their approach involves actively engaging with stakeholders to drive positive change and create lasting impact.

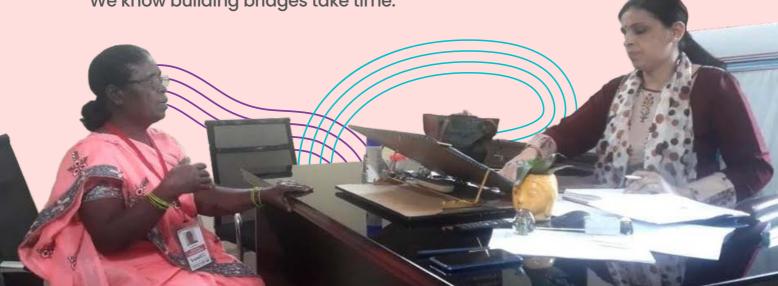
Impacts achieved		Lives impacted	
2021-22	439	2021-22	3,233,596
2022-23	585	2022-23	12,595,252



How CCs Achieve Impact

At VV our mission transcends mere highlighting issues; we are active participants in advocacy discussions, committed to addressing the most pressing challenges encountered by rural communities. One of the ways we see solutions emerging is to bridge the divide between individuals seeking their fundamental rights and the authorities empowered to actualize them.

The CCs go beyond merely creating videos and asking questions; they engage with the relevant stakeholders. They tag government officials, present videos, follow-up with in-person meetings and advocate for action. Many of the issues spotlighted by the CCs can often be resolved at the level of the Block Development Officer (BDO), particularly when related to schemes and entitlements. Certain issues are elevated to higher authorities, with CCs meeting with the appropriate officials. While some impacts materialize in a matter of months, others necessitate a more extended duration for realization. We know building bridges take time.



How Content Creators Organized for Change

Content Creators (CCs) play a crucial role in organizing communities to escalate their problems to government officials.

Here's a breakdown of their efforts in numbers:

Number of	Community
Meetings (Conducted:

2,614

Number of Calls Made

2,063

Number of People Who **Attended Those Meetings:**

73,612

Number of Videos Screened to People:

648

Number of Cases in Which Communities Filed Formal Written Applications to **Government Departments** with the CC's Help and **Encouragement:**

916

Number of Cases Where CCs Motivated and **Ensured That Affected Community Members** Met With Government Officials Responsible for the Solution:

846

by CCs to Various **Government Officials:**

Number of Cases in Which People Were Motivated to Call the Responsible **Government Officials:**

388

Number of Cases in Which People Were Mobilized to Take Part in a Protest such as Dharna, Bandh, or a Rally:

57

Number of Cases Where CC Motivated the Communities to Sign Public Petition on the Matter:

15

Number of Visits Made to **Government Offices:**

2,214





Tweeting for Change: Video Volunteers' Year on Twitter

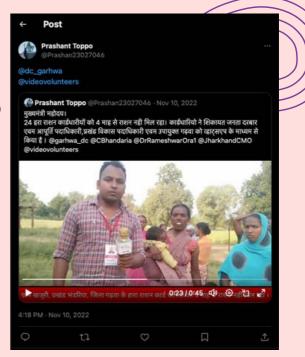
X (formerly Twitter) has become an important tool in the engagement efforts with diverse communities and in amplifying the story. While it is secondary to a CC's methods, it significantly expanded reach and influence. Their main audience on X includes government officials, media outlets, and allied organizations. X was this year to reach out to officials directly and experimenting with different tagging strategies.

A Year in Review

Community content creators'
Engagement: A significant milestone
was the active involvement of CCs, who
started tagging us alongside
government officials. This
demonstrated in our ability to amplify
community voices.

Government Officials' Retweets:

Government officials began retweeting the congratulatory tweets, reflecting their engagement with our content and mission.



Organizations' Involvement: Various organizations started tagging and retweeting our content, broadening our reach and impact.

Media Recognition: We established connections with media houses, leading to the publication of our stories in prominent platforms such as Hindustan Times, The Better India, and O'Heraldo.

Impact: Our activities on X resulted in less than ten direct impacts, but it significantly contributed to our outreach, visibility, and influence in the digital space.

Metrics and Success Indicators:

Our success on X can be measured by several key performance indicators:



- **Profile Visits:** Over the year, profile visits increased by a staggering 897.28%, indicating a growing interest in our content and mission.
- Impressions: Impressions also saw a substantial increase, reaching 25.90% growth during this period.
- New Followers: The number of new followers on our X increased by 66.88%, reflecting a growing community.
- Engagement and Reach: Our tweets earned 28.9K impressions during this 91-day reporting period, with no paid promotions. Different engagement parameters, such as retweets, mentions, and impressions, significantly improved over the reporting period.

How the CCs get authorities to respond to important issues in their community

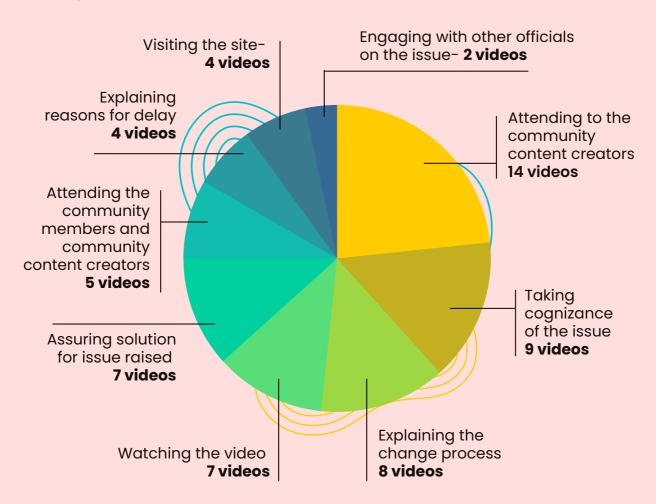
"Building a rapport with officials is a difficult and continuous process due to frequent transfers, new appointments or even change in panchayat leadership," says a CC from Maharashtra. But they also suggest using messaging apps like WhatsApp to reach out to officials directly.

CCs have found that it's important to establish trust within their network, as officials are more likely to respond to those who have a good relationship with the community. "They try to assess us, how much they can trust us and then behave accordingly," explains Avijit Adhikari, a CC in West Bengal. Officials tend to respond to claim-making due to the possibility of protests and fear of negative publicity.



What do officials actually say in the videos?

In a small study of a handful of videos, researchers at Aapti institute created a coding system to analyze the types of statements officials make in the videos when they agree to an interview. Their responses, in the videos studied, include taking cognizance of the issue, to interacting with the community members, from explaining the reasons for delay, to assuring a solution for the issue raised.



IMPACT STORY 1

2 million residents in Bhadohi village gets access to healthcare



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Bhadohi | Uttar Pradesh

IMPACT

Finally, in late May 2022, the hospital was opened with minimal staff and facilities.

LIVES IMPACTED

20,00,000

Issue: Insufficient healthcare access 20,000,00 residents of Bhadohi. In 2008, the construction of a 100-bed hospital commenced in the district with a budget of INR 18 crores. However, in 2014, the construction was halted at 80% completion due to allegations of misappropriation of funds. This left the residents of Bhadohi district in dire straits, forcing them to travel over 60 kilometers for essential healthcare services. Numerous patients lost their lives while journeying to nearest cities, where well-equipped health centers were located.

How the CC resolved the issue:

Anil Kumar decided to address the issue which was also impacting his family members. Anil made a video, which he screened to the local Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA). The MLA assured that the center would become operational after the elections. A month later, Anil and his community members met with the Chief Medical Officer in Bhadohi. Anil and his friends continued to share the video on social media, especially among the locals, and even tweeted it to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.

IMPACT STORY 2

Community Effort Restores Clean Drinking Water for a million villagers in Gumla





Gumla | Jharkhand

Issue: Lack of access to clean drinking water. The solar-powered water tower, known as Jal Minar, in Jamdih village in Gumla, had remained non-functional for over a year. Furthermore, the nearby alternative hand pump had been out of order for a month, and the neighboring colony's hand pump supplied contaminated water. The issue affected over 10 families and approximately 150 students who depended on the tower for drinking water.

Resolution: Shanti Kumari Baraik was approached by the residents to make

a video on this. They organized a meeting and submitted applications to the Panchayat and the Health Department. Unfortunately, they received no response to their requests. On March 15, 2022, during the weekly "Janata Darbar" (public meeting) conducted by the Deputy Commissioner of Gumla, Shanti, along with a resident of Jamdih village, submitted an application requesting the repair of the solar water tower. The Deputy Commissioner, recognizing the gravity of the situation, forwarded this request to the **Deputy Development Commissioner of** Gumla. He instructed them to direct all Block Development Officers in the district to repair the damaged water towers in the district

IMPACT

Following these actions, both the hand pump and the water tank have been repaired, ensuring the community's access to clean drinking water.

LIVES IMPACTED

10,25,213

IMPACT STORY 3

Rural Communities Regain Reliable Electricity Supply in Arwal





Arwal | Bihar

Issue: In Arwal district, rural communities across 23 panchayats (basic unit of local administration) faced a considerable challenge due to erratic electricity supply. This issue severely affected the farmers who relied on consistent electricity to perform essential farming activities.

Resolution: CC S. M. Zafar swung into action. He contacted the electricity department officials, who initially informed that the problem was technical in nature and that improvements were underway. However, what appeared to be a straightforward issue soon became a

prolonged and complex ordeal. As time passed, the farmers grew increasingly distressed, as they were unable to sow paddy in their fields, causing significant disruptions to their farming activities. To address this predicament, Zafar along with the community members reached out to the district president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the BJP President took immediate action and established direct communication with the Deputy Chief Minister. Together, they collaborated to find a solution to the electricity problem in Karpi Block.

IMPACT

Thanks to these efforts, a resolution was achieved, ensuring that consistent electricity supply was restored to the 23 panchayats. This alleviated the significant hardships faced by farmers, allowing them to resume their vital farming activities without interruption.

LIVES IMPACTED

2,00,000

IMPACT STORY 4

Community Effort Drives Healthcare Revival at Sadar Hospital, Benefiting 11.5 million Residents



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West Singhbhum | Jharkhand

IMPACT

The local population, encompassing 15,00,000 residents, witnessed an enhanced level of healthcare access and quality.

LIVES IMPACTED

15,00,000

Issue: ILack of access to healthcare services. Sadar Hospital, West Singhbhum district in Jharkhand, faced a critical shortage of medical specialists and nurses, adversely affecting the healthcare services for a vast population of 15,00,000 people. The hospital lacked essential staff, particularly an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), a dermatologist, and an ophthalmologist, which resulted in limited healthcare access and services for the community.

Resolution:

As a response to the healthcare crisis, CC Bela Jerai created a video on the Sadar Hospital to shed light on the pressing issue. The video emphasized the critical need for an ophthalmologist, ANM, and a skin doctor. Subsequently, after approximately one year from the video's creation and dissemination, the hospital management initiated positive changes. An ophthalmologist was assigned to Sadar Hospital, offering services twice a week. This change was the result of collaborative efforts that included producing the video and engaging in discussions with the hospital manager.

STORYTELLING



Most Moving Stories of the Year

Annually, the CC's document over a thousand community issues and their resolution through impactful videos.

We curate a selection of these videos in a playlist, celebrated by our audiences and upholding high standards of storytelling. The process of whittling down 1000s of videos to the very best ones plays a pivotal role in assessing our network's production quality. The playlist is reviewed to help shape the upcoming year's activities, determine training priorities for CCs, and to guide the communications teams in designing compelling social media campaigns.

This year the playlist has 186 curated videos from the remotest corners of India that showcase linguistic and gender diversity.



What did our top videos this year cover?

Our selected reports delve into grassroots movements, community mobilization, and collaborative efforts involving government representatives and the content creators.

For example, Debgopal Mondol's report spotlights community-led sanitation efforts in Kolkata's red-light district, while Saroj Rawani's report focuses on tribals resisting land grab in Chatra, Jharkhand.

Amir Abbas bravely tells the untold story of ASHA workers' financial insecurity, advocating for their rights. Maya Khodve's video sheds light on the agrarian crisis, saving 200 farmers from land aleination.



Stories on

- Asha workers and mid-day meals
- Agrarian Crisis
- Forced Eviction
- Labour Rights
- Positive Stories
- Gender
- Human Trafficking
- Caste
- Floods

State Wise Breakdown

- Jammu & Kashmir
- Madhya Pradesh
- Uttar Pradesh
- Chhattisgarh
- Maharashtra
- West Bengal
- Jharkhand
- Rajasthan
- Odisha
- Delhi
- Bihar
- Goa



Lily Kujur - The Tea Garden Activist Brewing Change through Community Storytelling

"There's much work to be done to give the plantation workers their rights. I am here to do that with the video stories I make."

In the serene landscapes of the Bamandanga tea garden in West Bengal, where lush hills and aromatic tea leaves paint a picturesque backdrop, Lily Kujur, daughter of a tea garden worker, has become a beacon of change. Lily employs grassroots activism and storytelling to shed light on the hardships faced by the tea garden workers.

The Darjeeling hills, Tarai, and Dooars region boast over 273 tea gardens, employing at least 3,50,000 permanent workers. Despite the exorbitant price tea commands, the workers remain underpaid, deprived of land rights, and subject to exploitation. Lily, one of the 15 content creators in the tea garden areas, passionately addresses issues such as land rights, minimum wages, road connectivity, education, trafficking, and gender.

Read more about Lily

Her commitment to social work began at a young age, facing challenges in traveling 21 kilometers for schooling on barely motorable roads. Lily's fiery spirit and dedication to her community led her to the world of 'community voice'. With the technical training provided by VV, she mastered storytelling, using it as a powerful tool to advocate the rights of tea plantation workers.

In the heart of the tea gardens, Lily's storytelling brews not only awareness but a potent call for justice, resonating with the struggles of those who cultivate the world's morning elixir.

Avijit: A Journalist Turned Storyteller

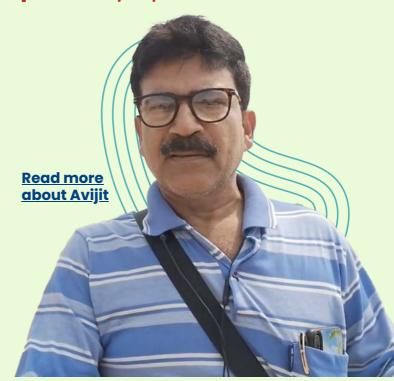
Avijit Adhikary is a seasoned journalist with nearly 8000 days of field experience, straddling the realms of both mainstream media and community storytelling. Over two decades, he's witnessed the dynamic shifts in India's media landscape, maintaining an unwavering commitment to impactful storytelling. Avijit's quest for more meaningful work led him to VV, where he found a unique platform to address local issues and drive change.

Hailing from an economically challenged background, Avijit's personal struggle for education fueled his commitment to empowering underprivileged communities. His impactful video stories on issues such as education for nomadic tribal children earned him prestigious awards.

His work goes beyond reporting; he actively engages with communities to resolve issues ranging from broken bridges to ensuring electricity supply. His dual roles in mainstream journalism and with VV allow him to contribute significantly to societal betterment, earning him respect and admiration.

His remarkable journey with VV has not only given him a platform but also a sense of fulfillment and self-confidence. Avijit Adhikary stands as a testament to the transformative power of community journalism, where storytelling becomes a catalyst for change, and every report is a step towards a better, more equitable world.

"Video Volunteers gave me a platform to go the extra mile for people."



Defying Darkness: Bideshini Patel, Torchbearer for Tribal Rights in Odisha

In the heart of Odisha, amidst the struggles of indigenous tribal communities, Bideshini Patel emerges as a beacon of hope. From a challenging childhood marked by neglect and abuse to becoming a loved social worker, Bideshini's journey is one of resilience and determination.

As a Community Content Creator, she tells stories of powerful mining corporations, tribal rights, and marginalized women. Facing threats and setbacks, Bideshini's spirit remains unbroken. Her efforts have brought electricity, education, and justice to this overlooked corner of Odisha, making her a true torchbearer for change. Her's is a compelling story of a woman who, despite her name meaning "foreigner," has become an integral part of the tribal families, relentlessly advocating for the rights of those often left in the shadows.

"There are several media companies covering corruption-related news, but VVs reports bring these matters affecting the common person to the forefront. This is the reason this organisation is my family. They also stood by me during tough times."

Read more about Bideshini



Shambhulal Khatik: Masterful Storyteller Igniting Change

The indomitable spirit of Shambhulal, a seasoned Community Content Creator, shines through his remarkable journey spanning 12 years. From a tea stall in Gujarat to the corridors of community leadership, his saga resonates with struggles, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to change.

Shambhulal's lens doesn't just capture stories; it becomes a tool for change, transcending personal challenges. His secret? A potent blend of community connection, astute leadership, and an unwavering commitment to resolving the most pressing challenges faced by his fellow villagers.

Water scarcity, electricity woes, gender disparities – Shambhulal tackles them head-on. His stories trigger change, from installing water storage tanks for tribal communities to exposing the unfulfilled promise of rural electrification. Shambhulal's success lies not just in storytelling but in navigating the bureaucratic labyrinth, ensuring that community grievances reach the right ears.

A distinctive feature of Shambhulal's work is his gender sensitivity, evident in stories addressing the plight of pregnant women and advocating for proper facilities for aspiring sportswomen.

As Shambhulal continues to be a catalyst for change, his sights are set on mentoring the next generation of content creators. His story is not just one of personal triumph; it's a testament to the transformative power of storytelling in bringing about positive change at the grassroots level.



SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS



Knowledge is Power: #kNOwTrafficking Campaign Raises Awareness and Inspires Action.



25th July to 5th August





तस्करी जानो । तस्करी रोको #k**N७**₩**Trafficking**



In July 2022, an anti-trafficking info campaign called "#kNOwTrafficking- Taskari Jaano, Taskaari Roko" was launched. CCs have been documenting stories on trafficking and migration since 2010, and as a result, 85 cases of trafficking and migration-related stories have been brought out, with 15 cases resolved, resulting in the rescue of 40 people.











#kNowTrafficking

Bachpan Bachao Andolan and Sanjog partnered in the online campaign to raise awareness on trafficking through social media. The campaign involved TED-style talks in communities with a high prevalence of trafficking in the tea garden and other districts of West Bengal. A total of 31 talks were held, attended by 1060 people.

IMPACT OF THE CAMPAIGN

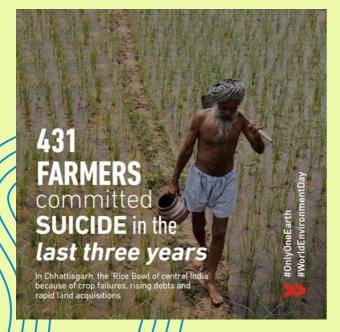
The impact of the campaign was significant, as CC Krishna Mondal, who has made videos on trafficking from the Sundarbans in West Bengal states



World Environment Day Campaign Shines a Light on Local Environmental Issues

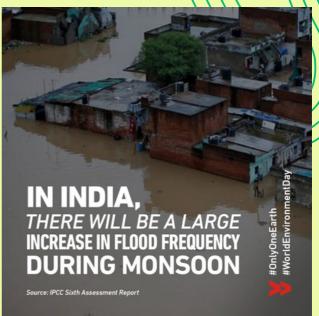


campaign started on June 4 with an episode of Awaz Ho Buland. On June 5, a live session was hosted on youtube with CC Maya Khodve to discuss the impact of climate change in Maharashtra's Nashik











from June 6 to June 9, a series of four live sessions were hosted on Instagram and Facebook.

The sessions featured speakers from various partner organizations discussing environmental issues in their states. The sessions covered climate change in West Bengal and its impact on low-lying lands, industrialization-induced climate change in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, vulnerabilities of the Himalayan range in Kashmir, and the importance of Khazan lands in Goa.

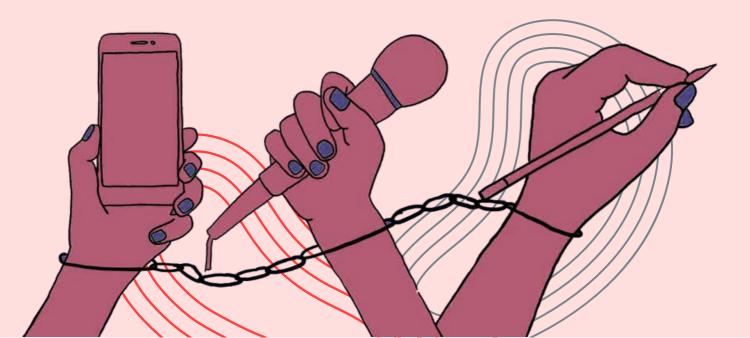




World Press Freedom Day 3rd May 2022

"First-Person Storytelling for Social Justice: VV Explores
Global Impact on World Press Freedom Day"

On World Press Freedom Day 2022, we announced an exciting new research project into first-person social justice storytelling in the US. For about one week, Brigham Young University students took over the VV Instagram account and shared fifteen videos made by amazing social justice content creators in the US. All of these content creators are powerful story tellers but without the viewership they deserve. Our desire was to create a conversation regarding whether our social media feeds show us content from people with lived experience of social problems, and to encourage audiences to find and listen to more diverse voices.



One of the content creators featured was Stephanie Bethany, a US-based autistic YouTuber who shares on her channel her personal experience and advocates for autism awareness. She explains in one of her most popular videos, "Many people have asked me what it's like to be autistic..." adding that she hopes her content give people "a little bit of an answer to the question, what is it like to be autistic."



Chetan Salve shared his story of personal experiences of oppression and marginalization. Salve has been involved in the Narmada Bachao Andolan for the past 22 years, which advocates for the rights of those impacted by the construction of large dams on the Narmada river in India. Salve shared,



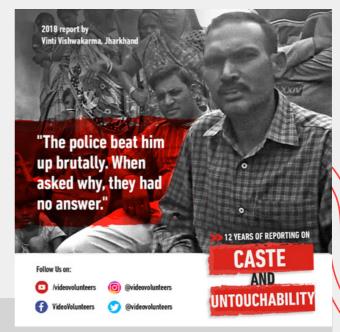
I was persistent about my claims with the government. I organised a collective protest. ... And now my community has been allotted one-hectare land. Breaking the Chains of Caste: Ambedkar Jayanti Campaign Against Untouchability in India



Despite the abolition of untouchability in India's constitution back in 1950, recent data indicates that about 27% of households still practice it, leaving over 160 million people in India considered 'untouchable'. To commemorate Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's 131st birth anniversary and his fight against caste-based oppression, VV conducted an Ambedkar Jayanti campaign.



This campaign featured 12 videos on caste discrimination and untouchability, posters shared on social media platform. A newsletter titled 'Less equal by birth: The story of India's 'untouchables' was released along with an Ambedkar Jayanti special episode of Awaz ho Buland, which covered a ground report on the social conditions of Dalits. The impact was significant, with an average of 50 people viewing each story and new followers added on Instagram.





Gayatri Devi, a Dalit activist, entrepreneur, and CC, shared her early struggles with caste-based oppression when she started working,

...it was very tough. Men from the upper caste community used to make catcalls, pass lewd remarks, say nasty things about me, and question my working hours.

Social Media Stats



2,64,305 PAGEVIEWS

during Apr 1, 2022 -March 31, 2023



3,21,991 SUBSCRIBERS

46,736 new subscribers during the period



25,772 FOLLOWERS

as on March 31, 2023



4815 FOLLOWERS

as on March 31, 2023



1871 FOLLOWERS

as on March 31, 2023





17,800 PAGEVIEWS

during Apr 1, 2022 -March 31, 2023



144,646 FOLLOWERS

as on March 31, 2023



2800 FOLLOWERS

as on March 31, 2023



unheard

1100 FOLLOWERS as on March 31, 2023









986 FOLLOWERS as on March 31, 2023



825 FOLLOWERS as on March 31, 2023

unheard

unheard

unheard Unheard











PRESS COVERAGE



21/4/22

Fighting COVD misinformation in rural India with media partnerships.



Scan to read the article



"Video Volunteers helped us source misinformation and distribute fact-checks...Video Volunteers, with its CCs in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh helped source rumours, falsehoods and misinformation that were circulating within the communities."

05/9/22

<u>'Worse Than Prison': How Journalists Helped</u> Rescue 40 Bonded Labourers From Torture

As soon as the sister in Bhadohi got that call, she approached Anil Kumar and Shabnam Begum, and Anshuman Singh. Intuitively, Anil Kumar knew what was happening, he had seen these contractors luring away people before. He mobilised the community and went to file a report in the local police station.



the better india

Scan to read the article

28/9/22

BMC's apathy parked at this Ghatkopar open space



Scan to read the article



Amol Lalzare released his film on the park's poor condition on YouTube and tagged the ward officer on Twitter in May 2022."

How Community Media in India Holds Local Officials to Account

In new research supported by the MIT Governance Lab (MIT GOV/LAB) and published earlier this year in the journal Comparative Political Studies, Kruks-Wisner gathers lessons from a network of citizen journalists in India who create videos about local needs to mobilize community members and officials to solve problems.



Scan to read the article

8/12/22

Empowerment via Community Media: Through the lens of Devidas Gaonkar



Devidas Gaonkar's journey with VV began in 2009 when he became a CC. Hailing from the indigenous Velip tribe of Goa, Devidas takes great pride in his cultural roots. Raised in a region heavily impacted by mining activities, he initially joined VV to document the environmental consequences of mining in Goa.

He is committed to preserving the oral stories of the Velip community and safeguarding their culture, not just through video but also as a published author.

Devidas is also actively engaged with Goa 360 and is the President of Tribal Research Centre Goa.

23/1/23

This NGO trains people to make and upload videos on social causes

Hindustan Times

Video Volunteers doesn't just teach; it identifies individuals from all over the country, including its remotest parts, and empowers them with these skills.



Scan to read the article



CC Khirendra Yadav was conferred with the Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Journalism Alankaran Samman by Journalist's Welfare Federation, Chhattisgarh on August 10, 2022.



Hailing from the conflict-ridden "red corridor" region of Bastar, Khirendra Yadav is a versatile artist with many talents including sculpting, painting, street theatre performance, and longdistance running. He is also a former district-level football player. As a Dalit, he has witnessed and experienced oppression, which inspires him to help his community fight for their rights. Khirendra Yaday focuses on child rights, women's rights, and HIV through his work as a theatre artist and filmmaker, viewing his videos as an extension of his passion for art and activism.

CC Devidas Gaonkar won the Goa State Biodiversity Conservation Award 2022 and also received a fellowship from the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training(CCRT) to conduct research for the Dhillo festival under Junior Research Fellowship.



Devidas Gaonkar, a proud member of the indigenous Velip tribe, is a poet and journalist. After dropping out of school due to a lack of funds, he discovered his passion for film-making and joined Video Volunteers to document his community's struggles against mining and environmental damage, as well as their fading traditions and tribal rights. He has also captured the Velip community's oral stories on video to preserve their culture and history.

Devidas's his insistence on answers and action has helped his community win important battles, including the rights to preserve the indigenous flora of the Canacona Forest reserve.

CC Wahida Mughal won the Iron Lady Award conferred by Indian Women International Olympic Association Haryana Panipat in May 2022.



Wahida, who lives and works from a remote village in Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir, was recognized for her work in community storytelling. She received an award from the Indian Women's Olympic Association (IWOA), a non-profit organization established by Prof. Sandeep Bhalla in Haryana, India in 2016, which focuses on promoting gender equality in sports. IWOA offers a range of opportunities for women, including sports competitions, workshops, seminars, training sessions, and general and sports education at the district, national, and international levels.

Jahan Ara Khaliq, a volunteer teacher and a CC, was awarded on Labour day by People's Welfare Trust.



"Video Volunteers gave me the platform to embolden myself and confidently put forth the problems of my society."

Jahan Ara is a feminist social worker, who joined the Video Volunteers network in 2016 to work on social issues in Padgampora, a village in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir. Jahan Ara has reported on non-functional village panchayats, infrastructure problems, and the non-availability of staff in the education sector. She also highlights the difficulties faced by the youth in her area, including injuries during clashes, while also showcasing their innovation and achievements.



Gayatri Devi recognized for her outstanding work in empowering young girls and promoting equal rights to education.

"Working with VV to resolve community issues has given me a lot of respect."



She was awarded the Prasasti Patr in July for her efforts in encouraging education among girls and empowering them, as well as for her contribution to community building and development. In addition, Dr. Narayan AB Iyer, the CEO of the Indian Development Foundation, awarded her for spreading awareness on education. Gayatri's dedication to promoting education and empowering young girls has been an inspiration to many in her community.

Gayatri is a social worker since 2001 and a CC. The veteran activist has worked consistently to break down historically ingrained and accepted caste and gender-based discrimination whose effects she personally experienced.



Bipal Rasaily was recognized and honored by the Mangerjung Primary School in Kalimpong for his contribution in bringing attention of the authorities to the school which was on the verge of shutdown through his video report.

Bipal had personally visited the school and interviewed the headmaster, teachers and students to showcase the challenges faced by the school and its development. His efforts were greatly appreciated by the school community and he was felicitated for his dedication to highlighting the issues faced by the school.

Industrialist Cyrus Poonawalla honors CC Maya Khodve's Inspiring Journey

"This car will not only save me a lot of time, energy and money, but it will also be constant encouragement for me to do more."

Read the report in **newslaundry**



Maya was gifted a car by Villoo Poonawalla Charitable Foundation head Jaswinder Narang on behalf of Poonawalla to help her report on problems faced by villagers around Nashik

Renowned industrialist Cyrus Poonawalla, the founder of the Serum Institute of India, one of the world's largest vaccine manufacturers, recently honored Maya Khodve, our community content creator from Nasik district in Maharashtra, with the gift of a car.

This gesture was a heartfelt acknowledgment of Maya's remarkable contributions and a token of appreciation for her unwavering dedication to driving positive social change. Maya's work as an activist and videographer has brought about significant improvements in her local community, making her a deserving recipient of this recognition.

Maya has been associated with Video Volunteers as a content creator since August 2014. Her work has brought about significant improvements in her local community.

Maya's journey from being a rag picker, along with her involvement in a rag pickers' union, has instilled in her a deep understanding of the potential of collective action. Furthermore, she has established her own video production business, showcasing her unyielding commitment to driving positive change in her community.

Avijit Adhikary won the coveted Shishushri Award 2022 from the West Bengal State government for the second consecutive year. Avijit's dedication to highlighting the plight of marginalized communities and bringing their stories to light has earned him this prestigious recognition.



His outstanding videos in Bengali language on the daily struggles and education of children of migrant workers in brick kilns, along with the efforts made by kiln owners to provide education through a temporary school, won him the award for the best video in the audio-visual category.

Avijit, who hails from a remote village in West Bengalis an experienced journalist who has worked with multiple leading vernaculars for over two decades. Having worked with both mainstream and community media, Avijit understands the advantages that a CC has over mainstream journalists in resolving people's issues.

Bideshini was awarded the prestigious Odisha Media Award 2022 becoming the youngest person to receive the honour.



She was chosen from a list of 375 nominated journalists and media persons. Bideshini is proud of this accomplishment and recognizes that her work with Video Volunteers played a significant role in achieving this recognition. She remains dedicated to her mission of using storytelling to bring attention to underrepresented issues in her community.

The Odisha Media Award (OMA) was established by a group of journalists and development activists with a commitment to the people of Odisha. The award aims to recognize and encourage the work of journalists and media persons in Odisha who champion the causes of the people

Future Plans and Goals

There are many initiatives planned for 2023–2024. We're developing an online curriculum; we've developed an app for government officials to identify local volunteers who can support them, and also one to distribute community-created content. We're doing a huge state -level survey about government officials to test how they respond to citizen videos, how they want to collaborate with citizens and how they think about 'voice'. Our hypothesis is that access to citizen voice increases trust, empathy and a spirit of co-creation.



The next two years at VV will be about research initiatives and tech pilots. Our mission is empowering community voices, and in addition to providing tools for citizens to use their voices, we also study 'voice' itself. 'Voice' for us is something quite concrete: it relates to what someone says when they are asserting their power to someone with authority. We will be writing about 'voice' itself: how it is defined, why it matters, how it can be scaled, how we can improve the delivery systems for voice, and most crucially, how we can unpack the insights within it.

Over the last 20 years, we have designed multiple community media/voice models that have been implemented by organizations in several countries. As we look to the future, our focus will be on applying platform thinking to develop new ways to aggregate, understand and scale citizen insight. Scaling citizen voice is finally possible, and we are very excited.















