SEVEN STATE COMMUNICATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP KICKS OFF @ LUCKNOW

As part of an extensive programme to assess the communication needs of its CSO partners, PACS has initiated an extensive two-day workshops in the seven states of Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh to be held over October-November 2011 in Lucknow, Patna, Bhopal, Ranchi, Raipur and Bhubaneswar. The exercise, to be conducted by Delhi based agency, The Resource Alliance will introduce the concept of Appreciative Inquiry and use several international communication strategies and techniques to lead the participants on a route of self discovery and growth. The first of these workshops is being held in Lucknow on October 11-12 with 34 participants from partner organisations.

THE FOUR R’S IN NEEDS ASSESSMENT

PACS expects partner CSOs to be able to:
- **Raise** issues of exclusion,
- **Represent** excluded people be part of representations in all fields
- **Responsiveness**, enable responsive service providers and
- **Report** and replicate key success stories to usher in perceptible change in society

ON THE AGENDA: DISCOVERY, DREAM, DESIGN, DESTINY...

Lead Communication Consultant, Augustine Veliath, led the discussions on the first day guiding the participants through a journey that would cover two days and usher them through a wonderful period of (self) Discovery where participants would learn to relate their experiences of successful communication, and then proceed to Dream in order to achieve goals they hope to attain. The sojourn continues over the next day to help them design their own course of action and craft a communication vision for the organization through open dialogue. Finally at the Destiny/ Delivery point, the peak of the discussions, the participants co-construct the future need and tools for innovation & action.
SEVERAL STORIES EMERGED FROM THE SESSIONS THROUGH THE DAY... OF GRIT, GUTS, DETERMINATION AND PERSEVERENCE IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION AND EVEN GRAVE THREAT TO LIFE!

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system ‘life’. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to heighten positive potential. Instead of adopting the standard traditional approach of looking for a problem, AI looks for what works in an organization using the technique of SOAR—Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations arriving at Results!

By seeking out the best communication experiences of each participant, the workshop opened them to further introspection, exploring how the best communication moment came about and sharing it with their peers. Thus whether they were tales of motivating people to administer polio drops to his children or the quest for social justice for an innocent youth from Dalit community, gradually the sagas unraveled revealing slowly but surely, the strengths that lay within. From the case of reforming an non responsive teacher at a village primary school to saving a minor girl from being “sold” in marriage, each tale brought forth the abilities of partner CSOs in fighting social injustice and exclusion and adopting innovative communication techniques to turn the odds in their favour!

**Session plan of the day**

**Group Session: We Discover**
Appreciate the best of "what is" by focusing on peak times.

**Group Session: We Dream**
Creating a positive vision of what might be, what we would like to achieve through Pro Action Café.

**Reflection on questionnaires received**
Savitri may stand barely at three feet in her half inch heels but her courage and determination to fight social injustice makes sure she stands tall among her colleagues. Working with runaway kids from troubled backgrounds, Savitri rarely lets her small wards know of her own battle against discrimination. Hers being the only Dalit house in a locality teeming with upper castes, Savitri met stiff resistance when she tried to get her plot of land registered. When she complained to the local police of the resistance, she was waived aside with the answer that there was no staff available to probe her complaint. Undeterred Savitri went to the offices of the District Magistrate (DM) and put up her application before him. Not only was her plea heard, but the DM ordered the reluctant cop to take immediate action on her report and apprise him of the progress on the case within 24 hours. Today Savitri has won her fight against injustice, registered her land holding and continues to seek justice for others!

SHE’S A SMALL WONDER

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--- Savitri

DISCOVERY - ROLE PLAY

In groups of three, participants learned to relate, listen and questions as they passed through the roles of narrator, note taker and questioner to probe and come out with success stories to put before others. Whether it was the innovative use of media to expose corruption and wrongdoing or simple advocacy, each had something to add to the basket that was overflowing with success sagas at the day’s end.
WHAT'S MORE IN STORE?

Day Two plans on dealing with the present and grounding the dreams to the facts of the proposal and channels of communication for PACS.

Session plan for day two:

Group work: We Design
Design the future of PACS communication through open dialogue.

Group work: We Deliver; Our Destiny As Communicators
Co-construct the future through proper planning and clear tools of communication based on their areas of intervention

Know more on PACS:

website: [www.pacsindia.org](http://www.pacsindia.org)
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