

# Annual Report

July 2006 – June 2007



Development Research Network



### ► Background

D.Net (Development Research Network) is a non-profit organisation, implementing research and action programmes for economic development of Bangladesh. Incepted in January 2001, D.Net obtained legal status under the Societies Act 1860 with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Bangladesh in August 2001. Working with interfaces of major development issues, D.Net thrives to build up itself as a multi-disciplinary research organisation.

### ► Vision

A society where information and knowledge play its designated role to facilitate the participation of all stakeholders for generation of wealth and its equitable distribution for poverty alleviation.

### ► Mission

To become a premier organisation in Bangladesh and beyond, by conducting research and undertaking various programmes in areas where information and knowledge can contribute to poverty alleviation, economic growth and peace.

### ► Goals

- Generation and sharing of knowledge for broader constituency.
- Playing a visible role in ICT and development policy.
- Sharing best practices in South Asia and beyond.

## Chairperson's Message

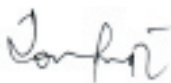


D.Net has been playing a vital role in the cutting edge areas of development research and in translating those research findings into livelihood development of the common people since 2001. As the Chairperson of the organisation I take pride in observing that D.Net is now focussing on consolidating its various activities. Working environment in Bangladesh can be challenging for many reasons, the toughest one is the skill gap. However, I strongly believe that one of the major strengths of D.Net is its committed, young and energetic workforce. I would like to express my gratitude to the young team of D.Net on the occasion of the publication of its 'Annual Report 2006-2007'.

This annual report is the document of transparency and accountability of the organisation to its stakeholders. It elaborates the activities of the organisation as well as its challenges and successes. With limited resources but sincere efforts, D.Net colleagues have been able to buildup reputation among the stakeholders at the grassroots level, which is the most important capital for the organisation. D.Net's endeavour has also attracted attention of the global stakeholders. The most commendable achievement of D.Net is its ability to work in collaboration with many like-minded organisations, which has created a synergy and produced startling results. D.Net has also successfully capitalised its partnership for building its own capacity and spreading its philosophy into many minds. Formation of Bangladesh Telecentre Network is one of the fruits of such partnership. I wish a grand success to the network, under the able leadership of D.Net.

D.Net has substantially expanded its horizon of activities; it is now time to focus on consolidation and quality. Through formulation of internal management policies and Framework of Internal Governance, the process of institutionalisation of the organisation has gone deeper. I further appreciate the fact that D.Net has identified its core values through a consultative and participatory process with participation of all staff through experience. The core values are: sharing, transparency, continuous learning, dialogue and gender equity. The core values would guide the institution to move forward uninterruptedly.

I solicit hearted support, cooperation and advise from all stakeholders and well wishers of D.Net to help us achieve our mission and vision.



**(Toufic Ahmad Choudhury)**

Chairperson, D.Net

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## 2006-2007 At a Glance

### August 2006

- International workshop on 'Building Telecentre Family in Bangladesh: A Workshop for Social Entrepreneurs & Practitioners' held at RDRS in Rangpur.
- First Digital Exhibition of Gunijans.
- Joint Research of D.Net and Sarvodoya, Sri Lanka
- D.Net in association with other organisations launched Bangla version of *Telecentre Times* for the telecentre professionals and enthusiast in Bangladesh.

### September 2006

- D.Net participated at IT Mela of BASIS in Rajshahi and Bogra.

### October 2006

- D.Net organised two training workshops to evaluate project supported by IDRC and to develop Monitoring and Evaluation System of D.net's projects.

### January 2007

- Bangladesh Telecentre Network (BTN) has launched in Dhaka and D.Net has been elected as a first secretariat of the BTN.
- CLICK programme started under Microsoft Unlimited Potential Programme.

### February 2007

- For the first time in 2007 D.Net has participated in the Ekushey Book Fair organised in Bangla Academy.
- D.Net participated in e-ASIA 2007 event held in Putrajaya, Malayasia.

### March 2007

- D.Net has participated in 'BASIS SOFTEXPO 2007', is the biggest showcase in the country for software products and services, IT enabled product and services.

### April 2007

- D.Net and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) jointly organised a workshop to create audio content developers at the grassroots.
- UNESCO and D.Net have signed an agreement to jointly implement potential educational adult learning content "Naree O Noksha".

### June 2007

- D.Net started research collabotation with Oxfam GB.

## Introduction

D.Net under its Mission 2010, the five- year strategic plan, conducts research and implements action programmes under six thematic areas:

1. Access to Information and Knowledge
2. Enhancing Business Competitiveness for Economic Growth
3. Governance and Human Rights
4. Human Resource Development
5. Institutional Capacity Development
6. Economic and Development Policy Research,

This report elaborates programmes and projects undertaken and implemented in programme year 2006-07.

The report has been made descriptive to inform D.Net's stakeholders in detail about its activities. Thus, it probably went beyond the traditional format of annual reports. Such descriptive nature of the report would help stakeholders to know about D.Net in greater depth and breadth.



# Access to Information and Knowledge

Access to information is the earliest and largest theme of D.Net since 2001, in terms of programmes and activities. By implementing a number of projects and programmes under this theme, D.Net aims to develop appropriate methodologies for conducting research and promoting issues of access to information among broader constituencies for active engagement. Some of the activities aimed under the theme include: **recording evidence** on the impact of ICTs on poverty; **raising awareness** among the stakeholders regarding the impact of ICTs on poverty; **identifying innovative solutions** for using ICTs in healthcare, education, human rights, disaster management and agriculture and ensuring improved access to livelihood information that enhances livelihood opportunities. Pallitathya is the main programme under this.

## Pallitathya: Sustainable Rural Livelihood Information Network

Pallitathya is the largest programme of D.Net since 2003. The objective of this programme is to conduct research and promote models for creating sustainable information and knowledge system for the poor and marginalised population of Bangladesh. The action research that has so far been undertaken at D.Net through the establishment of Pallitathya Kendras (Rural Information Centres - RIC) prove that if carefully designed, advance ICTs can facilitate poor people in improving their livelihood through access to relevant livelihood related information and knowledge. The researches under this programme have helped and facilitated D.Net to build the Pallitathya Model (Figure 1).

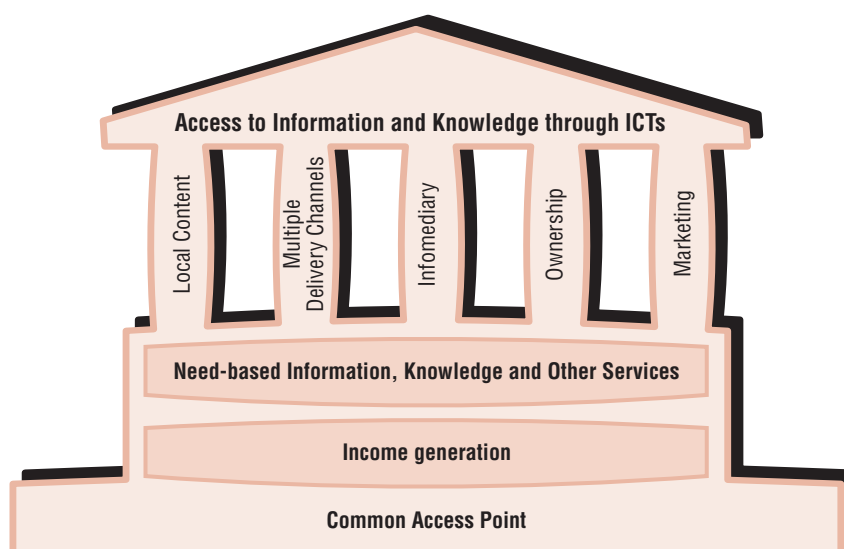


Figure 1. Pallitathya Model

## Impact of ICT Carried Livelihood Information Delivery System for Rural Community

This is a research project implemented by D.Net with the support of International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada. The project was planned for two years initially from April 2005 to March 2007 to answer five key questions:

- i) What are the specific end-user information requirements by the rural poor of Bangladesh? What are the existing sources of information and their effectiveness?
- ii) What form of digital content will satisfy those information requirements?
- iii) What ICT-based delivery channels are most appropriate and cost-effective to make the digital contents available to the end-users?
- iv) What would be the most effective role of infomediaries (information intermediary) to make the content accessible to the end users? and
- v) What is the impact of these information on the lives of end-users?

Under the project, the following activities were undertaken:

- a. Two RICs were established in Noakhali and Netrokona.
- b. Infomediaries played a key role in ensuring the 'no exclusion' policy to maximise the benefit of ICTs. People, who know how to use computer and other ICTs, are able to access these technologies themselves to retrieve information and knowledge relevant to their livelihood. However, in Bangladesh most of the people do not or cannot access ICTs, either due to illiteracy (also ICT illiteracy), or for physical disability or even social taboo. These people have to become either literate or they can receive help from the infomediaries, who sit at the centres with a knowledge database or move from door-to-door with a mobile phone to facilitate communication with the *Help Line* expert.
- c. Around 30,000 pages of Bangla language content in nine livelihood areas have been developed for making ICTs relevant to the poor peoples' life. This information and knowledge base was developed based on the needs identified through research, where local participation was the key. The content-base is called Jeeon-IKB ([www.jeeon.com.bd](http://www.jeeon.com.bd)).
- d. Offline dissemination of knowledge and information is a big part of the whole system, under which a Bangla monthly bulletin ***Pallitathya*** is regularly published.
- e. The focus was not only on the computer, but also on other modes of ICTs. D.Net successfully deployed mobile phone for accessing expert consultation for the poor people.
- f. Gender main streaming was the focus of this project; female infomediaries from the villages not only changed lives, but also made the modern ICTs available to more than 40% of the beneficiaries.
- g. D.Net used latest methodologies for evaluating its projects. Outcome Mapping and Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) were used for evaluating the project.
- h. D.Net conducted a study on impact of ICTs on the livelihood of the poor people and developed a new methodology. It introduced the concept of benefit on investment (BOI) to be used for evaluating sustainability of ICT-based information and knowledge system for the poor instead of using return on investment (ROI), which happens to ignore social benefits of such a system.



D.Net's understanding was that pure profit-oriented business model would exclude the poor from the benefit of ICTs. To ensure that the poor are not excluded, the ownership issue is always important. D.Net also plans to publish a research monograph based on findings of this action research.

- i. Through this and other related research projects D.Net has been promoting the concept of partnership for building a country-wide network of telecentres. D.Net therefore launched the idea Mission 2011, which is about building a sustainable system of information and knowledge for the poor with participation of multiple organisations, by the 40th independence anniversary of Bangladesh.

### **Evaluation of Pallitathya Programme**

D.Net conducted an evaluation of the programme during October to December 2006. International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Association of Progressive Communications (APC) provided technical assistance to D.Net's research team to understand the GEM and Outcome Mapping, and apply them in evaluating not only this particular programme, but any programme or project at D.Net. The objectives of the evaluation were to draw lessons from the current activities of the programme towards possible changes in its implementation and determining scope for new elements that can be incorporated in any existing or new programmes.

The evaluation study was an exercise of self reflection for the D.Net research team. One of the major lessons drawn from the evaluation was that identification of the right infomediary (information intermediary) is the key element of success. A number of important lessons were learned from the process of project implementation. Some of them are:

1. An infomediary, a human interface between digital livelihood content and information seekers, is a vital component of the whole concept of the Pallitathya Model. The quality of the infomediary matters. Information dissemination was better in those locations where suitable and qualified infomediaries were available. It was found that in selection of the infomediaries, quick learning skill, familiarity in using ICTs and social commitment are important characteristics to look for. These factors help to determine the impact on the beneficiaries and their attitude towards new technology and the specific programmes. The impression about Pallitathya Centre was excellent in three of the four RICs operated by D.Net, whereas in the fourth location it was mixed. It was also identified that attitude of local organisation is also important; there is a correlation between motivation of infomediary and readiness of the local organisation.
2. The idea of “critical mass” of livelihood content worked well and Pallitathya Centre became a “*one stop information centre*” for the villagers. The content in all areas of livelihood have been developed and made available since beginning of the programme. As a result, demand for content in one area was created through the demand in content for other areas. This integrated approach may be promoted for other telecentre practitioners.
3. Resource pooling was one of the important success factors of D.Net's *Pallitathya Model*. D.Net was disheartened and frustrated by the varying levels of understanding of different donors and about the importance of local content. In some cases, D.Net also understood the limitation of resources from the donors as well. Following the critical mass approach, the content development in nine livelihood areas was supported by IDRC Canada, Research Initiative Bangladesh (RIB) and Manusher Jonno

Foundation. This combination of resources proved that ownership of design of project with flexible donor support can be a critical success factor.

4. Demanding information for solving livelihood improvement is an issue of behavioural change of the villagers. Door-to-door services with mobile technology can be more effective in changing the behavioural pattern. Based on the learning from the programme, D.Net plans to introduce PDA/SmartPhone or similar mobile device instead of simple mobile phone for the mobile ladies, which will enable them to provide various services to the people at their door step and ensure better income opportunities at the same time.
5. An ICT-based Help Line emerged as a new channel for accessing information for the rural community, having coverage across the country thanks to high penetration of mobile phone.
6. No exclusion policy proved to be effective in creation of confidence among the villagers. It was possible due to the three-pronged approach:
  - a. Deployment of infomediary, a human interface between users and expert content;
  - b. Mobile service through mobilisation work; and,
  - c. The assistance of the mobile lady, who visits rural households in search of people who are unable to visit the centres for various reasons.
7. Similarly, the no refusal policy was also important in winning the hearts and minds of the beneficiaries while making the services effective.
8. In a few cases, it was found that information receivers did not receive proper services from the institutions they have been referred to. This implies that information service alone may not prove to be adequate. Improvement of quality of services delivered by service providing institutions is also needed for effectiveness of information services.
9. Promotion of access to livelihood information is relatively a new phenomenon. The research shows that a visual demonstration is more effective than lecture based mobilisation camp (meeting, focus group discussion etc.). Design of promotion cannot be made with a residual approach but only by oral communication when behavioural change happens to be a major goal.
10. It was found that issue based (agriculture, health, legal & human rights, education) camp is a very effective tool to promote online activities.

### **Can Access to Information Improve the Situation of Temporary Domestic Migration due to Monga?**

During the baseline survey of the IDRC project, it was understood that access to information can play an important role in improving the livelihood of people affected by *Monga*. Although it was not the mandate of the research project, D.Net wanted to investigate the issue and conduct a parallel survey. Despite all commitments, the study remained incomplete during the programme year 2006-07. The resource mobilisation efforts drained huge energy, which was crucial for ensuring institutional survival. The study will be completed in the next fiscal year.

## Access to Information for Improvement of Rural Livelihood Phase II

This action research was implemented by D.Net with the support of RIB. The duration of the research was 18 months from March 2005 to August 2006. The research was conducted in the village of Babrijhar, Nilphamari Sadar Upazila, Nilphamari. The objective of the action research was to develop alternative business models with infomediary concept for improving access to information for rural livelihood. For developing an integrated system of ICT-based rural livelihood, information and knowledge services were made available to the rural people through locally owned Pallitathya Centre (RIC). Pallitathya Centre offered a range of services falling under two categories: livelihood information and knowledge, and necessary ancillary services for generating income for the centre.

Livelihood information and knowledge were the core service provided through four different channels:

- i) Offline CD based content;
- ii) Mobile phone based Help Line;
- iii) Video documentary; and
- iv) Internet.

'Infomediary' was the bridge that acted as a link between rural people and ICTs for access to livelihood information.

The project shows that access to information on demand is an issue of behavioural change of the villagers which are likely to occur slowly. A consistent and prolonged intervention is required for behavioural change.

The local community through a committee has taken over the ownership of the centre. If all the components function well, it will be possible to fully recover the operating costs in 3 to 5 years.



*A woman sharing her problem with the help desk expert through mobile phone at a Pallitathya Kendra.*

## **Abolombon II: Empowering People and Alleviating Poverty through Improved Access to Livelihood Information**

D.Net had successfully implemented a project titled '*Abolombon Empowering People through Improved Access to Information on Governance and Human Rights*' during March 2005 – August 2006 supported by Manusher Jonno Foundation. The project was a key component under the umbrella programme of Pallitathya. The primary focus of the project was to improve access to information on governance and human rights issues by the rural poor. Use of ICTs was experimented in the project successfully and the project outcome was very positive in terms of changing lives of the people, who received information and related services.

The success of the project and lessons learned provided enough ground for the next phase, Abolombon II: Empowering People and Alleviating Poverty through Improved Access to Livelihood Information. Under this new phase, additional information and knowledge centres will be open and operated by local organisations and groups with close cooperation and support of D.Net. This approach has another dimension of sustainability of ICT-based information system for the poor. As the information system generates money, it lessens the economic burden for the organisation and provides new earning opportunities.

This phase thus aims to spread the experience of the previous project, and continue experiments under D.Net's Pallitathya programme in new locations of Bangladesh with special focus on local ownership and sustainability. D.Net also plans to work closely with a number of local organisations and groups for establishment of *Pallitathya Centres*, a common access point for livelihood information for the rural community, with emphasis on women, handicapped and other minority groups for accessing the whole spectrum of livelihood information.

The first phase of the project established the fact that if carefully designed with local participation and ownership, ICT-based livelihood information system can make positive changes in the lives of rural poor both in terms of empowerment and well-being. Financial and material contribution of the local organisations is the key element of this second phase; the cost of which would have been at least 60% higher if the previous model of funding had been followed.

The project has two distinct objectives:

- a. Development of D.Net's capacity, as a hub for information and knowledge base, with cost-effective and relevant technology solutions and capacity building of local social entrepreneurs, so that D.Net can support a large number of RICs, established with full or joint local ownerships;
- b. Providing support to a number of organisations and groups for establishment and operation of *Pallitathya Centres*; where support of recurring cost will be provided with a diminishing share for D.Net, over a period of three years so the centres can operate on their own.

Under the first component of the project, D.Net will continue its development of digital livelihood content in simpler Bangla language in textual, pictorial and audio-visual format. The demand for the

latter was identified during the implementation of the first phase of the project. The content is being added to *JEEON-IKB*, the off-line content base of D.Net. A large chunk of the content will also be made available online through *abolombon.org*, *pallitathya.org* and *jeeon.com*. *abolombon.org* was developed under the first phase of the project.

Help Line is in operation under the project with new features. As the internet connectivity is available in the project areas, two types of *Help Line* will be operational: (a) Internet based *Help Line* from the RICs; (b) Mobile phone based *Help Line* operated through mobile ladies. The mobile ladies bring the information services at the door-step of the villagers, which is particularly helpful for rural women and the handicapped. In both cases a central *Help Line* is in operation by a group of professionals who are ready for providing answers and counselling to the livelihood queries of the rural people.

One of the major demands for livelihood information is directory service. As the project area is going to expand, the existing directory database *Jeeon-Thikana* is being updated for covering six new districts (in minimum 18 locations). At least twenty five (25) RICs are planned under the project to be operated by grassroots organisations with close support and monitoring of D.Net.

The centres provide both livelihood information services and other income generating ancillary services. The net income is deposited in the centres' bank accounts and become the property of the centres at the end of the project. These incomes will also play a role in making the centres sustainable and self-reliant.

It was found that thematic issue-based camps turned out to be very effective for marketing and promotion of the centres' activities. Thus four thematic issue based camps are being held at each centre with participation of D.Net. Promotional materials like posters, leaflets etc. are provided by D.Net in each of the centres.

The specific outputs of the project are:

- 1) Adequate web and CD based livelihood digitised content (both textual and audio-visual format) are available for dissemination through the *Pallitathya Centres*;
- 2) Twenty Five (25) functional *Pallitathya Centres* with differential support mechanism to make it self-sustainable within a period of 3 years;
- 3) A mobile-phone based and online Help Line services for providing immediate real-time information to the villagers;
- 4) At least 150,000 beneficiaries are taking ICT-based livelihood information and ancillary services.

The duration of the project is 36 months from March 2007 – February 2010. Twenty five RICs are planned to be launched in six divisions namely: Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal.

It is a tri-partite contributory project, where contribution of Manusher Jonno Foundation is BDT 45,964,692; contribution of D.Net is BDT 2,168,827 and contribution of D.Net and local partner organisations both in cash and kind is BDT 7,301,472. Such combinations of financial and in kind contribution make the project outcomes sustainable.

Some specific achievements and targets are:

- a. More than 150,000 beneficiaries benefitted by using the livelihood information.
- b. More than 500,000 indirect beneficiaries (for e.g. informal passing of information by a service recipient and people getting better services from different service providing agencies as an impact of Pallitathya model which helped to create awareness etc.) will receive support from information centres.
- c. At least 125 educated youths will find employment opportunities.
- d. The government and many other organisations will establish information centres, which will facilitate the rural people, overcome the digital divide and build a country-wide network of information centres.

During the period from March 2007 to June 2007, 19 organisations have been identified for partnerships. Three RICs already started operations, namely: Padma of Jhinaidah; Diganter Dak, Subarnachar, Noakhali and Babrijhar Pallitathya Centre, Nilphamari. The first training of the infomediaries was held in Dhaka during May 2 - May 16, 2007. The second training of infomediaries started on June 19, 2007 where infomediaries of four organisations were trained. The organisations were: Ghashful, Chittagong; Gandhi Ashram Trust, Joyag, Noakhali; Dharitri, Mongla, Bagerhat; and Gono Unnayan Centre (GUK), Gaibandha.

### **Teletathya**

Teletathya is one of the success stories of D.Net. It is about providing consultation and information to the people over telephone and the internet. Teletathya is designed in a manner that it can be developed into *People's Call Centre* in coming years.

The concept was first tested in 2004, through a project implemented by seed grant of Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP).

During this post-modern era, when there is a disproportionate hype about using computers and internet for tackling issues of economic deprivation and social injustice, the concept of using a relatively less 'fashionable' technology, the mobile phone, as an effective 'last-mile solution' to take information to the poor was floated by D.Net.

This innovative idea of using the mobile phone was taken place on the background of remarkable success in Bangladesh with more than 85% of geographical coverage for bridging the gap between information providers and the target beneficiaries. Questions from rural areas can be handled through a 'Help Line' person by subject matter experts who are equipped with ICTs to respond to specific queries within a short time. It is important to recognise that not all queries are handled through this service since many problems require physical inspection for a meaningful solution.

As the initial project was operating with a good outcome at the grassroots level, D.Net incorporated it in the Pallitathya Model, which ensured D.Net's RICs to implement 'no refusal' and 'no exclusion' policies for the services provided by them. The Help Line services have gone into the third phase at present. During the second phase the Help Line continued its operation for four RICs under the *Abolombon, Impact of ICT-carried Livelihood Information on Rural Livelihood and Access to Information for*



*Improvement of Rural Livelihood Phase II* projects. The third phase of the Help Line started in April, 2007 with the brand name of Teletathya.

The third phase is proposed from the period of April 2007 to June 2009, within which 'Teletathya' will be a project of an independent social entrepreneurship spin off from D.Net.

### **Second Phase of *jeeon.com.bd*: Joomla-based CMS Development for Livelihood Content Portal**

The *jeeon.com.bd* is the on-line version of the off-line *Jeeon-IKB* (information and knowledge base). It has been successfully working in *Pallitathya Kendras* (RICs) since 2005. The on-line version of *Jeeon* is going to be a sub-project of *Pallitathya* Programme from the year 2007-08. Under *jeeon.com.bd*, digital content will be developed along with a CMS (Content Management System). After testing several such systems, Joomla, the open source CMS, was chosen for creating the customised CMS.

In order to meet the demand for online livelihood content, D.Net strived to improve efficiency in the content development process. As the database gradually developed, the need for a better management system has also increased.

Joomla offers several privileges which are particularly suitable for the livelihood contents developed by D.Net. Firstly, it is easier to fit the existing content structure of *Jeeon* into Joomla. The system also enables its implementers to customise it as required.

Secondly, D.Net prefers a Bangla system for *Jeeon*. Fully developed Bangla CMS is not available at present. BD Joomla, an international group is working to develop a Bangla website using this CMS that may extend necessary support to D.Net when necessary. Another additional feature is the group of developers working on Joomla worldwide, which would be helpful in the future for improvement of the CMS. Lastly and most importantly, Joomla is a free resource, i.e. D.Net will be able to legally expand it without any license fee.

It is hoped that the new system will provide better facilities to the users than the previous ones. It will significantly reduce involvement of technical persons for content development. The browsing system will be smarter and the printing facilities will also be significantly improved.

Knowledge Management Division (KMD) is in charge of the CMS development, assisted by the content development team and others in the research division. As it is being understood and experienced, the whole activity of CMS is actually a process of huge learning. It also consumes more time than expected requiring some changes in the content development activities on the whole.

### **Innovative Solutions**

One of the major problems for the telecentres across the globe is getting innovative solutions which can reduce cost of operations, enhance income opportunities and outreach to the community. D.Net's team started a project of its own (without outside financing) in January 2007 to identify and develop solutions, which can address problems of telecentres. D.Net learned important lessons from the projects implemented in the past three years. Particularly, the sustainability debate sparked the idea of having such a project, which will identify new technologies, solutions and products and promote them among the telecentre practitioners for raising income and ensuring financial sustainability.

Under the project the first solution was 'Info lady'. The solution proposed deployment of information workers with mobile devices to provide information, communication and other ancillary services at the door step of people in rural areas and to generate income. This turned out to be a new profession in rural areas for educated men and women. The name 'Info lady' was chosen from D.Net's project, help line - the 'mobile lady', a woman with mobile phone offering counselling services at the doorstep of villagers through a mobile phone. In the proposed solution instead of the mobile phone the potential worker would use PDA, classmate PC, EEE PCs or any other similar kind of mobile multi-media device for offering multiple services. This model estimated that a mobile lady can earn BDT 5000 to BDT 20000 per month.

D.Net is currently working on low cost power back-up system for desk-top PCs which may be used in telecentres and reduce cost of operation.

### **Sustainability of Telecentres**

D.Net has undertaken a study on sustainability of telecentres based on the action research projects implemented so far. The objective of the research is to provide some fresh ideas in the debate on sustainability issues. There are two distinct schools of thought on this issue. One school believes in 100% financial viability as the way of ensuring sustainability, as they believe that financial sustainability is the only problem of telecentres. The other school believes that the services provided through telecentres are 'public goods' and like any other public goods, the services should be freely available to the community and it is the responsibility of the stakeholders to ensure resources for making the telecentres run. D.Net's approach on sustainability is a mixture of the two.

Sustainability of telecentres or any social enterprises is not only an issue of generating income but there is a whole spectrum of issues related to sustainability, namely: financial, operational, socio-cultural, technological and such. A holistic approach is needed so that the information and knowledge system for the poor can be useful to the community for a long period of time and can also become an integrated part of the ecosystem in the rural community.

The survey is now in process in order to collect the key insights from the ground. The report is planned to be finalised by end of 2008.

### **Telecentre Times (Bangla and English Version)**

A couple of years ago, few telecentre networks and telecentre practitioners understood the purpose and power of learning and sharing experiences. Many perceived it as another way of revealing "too many secrets" to the world. The first-ever Global Telecentre Leaders' Forum in Tunisia in November 2005, organised by telecentre.org, changed many things.

After over four evenings of interactive discussion in Hotel El-Hana; TLF, Sarvodaya, UgaBYTES and D.Net agreed on a meeting, called '*A partnership at Midnight*' to pursue the possibilities of collaborative work. The three partners kept the online linkage with each other until they announced their camaraderie on 26th March, 2006 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The occasion is remembered as "Building a Common Path -

Beyond WSIS: A Collaborative Partnership.” Telecentre.org agreed to be the celebrant and IDRC funded the reception and travel costs of the partners. The telecentre newspaper covered the event as the commencement for collaborative programmes registered under [www.telecentre.org/projects/blossom](http://www.telecentre.org/projects/blossom).

*The Telecentre Times* is now a reality. It nurtures goodwill and common learning among grassroots-voices; capturing grassroots innovations, experiences, novel solutions and much more, disseminating them in a single publication through regional networks, websites and mailing lists. It's basic aim is to energise as well as amplify best practices and programmes in the *Telecentre* movement.

Many other networks eagerly attributed the concept of making the Times a truly collaborative publication.

In practice and design, the *Times* uses voluntary efforts and resources of regional *telecentre* networks and telecentres, which are keen to share and build bridges between each other. Each network has some goodwill lead editors who consolidate all the efforts made by different individuals. UgaBYTES is responsible for coordinating the process, including designing the online and offline versions. Every organisation hosts the online Times on its website. The printing is done centrally to minimise costs, this particular one has been done in Sri Lanka with the coordination of Sarvodaya while the printing cost was funded by telecentre.org. Browse [http://www.mission2011.net.bd/index.php?option=com\\_docman&Itemid=99](http://www.mission2011.net.bd/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=99) for English version and for Bangla version please browse and <http://www.ugabytes.org/telecentretimes>.

### **Telecentre Times English Version**

On May 9, 2006 at the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) International Forum, the newspaper for the telecentres across the globe called ‘The Telecentre Times’ was launched in Colombo, Srilanka. Telecentre.org hosted and financed this initiative in order to print it in different languages like English, Spanish and French. The launching ceremony was attended by Dr. Richard Fuchs (IDRC), Professor Subbiah Arunachalam (MSSRF) and many other leaders of Global ICT4D movement. Dr. Ananya Raihan is the member of the editorial board of the newspaper on behalf of D.Net.

### **Telecentre Times Bangla Version**

Bangla Telecentre Times was launched on August 28, 2006 at an International Workshop titled ‘Building Telecentre Family in Bangladesh’ held at RDRS, Rangpur, Bangladesh. D.Net initiated the effort, where Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio & Communication (BNNRC), DRIK, EKOTA and Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) collaborated to make it a reality. The launching ceremony was attended by Dr. Shamsul Bari, Chairman, Research Initiative Bangladesh (RIB); Selina Hossain, Executive Director, Fareea Lara Foundation; Professor Subbiah Arunachalam (MSSRF), Mark Surman, Managing Director, Telecentre.org; Basheerhamad Shadrach, Senior Programme Officer, IDRC, Telecentre.org Program, India; Priyanthi Daluwatte, Project Manager, Virtual Village Project, Sarvodaya, Srilanka; Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net; A. H. M. Bazlur Rahman, CEO, BNNRC; Arifur Rahman, Chief Executive, YPSA and many other leaders of the ICT4D movement in Bangladesh. D.Net is the secretariat of the publication.

The Times is designed as a quarterly global online and offline telecentre newspaper. In future, there are plans to publish it on a regular basis. Three issues of the Bangla Telecentre Times have been published so far. In April 2007 the editorial board proposed Bangladesh Telecentre Network (BTN) to host this publication, as the coalition of telecentre stakeholders would benefit from this publication and dissemination could be wider if it is under the jurisdiction of the network. The BTN Executive Committee accepted the offer and the fourth issue of *The Telecentre Times* will be published under the banner of BTN.

### **Reference System for Telecentre**

Telecentres around the world struggle with day-to-day management issues, like developing useful services for their communities, finding effective technologies and affordable solutions, managing finances and such. Telecentre practitioners need a community to share with, learn from and collaborate with to solve common challenges. Stronger telecentres are more capable to make better contribution in community development. Within this context telecentre.org programme at IDRC is working with telecentre networks around the world to develop and deliver online and offline support services in French, English and Spanish languages. The reference services are conceived as a flexible and collaborative way for building and sharing experiences among telecentre practitioners and telecentre networks within and across countries.

IDRC assigned D.Net to develop a report on 'how to run Telecentre reference services' based on the information of the experience of UgaBYTES on operating the first reference desk in the world. During September 2006 to March 2007, D.Net team developed a conceptual framework outlining the structure and components of the 'how to run Telecentre reference services'. D.Net worked with UgaBYTES, suggested a list of readings as a start, and also determined the needs of the network's practitioners and how best these needs can be met using the online and offline telecentre reference services. It also reviewed and recommended technology and software solutions based on telecentres' needs and UgaBYTES current services that the telecentre reference services can use to improve the Help Line with due regard to simplicity, scalability, flexibility and opportunity to foster collaboration with other telecentre reference services around the world. The report recommended organisations and individuals that might help UgaBYTES Telecentre Network to deepen their service offerings. The D.Net team also documented UgaBYTES experiences in reference service operations including areas such as: start-ups, techniques in growing a user community, management, evaluation, and support. It developed a concise document with appropriate illustrations on 'how to run Telecentre reference services'. It also supported UgaBYTES in integrating appropriate components of 'how to run Telecentre reference services' document in its services. Based on the inputs, UgaBYTES was able to increase number of practitioners to seek the support of the reference desk.





*Students enjoying an education related audio-visual content at Pallitathya Kendra*

### **Jeeon Thikana (Directory Database)**

Jeeon Thikana is an immense and well organised database of livelihood and livelihood related service providers in different fields, i.e. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, building materials, vehicles, health, training centres, newspapers, education, legal and human rights, markets, hotels, NGOs, cycle and automobiles, communication services, food preservation, non-farm activities etc.

The database was built by a hard working D.Net team. The main objective of *Jeeon Thikana* was to prepare up-to-date information and make it accessible to the rural and urban dwellers easily. Local people, GOs, NGOs, and information service providers are the main users of *Jeeon Thikana*. This database is able to provide information on 23 main sectors. These 23 information sectors were selected by giving priority of the local community's information need. Most of the sectors are directly livelihood related, i.e. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, food preservation, non-farm activities etc; the other sectors include health, education, transportation, training centre and market information.

Up to June 2007, the number of information (covering 23 sectors) collected and entered into the database was around 7,909. The updating of *Jeeon Thikana* is a continuous process. Some limitations were experienced during login/accessing the database, thus a new software was adopted in order to solve the problem.

## Jeebika.com

With a land area of 144,000 square kilometers, the population density of Bangladesh is remarkable. Recent estimates reveal Bangladesh's population range from 142 to 159 million, making it the 7th most populous nation in the world. The population is generally poor and live in rural conditions. About 80% of the population live without a stable job and almost everyone wants only one thing, a good job for survival. But it is mighty hard to attain a job sitting in your hometown.

In this light, D.Net (Development Research Network) thought of doing something worthwhile for the less educated people who were at a disadvantageous and dismayed state, through which these people would get a hope for survival. jeebika.com.bd was born from this innovative idea. It is such a website where there is news for people with different academic backgrounds. The main aim of D.Net is to provide adequate job information for people not only with primary education but even for the uneducated ones.

Since launching of this portal in June, 2007 on a test basis, six people have managed to get government, private, public, NGO and service oriented jobs by browsing the jeebika.com.bd website from the Noakhali Pllitathya Kendra, created and run by D.Net. Among them M. Sohel from Noakhali district joined the Bangladesh army as a soldier, Mohammad Nur Nobil from the village of Char Majid joined a NGO as an accountant and Mohammad Hosnain from South Kachpia village joined BRAC as a computer operator.

There are many job related websites in the country at present, but the website jeebika.com.bd is of a completely different kind. It is diverse in nature and has been translated in Bangla. A special feature of this website is that with the help of jeebika.com.bd everybody starting from an uneducated person to a degree pass person can avail the necessary job information. This website is divided among various categories.

## PAN Localisation II

PAN Localisation is a regional initiative for the Asia Pacific region in order to develop local language computing capacity in Asia. This initiative is supported by IDRC, Canada and D.Net joined the project in its 2nd phase which started from May, 2007. In the Bangladesh component of PAN Localisation II, D.Net has been working in collaboration with BRAC University (a lead organisation) to train two levels of end-users in their rural community networks, the infomediaries (who are trained and placed to help rural communities) and end-users from rural communities. The project prepares training materials on content development and information literacy. Under the project Bangla OCR and text-to-speech software is being developed (BRAC University is responsible for these components), which will be tested at the field level by D.Net.

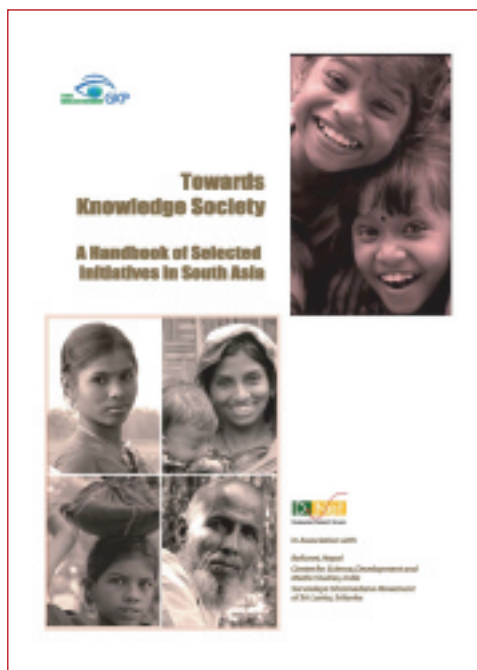




## Development of K-Product - South Asia Regional Handbook

The ICT4D issue is now getting priority in development activities around the globe including in South Asia. In many instances, South Asia is the pioneer in creative ideas and their successful realisation on the ground. The instances of successes and failures are often discussed in various seminars, workshops and other forums organised in various parts of the world, however, there is a severe dearth of detailed information and insights about these initiatives. To support the growing need for information and knowledge regarding ICT4D initiatives in South Asia D.Net of Bangladesh, Bellanet of Nepal, CSDMS of India, and Sarvodaya of Sri Lanka collaborated to produce a handbook titled 'Towards Knowledge Society: A Handbook of Selected Initiatives in South Asia'. The handbook was launched in Kuala Lumpur in December 2007 and was also made available in GKP and D.Net's web.

The publication of the handbook is a step to meet the deficiency and to share selected ICT4D initiatives of South Asia among practitioners, policy makers, development partners, academicians and students. We believe that this partnership effort will benefit the readers and ICT4D practitioners around the world.



## Adaptation of the GEM Tool for Rural ICT for Development Projects

D.Net team is working to prepare a guideline for adaptation of Gender Evaluation Method (GEM) tool for rural ICT for the development (ICT4D) projects. D.Net adapt the GEM in Bangladesh for its Pallitathya Help Line project in 2004, it also adapted the GEM tool for evaluation of its projects. Based on the ground experiences, D.Net plans to prepare a guideline by June 2008. The GEM was developed by Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and is now widely used in evaluating development projects across the globe.



*People making health queries using Jeeon-IKB at Pallitathya Kendra (RIC) with assistance of on infomediary.*

## **Bangladesh Online Research Network (BORN) [www.bdresearch.org](http://www.bdresearch.org)**

### ***Webcasting of National Budget 2006-07***

D.Net broadcasted the national budget along with the public reaction on June 8, 2006 through [www.bdresearch.org/budget06](http://www.bdresearch.org/budget06). On June 8, 2006 a total number of 6,322 people from 30 countries across the world visited the site 12,059 times. The number of visit totalled to 402 times on June 9, 2006. A number of research institutions including Centre for Policy Dialogue used the running commentary of the budget hosted by D.Net research team. Along with the budget speech of Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, commentary and immediate responses of eminent economists, business leaders and other stakeholders of the country were also broadcasted on the web with the help of the D.Net team. Both audio and text version of the interviews are now available online. This was the fourth time D.Net had conducted such an event. This event was organised as a part of BORN programme.

### ***BORN Seminar held at Khulna University***

The widely accepted web portal [www.bdresearch.org](http://www.bdresearch.org) was applauded by the audience in a seminar at Khulna University, jointly organised by Khulna University Research Cell and D.Net. Mahmud Hassan, Programme Director along with a team from D.Net was present at the seminar. The acting VC, Professor Dr. Abdul Hasib chaired the event as chief guest. Deans, department chairs and students participated in the event. The audience highly praised the website, especially its different features. They also showed keen interest to share their publications through this web portal.

### ***BORN Seminar held at Chittagong***

A seminar on BORN was successfully held at the conference room of Independent University Bangladesh (IUB), Chittagong campus on 28, June 2006, which was organised by D.Net in collaboration with IUB. Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net in his keynote speech talked about the website and demonstrated the way it worked. This seminar produced huge enthusiasm among the audience. A good number of teachers and students from universities of the locality attended the seminar. On the same day, a series of meeting was also held with the deans of different faculties of the Chittagong University. They expressed their willingness to collaborate with the website by sharing their publications, especially the different journals of the faculties.

### ***MOU Signed Between BORN and ELDIS to Share Research Papers***

ELDIS, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex and BORN, D.Net signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for sharing research papers between their web portals. Under the MOU, BORN decided to share all free research papers with ELDIS which would help enrich their portal and improve the availability of Bangladeshi research papers on the internet. ELDIS also decided to share about 1,000 research papers with BORN in order to enhance its collection of research papers. A CD version of research papers called 'OneDisc' was published by ELDIS for distribution among the research organisations. According to the MOU, D.Net was responsible for distributing the OneDisc in Bangladesh, on behalf of ELDIS, in order to meet the demand of people engaged in research work without the facility of the internet connection.

## Current Status of BORN

1.	Theme coverage	84
2.	Total paper available online	1212
3.	Total number of downloads	3600
4.	Total registered users	1362
5.	Hit count as of that date is over	45,000

## User Profile

Male	1050
Female	166
Students	535
Teachers	151
Researchers	186
Professionals	396
Development Workers	32
Others	68

## Gunijan: Building a Proud Heritage ([www.gunijan.org.bd](http://www.gunijan.org.bd))

What heritage are we leaving for our future generation? This is an eternal question at all the turning points of history. As a nation, we need sources of inspiration, from those people who have served or are serving our motherland with their creativity and devotion to ideals of peace, humanity and social justice. The **Gunijan**<sup>1</sup> initiative was taken with a view to represent the best people of our soil, who inspire us through their writings, words, scientific and artistic creation or any other ingenious pursuits. It is hoped that this universally accessible information of the finest people of our country will inspire the new generation to demonstrate their best actions as patriots of the motherland.

This website will provide information for the next generation residing at home and abroad; about those great people who have made their present and past glorious by contributing to nation building; it is further hoped that these people will help in inspiring the youth to be more patriotic and be more creative and productive and to take the nation to new heights of success and accomplishments.

### Online Journal of Gunijan

A group of passionate volunteer researchers (mostly journalists and development activists), are working with zest and vigour to collect information on these personalities. These information include a complete biography; selected writings or creative work; awards or recognitions; pictures and videos; along with a complete interview, which describes his/her feeling for making such great contribution towards the nation. A group of filmmakers are also working to develop documentary film on *Gunijans*.

<sup>1</sup>. 'Gunijan in Bangla is all eminent person'

**Gunijan.org** is a bi-lingual electronic journal on these eminent personalities. An Advisory Committee comprising of three members has been guiding the Gunijan team in identifying the of individuals from a comprehensive list provided by the research team.

The *Gunijan* attempts to organise several special programmes, school events, musical concerts, talk shows, publish annual compendiums and CD-ROMs of the eminent personalities. The thematic areas of Gunijan mainly consists of significant subjects as: liberation movement, education, music, literature, fine arts, social science, philosophy, performing arts, journalism, media, human rights, social entrepreneurship, science, health, sports, Adibashi, etc. To date, it has published 40 profiles and plans to post another 74 profiles, which are at the moment in the pipeline. It is said that 'passion and patriotism' is what makes Gunijan progress and move along.

### **Gunijan School Events & Others Activities**

An education fair had been jointly organised by Voluntary Association for Bangladesh (New Jersey), Gunijan and FERI at Mirpur Upazila, Kushtia on March 3, 2007. Students from three local schools namely Amla Sadarpur High School, Neemtali High School and Jahanara Girls' High School were present at the fair which was organised at the Amla Sadarpur High School Auditorium. A stall of Gunijan programme was installed at the Regional Math Olympiad, Jessore on January 11, 2007.

In these events, parents, teachers and local civil society members attended and browsed the website. They queried about the Gunijans and gave their comments for promoting the local Gunijans and applauded for making the programme more familiar among the local people.

A new and dynamic website had been launched in February 2007 which allowed the team members to update and edit the website from any location.

Gunijan had organised the Advisory Committee meeting twice last year, in which the future activities of the programme including a list of 350 persons had also been approved. This year, Gunijan received a large quantity of donations both from home and abroad. Presently, a new devoted team is working with Gunijan, determined to take it to a new level and make it a total success.

# Enhancing Business Competitiveness for Economic Growth

Under this theme, D.Net aims to facilitate the business community in Bangladesh to use market intelligence for enhancing competitiveness through its research. D.Net is now conducting research on identifying information needs, effectiveness of delivery mechanism, and their corresponding theoretical and empirical studies. These activities aim to:

- ☐ understand the role of information in business competitiveness;
- ☐ analyse domestic and international markets for promoting domestic business and export;
- ☐ promote SMEs (small & medium-sized enterprises) for economic development;
- ☐ hold dialogue with industry stakeholders.

## SMEs, Market and Trade Analysis

### **A Business Plan: Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute**

During the programme year, D.Net developed a business plan for Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) for establishing a Corporate Social Responsibility Centre in Bangladesh in collaboration with Dr. Farhat Anwar, Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka. Dr. Ananya Raihan played a key role in his individual capacity. The centre will be launched in September, 2007 with endowments from a number of reputed local and international corporate bodies. KATALYST provided financial support for the preparation of the business plan.

### **Development of User Guide on ‘Effective Use of the Harmonised System Code’**

A user guide on ‘*Effective Use of the Harmonised System Code*’ was prepared during March – May 2007 for German Technical Cooperation. Dr. Ananya Raihan played a significant role in the preparation of the guide. This user guide will facilitate Bangladeshi exporters and export support institutions to maintain proper classification of export goods and reduce hassle in custom points across the globe. Such a guidebook is the first of its kind in Bangladesh.

### **Development of Handbook on Standards and Environmental Regulations**

D.Net is working on a handbook on *Rules and Regulations Relating to Standards and Environment Issues in International Trade* commissioned by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI). The handbook is planned to be completed by July 2007.

The global trading regime has become more competitive than before because of various reasons, primarily due to globalisation and consumer awareness across the globe. While the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was formed in 1995 for fostering free trade among the trading nations, many new issues came up as substitute to tariff barriers. Two of them are standard and environmental issues. Standard issues are mostly dealt outside the WTO framework; except a few like sanitary and phytosanitary regime, which has become a part of the trade regime and subject to trade dispute settlement mechanism of the WTO. Individual countries also apply different kinds of standard and environmental rules; lack of knowledge sometimes prohibits exporters of the developing nations to reap the benefits of free trade.

Major exporting countries follow standards and environmental rules, which are common in some cases and different in other cases. It is very difficult for individual exporters, particularly SME exporters to follow the latest developments and changes in those regulations; as a result, often the exporters face loss and become discouraged in export business. As Bangladesh follows the 'export oriented growth path' it is important to support the exporters in understanding the regulation of the importing countries and take necessary prior actions.

The objective of the handbook on '*Rules and Regulations relating to Standard and Environmental Issues in International Trade*' is to facilitate exporters of Bangladesh in understanding various provisions stipulated in the import regime of the countries which are Bangladesh's major export destinations. The handbook will be completed by December 2007.

### **Development of Handbook on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)**

D.Net is working on a handbook on *Rules and Regulations Relating to Intellectual Property Rights in International Trade* commissioned by FBCCI. The handbook will be completed by July 2007.

IPR issues and global IPR regimes have important implications for developing countries like Bangladesh. Some of them are positive and others are negative; sometimes from the perspective of the consumers, sometimes for the traders and manufacturers. It is now important for exporters of Bangladesh to understand the stipulations of IPR regimes of the major importing countries, so that ignorance does not kill the investment or interrupt smooth export to those destinations.

FBCCI commissioned the study to facilitate its members with knowledge and information about how to avoid problems related to violation of IPR regime of the importing countries and also protect themselves from such violation. The objective of the handbook on '*Rules and Regulations Relating to Intellectual Property Rights in International Trade*' is to facilitate exporters and manufacturers of Bangladesh in understanding various provisions related to IPR regime stipulated in import regime of the countries, which are Bangladesh's major export destinations.



# Governance and Human Rights

Under this theme, D.Net conducts researches and disseminates findings for advocacy to establish rights to information and good governance. It promotes advocacy on e-governance, develops legal contents, and facilitates match-making programmes for victims and support institutions.

The objectives of this theme are :

- **to promote good governance** at state, local government and enterprise levels;
- **to promote human rights** through establishment of rights to information for all citizens including the poor and the marginalised;

D.Net expects that through its intervention, rights to information will be established for the common citizens along with enhanced transparency and accountability of institutions.

## **Abolombon: Empowering People through Improved Access to Information on Governance and Human Rights**

*Abolombon*<sup>2</sup> was designed to improve access to information on governance and human rights for the rural people using various ICT channels as a part of the umbrella programme of *Pallitathya*.

With the financial support of Manusher Jonno Foundation, D.Net completed the 18 months long project in August 2006. During the period, the activities undertaken were:

### ***Major Outputs and Outcomes of the Project***

Information on law and human rights was received by a total number of 305 users from the Pallitathya Kendra during September 2005 to August 2006. Remarkably, the majority (39.51 percent) of the users of legal and human rights information services were received by the housewives, which was possible due to availability of help line, as mobile infomediaries went to them for providing information services. More than half (51 percent) of the users received services on land law related issues. Users on women rights issues stood second (26 percent). Total 3 percent cases were referred to the lawyers of partner organisations.

The major outcome of the project was that the organisations, both national and local, working on human rights issues have become aware on the subject of access to information and are eager to play a role in mainstreaming ICTs in human rights movement.

### ***Content Development on Law and Human Rights***

Contents were developed on the issues of legal text, women rights, child rights, land rights, labour rights, local governance, succession and minority rights. The content was launched in a web site <[www.abolombon.org](http://www.abolombon.org)>. The content was also deployed to *Pallitathya Kendras* in CD forms.

### ***Help Line Setup on Law and Human Rights Issue***

D.Net operated the *Help Line* with lawyers at the *Help Desk* end for providing advice to the victims at the village level through mobile phones and letters. A directory database '*Jeeon-Thikana*' was also useful to help the lawyers in case the victim needed support from a legal aid institution. At the village end, there

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<sup>2</sup> In Bangla "Abolombon"

was a mobile infomediary who went from door to door for assisting information seekers, particularly women and the physically challenged, who seldom got a chance to go out of the home to call the *Help Desk*.

### ***Six Law Camps were Organised***

In the law camps, a total of 74 persons received legal advice and legal aid in Nilphamari; among them 29 were female and 45 were male. A total of 80 persons received legal advice and legal aid in Bagerhat, and among them 42 were female and 37 were male. Lawyers of Legal Aid organisations, BRAC, BLAST & NLAO etc. were invited to provide advice, awareness and legal aid to the rural people facing human rights violations.

### ***A National Seminar was Organised at the BRAC Centre Inn on 5th August, 2006 on - ICTs and Access to Information: How to Make It Work for Promoting Human Rights***

Hon'ble minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed MP, Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs was the chief guest of the seminar. The seminar was chaired by Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, Manusher Jonno Foundation. A paper was presented by Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net. The paper emphasised on having a common access point as the precise location of establishing a Pallitathya Kendra (rural information centre) to ensure delivery of livelihood information to the rural people. Dr. Raihan stressed that the purpose of the seminar was to build up partnerships, so that rural information centres could be set up all over Bangladesh under the goal of 'Mission 2011'. The seminar was preceded by a digital exhibition of abolombon.org and JEEON-Law and Human Rights; the website of legal and human rights information in Bangla and its CD version were also presented for promotion of this website before the public. The digital exhibition was inaugurated by Dr. Hameeda Hossain, eminent human rights activist and founder member of Ain-O-Shalish Kendra. Academicians, teachers, legal experts, human rights activists, NGO representatives, researchers and students were present at the exhibition and seminar.

### ***A Meeting with Stakeholders Titled "Joining Hands for Promoting Access to Information through ICTs"***

The meeting was held on August 23, 2006 at W.V.A.; MJF partners, non-partners, beneficiaries and infomediaries of *Pallitathya Kendras* were invited to collaborate for the promotion of access to information through ICTs. A presentation was made by Mahmud Hasan, Programme Director, D.Net, on 'Possible Ways to Collaborate.' Dhaka Ahsania Mission, PKSf, Mass-line media centre, CDA - Dinajpur, Ecota Fair Trade Forum, GUK- Gaibandha, ADORE-Khulna, Naripokkho, Voluntary Association of Bangladesh, RDRS, Gandhi Ashram Trust-Noakhali were present at the meeting.

## Online Legal Reference System

In collaboration with legal experts, Human Rights organisations and legal aid organisations along with D.Net started an initiative to prepare a website on Human Rights references in Bangladesh. The partners were Ain-O-Shalish Centre (ASK), BLAST, Law Review, Kamal Hossain & Associates and Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Advocate Bangladesh Supreme Court, Editor of Bangladesh Legal Decisions (BLD).

Presently, D.Net is coordinating this as the secretariat. The members are providing their valuable time, suggestions and guidance voluntarily. D.Net is preparing the website according to the suggestion and guidance of the members involved with this initiative. A website [www.rights.org.bd](http://www.rights.org.bd) has been created for posting important judgements which can be referred by human rights activists.

# Human Capacity Building for Development

The objectives of the theme are :

- ☐ to promote capacity building at the grassroots level particularly for youth and women
- ☐ to promote capacity building for advanced research
- ☐ to promote skills development for contributing in national development

The specific activities under this theme are:

- ☐ to undertake training for youths in the area of research capacity development
- ☐ to identify skills of the stakeholders and develop training programmes for addressing it
- ☐ to undertake programmes for training the youths at the village level on ICT and other job oriented activities
- ☐ to take initiative for establishment of 1000 community based learning centres by FY 2011

D.Net expects that through its intervention and under this theme, employment opportunities would be created at the grassroots levels and research capacities would be improved amongst the new research community.

## Education and Skills Development Research Programme

### Improvement of Curriculum and Manual for Basic Computer Learning

Under the Computer Literacy Programme (CLP) a practice based curriculum was developed called *Esho Computer Shikhi*, guided by eminent personalities from home and abroad. It is a 32-hour course for students from Class VI to XII which includes Paint, Word, Excel, file management and PC troubleshooting.

The curriculum has been extended up to 40 hours incorporating Power Point, Email, Internet and some extra features on Word, Excel and PC troubleshooting. The new version will be published very soon.

### Research & Development on 'ICT in Education'

D.Net is collaborating with the Foundation of Education, Research and Innovation (FERI) and Institute of Education and Development of BRAC University to develop and assess effectiveness on multimedia based supplemental material (MSM) for class VI science teachers and students. FERI is designing and developing MSM CDs and monitoring and evaluating (M&E) framework, in collaboration with D.Net and BU-IED, to assess the effectiveness of the MSM on students and teachers.

The duration of the project is April – June, 2007.

## **Translation of Microsoft Unlimited Potential Curriculum (MSUP) for Skills Training of the Underprivileged in Rural Bangladesh**

D.Net is implementing a project, **Community Learning, Information Communication and Knowledge (CLICK)** supported by Microsoft. Under the project, a total of 13 RICs are being established in different geographic locations of Bangladesh with different partner organisations to provide computer and technology skills training for the underprivileged. Community people are able to get livelihood information using ICTs. A total of nine modules, i.e. Computer Fundamentals, Digital Media Making, World Wide Web Fundamentals, Web Design Fundamentals, Word Processing Fundamentals, Presentation Fundamentals, Database Programming, Spread Sheet Fundamentals and Infomediary will be used for skills training. Out of the nine modules, eight modules were prepared by Microsoft and one module was prepared by D.Net.

D.Net is now translating the modules prepared by Microsoft into Bangla. These Bangla modules will be initially used in 13 RICs, and gradually in other schools, colleges, NGOs, etc. within the country and abroad.

## **Mapping the Digital Literacy and Training Materials**

D.Net had conducted a research titled '**Review experiences of Bangladesh in the use of ICT software in literacy/skills training programmes**'. D.Net had also developed a comprehensive list of GOs/NGOs having ICT-based literacy and education programmes in the Non-Formal Education sector. Moreover D.Net also collected ICT-based educational materials and developed a tool to measure the effectiveness of those materials. This was again shared with experts from government and non-government sector on May 23, 2007 in a regional workshop. The research was sponsored by UNESCO, Bangladesh.

## **Functional Literacy for Working Women in Rural Areas**

The third aim of the millennium development goal is about promoting gender equality and empowerment; where the target is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and at all levels of education no later than 2015. In line with this target, the project aims at reducing literacy gap among the adult women population through life skill courses where literacy will be integrated as a part of life skill development.

The focus of 'life skill' in particular is on economic activity that nationally engages most illiterate and semi-literate women. This gives a broader target audience who will find the output of this project most useful.

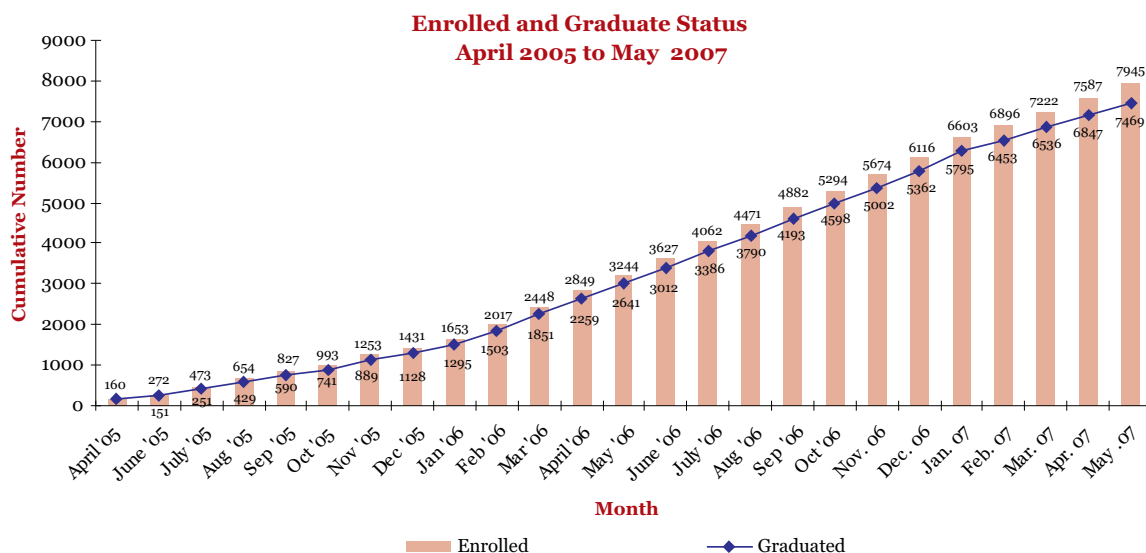
In April and May, the team surveyed many sites within Bangladesh and selected embroidery as the number one economic activity for much of the Bangladeshi illiterate and semi-literate women. In June, they spent extensive amount of time at a few selected locations, collecting data that would help in creating the functional literacy materials. The end product of the project was an ICT-based primer for the working women titled 'Naree O Noksha'. The primer is expected to be used in public access ICT venues. This project was sponsored by UNESCO, Bangladesh.

## Bringing Underprivileged Rural Youths into ICT Learning

### Computer Learning Programme of VAB-NJ & D.Net

D.Net has been implementing *Computer Literacy Programme* (CLP) since 2004 initiated by Volunteers Association of Bangladesh, New Jersey Chapter (VAB-NJ). The programme has been extended up to December 2007.

Since its inception in 2004 up to June 2007, CLP established 54 Computer Learning Centres (CLCs) in 28 districts throughout Bangladesh. With the help of the CLP, 114 teachers have already been trained and over 6,469 underprivileged children and youth have also been graduated.



The CLP has brought some positive changes in the educational institutions throughout the country. The rate of attendance has improved over the last two years of operation. Some of the students who completed the course have started to perform better in other classes as well. Teachers from other subjects

have also become interested in computer studies. The number of enrollments in computer studies for secondary examination has also increased in schools under the CLP. More importantly, teachers have started to think about how computers can be used for teaching other subjects.



**Education Fair at Amla Sadarpur High School,  
Mirpur, Kustia**



A large number of students attended an Education Fair jointly organised by D.Net, VAB-NJ and FERl in Kustia on March 3, 2007. Students from three schools, namely: Amla Sadarpur High School, Amla; Neemtali High School, Khayerpur and Jahanara Girls High school, Amla participated in the Education Fair. The event was a unique one as it created a new vision among the students in the remote locations of Kustia district. The students were able to consider new horizons of higher education, modern educational instruments, education based websites which were till then completely unknown fields to them. The whole session was divided into five parts: Education with Modern Technology, Education Counselling, Learning with Computer, Knowing our Eminent Persons through Website and Scopes for Foreign Education.



The event was organised at the Amla Sadarpur High School, Mirpur, Kustia. A number of teachers and local civil society members attended the fair and spent the day with the children to encourage them. The education fair was a highly participatory event which created huge enthusiasm among students, teachers, parents and organisers.

D.Net has a plan to establish 1000 CLCs by 2010 with support of Non-resident Bangladeshis, individuals and corporate entities in Bangladesh.

## Community for Learning Information, Communication and Knowledge (CLICK)

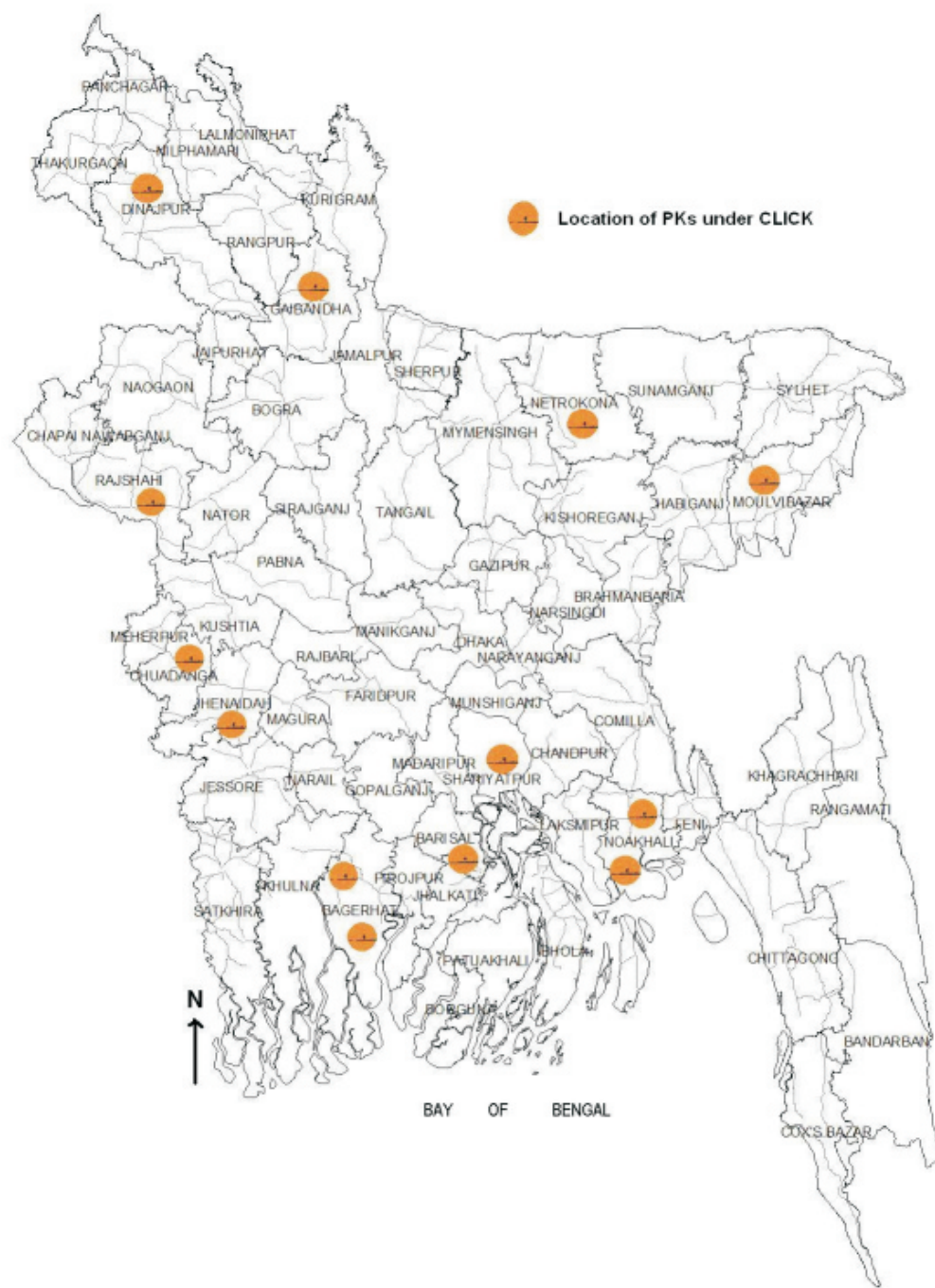
CLICK is a hybrid of Pallitathya (an information system for the poor and underprivileged through Telecentre) and Computer Literacy Programme (promotes knowledge about the usage of computers among the underprivileged rural youths) model. CLICK is basically: i) a global-standard technology learning space for underprivileged groups in rural areas; ii) technology skills for emerging ICT-based professions in rural Bangladesh; iii) rural community information centres in achieving sustainability and iv) information and knowledge acquiring scope for rural youths. Microsoft as a part of their Unlimited Potential - Community Technology Skills Programme provided cash grant equivalent to USD 100,000 and operating system and application software valued USD 67,000 for implementing CLICK. The hardware support came from the local partner organisations.

Thirteen *Pallitathya Kendras (PK)* have been established under CLICK, in 11 districts in collaboration with 13 partner organisations. The duration of Microsoft support is from January 2007 to June 2008. It is expected that *PKs* will be financially viable and sustainable after this period. *PKs* are providing IT skills training courses (Desktop Publishing, Web Development, Database and Infomediary) using Microsoft Unlimited Potential and D.Net's curriculum. Livelihood information (agriculture, health, education, law and human rights, appropriate technology, non farm economic activities, disaster management, employment, government services, directory information etc.) is another core service of *PKs* carried out for the community people. Ancillary services have been integrated with *PKs* for maximum utilisation of resources and equipments. Types of ancillary services vary with the location and demand of the community people. In general the ancillary services are email, soil test for measuring fertiliser requirement in crop land, pond water pH test, photography, diversity visa application, computer composing and printing, mobile phone for personal use, height and weight measurement etc.



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Community Technology Skills Program



**Figure 2:** Geographic location of *Pallitathya* Kendras under CLICK

## Internship

Internship is one of the capacity building programmes of D.Net. D.Net invites national and international interns for having hands on experience in development research through participation in various activities. Currently two persons are allowed to apply each year and duration of each internship is usually 3 months.

The **National Internship Programme** (NIP) was launched in 2003. Basically the national intern should be a graduate or post-graduate, having recently completed or in the process of completing exams at a University in Bangladesh. The deadline to apply for the NIP is July 15, every year. The monthly honorarium for this position is BDT 4,000-6,000 which covers the transportation cost and some pocket expenditures. Any expenditure for field visits outside Dhaka is provided by D.Net. At the end of the internship, a certificate is given with their accomplishments.

The International Internship Programme was launched in 2005. The international intern should be a graduate or undergraduate from a University outside Bangladesh enrolled in any of the following disciplines: Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, International Relations, International Law, Development Studies, or Business. International students may participate in the programme during their semester break in the summer. They are also welcome any other time depending on the availability of the position. The deadline to apply for the IIP is January 15 every year.

D.Net does not deal with immigration authorities in Bangladesh and therefore, the applicant is requested to obtain necessary visas on their own. However, D.Net does assist with providing address and contact point at the embassies or High Commissions abroad. D.Net also suggests physicians for check up and necessary vaccination requirements. The monthly honorarium for the international intern is BDT 5,000 – 10,000, which cover the transportation cost, pocket expenditure and some living costs. Any field expenditure for visit outside Dhaka is provided by D.Net. At the end of the internship, a certificate is given with their accomplishments.

In 2006-07 programme year six interns worked in D.Net, Among them, 2 have become full-time staff. Two international interns also joined D.Net in the programme year.



# Institutional Capacity Development

The objectives of the theme are:

- **to promote access to information** at the grassroots level through support towards mainstream institutions
- **to develop institutional capacity** of the organisations willing to focus on research in various issues including ICT4D issues

The specific activities under this theme are:

- **capacity building and support to the institutions** working for improving access to livelihood information through establishment in RICs of telecentres
- **developing manuals and design courses on 'Development Informatics'** in reputed universities of Bangladesh

D.Net expects that the outcome of these activities will raise awareness among different organisations to understand the importance of information for poverty alleviation and improve education on Development Informatics in reputed universities.

## Certificate Course on ICT4D at BRAC University

On June 4, 2007 the BRAC University Academic Council approved a certificate course on **ICTs for Development** to be conducted by D.Net; the total duration of the course is 120 hours.

## Pallitathya-Bikash

D.Net launched a new project titled **Pallitathya-Bikash** in April 2007. The basic objective of the project was to provide technical assistance to institutions who want to replicate D.Net's Pallitathya Model or any of its elements. Under this project, CARE Bangladesh was the first institution, which finalised an agreement with D.Net to establish two telecentres in Sunamganj and Moulvibazar in July 2007.

## Resource Mobilisation (GKP)

In line with the strategy of Mission 2010, D.Net developed a resource mobilisation plan. Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), Canada contributed CAD 6,000 (Canadian Dollars) to increase D.Net's resource mobilisation capacity and ensure sustainable operations.

The broad **objective of the project was to formulate** and implement resource mobilisation and strategies, following the activity plan of D.Net's Mission 2010.

A strategic resource mobilisation plan in line with Mission 2010 was developed and a report was prepared based on the mapping exercise of prospective partners, potential donors, individuals and their funding activities. The project created the foundation to mobilise resources for accomplishing D Net's Mission 2010 and on long-term effective linkages and collaboration with different donors, institutions, and individuals.

# Economic and Development Policy Research

The objective of the theme is

to contribute to economic and development policy making through research activities.

Under this theme, D.Net undertakes research in the area of poverty, growth, macroeconomic management, trade, corporate social responsibility, financial sector reform, etc. D.Net expects that its research findings will facilitate informed policy making through better access to analytical outputs.

## **Socio-anthropological analysis of impact of ICTs on rural community; based on current projects in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka**

D.Net and Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka conducted a joint study on Socio-Anthropological Analysis of Impact of ICTs on Rural Community. The study was presented in e-Asia 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during February 5-6, 2007. This was the first international research collaboration of D.Net. An enhanced version of the research study will be published in a book form, where a comparison of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will be presented.

## **Purchasing Practice of the Readymade Garment Sector**

D.Net conducted a research study on Impact of UK Purchasing Practices on Readymade Garment (RMG) Sector in Bangladesh during January – April 2007. The research study was sponsored by Traidcraft, UK.

The objective of the study was to gather Bangladeshi RMG companies' experience when conducting business with UK companies. In particular the study focused on how UK companies could improve relationship with Bangladeshi suppliers to have positive impacts on the livelihoods of those involved in the supply chain. In turn, this study also highlighted similar areas where Bangladeshi exporters needed to improve their sourcing/purchasing practices to have a better impact on poverty. As a major trading partner of Bangladesh in RMG sector, UK has been used as an example of European Union (EU) purchasing practice.

## **Regional Trading Arrangements**

D.Net has signed an agreement with OXFAM, GB to organise a consultation on Regional Trading Arrangements (RTAs). The consultation was held on June 27, 2007 at CIRDAP Auditorium. As a follow-up of the consultation D.Net signed an agreement with OXFAM, GB to conduct a series of studies on trade issues, particularly on RTAs.



Dr. Naznin Ahmed, BIDS;  
Anil P. Tambay, Oxfam GB;  
Prof. Mustafizur Rahman, CPD;  
Suhel Ahmed Choudhury;  
Former Secretary Ministry of Commerce  
were present on the occasion.



# Publications

D.Net puts significant emphasis on publication, in the programme year 2006-07.

## Newsletter

D.Net has regularly published its Newsletter, titled D.News since 2005. The soft version of the publication is always available on the website at [dnet.org.bd](http://dnet.org.bd). The newsletter informs the stakeholders about D.Net activities on a quarterly basis.

## Pallitathya Bulletin

The '*Pallitathya Bulletin*' has been published in Bangla since 2004, under the Pallitathya programme. The bulletin has become popular among the rural people through RICs and direct posting. At present the bulletin is distributed free of cost and only a small price is charged after registration. The collected money is again used for supporting the distribution.

## Telecentre Times

D.Net is responsible for publishing the Bangla *Telecentre Times*. The quarterly newspaper is distributed among the members of the Bangladesh Telecentre Network (BTN). It is planned that the fourth issue of the newspaper will be published by BTN. D.Net being the secretariat of BTN will continue this publication and the cost of the publication will also be borne by BTN. Collaborating institutions shared the cost of publications in the past and the contributions to the issues were voluntary.

## Publications of D.Net Series

Development Research Network, as the name implies, conducts in-depth researches on various topics of public interest to create knowledge and awareness which in turn can have a notable impact on economic growth, poverty reduction and technological development.

Three main publication series have been developed in D.Net so far. They are Research Paper Series, Occasional Paper Series and Working Paper Series. Other than these, books and monographs are also published on a regular basis. A new series called the Research Note Series is underway and will be published soon.

These publication series have managed to receive scores of appreciation from various academics, institutes, organisations and stakeholders. It is further hoped that this non-profit organisation will continue to strive for excellence and deliver information in the research arena in Bangladesh and abroad.

Total publication during 2006-07 programme year:

Research Paper Series	1
Occasional Paper Series	6
Working Paper Series	6
Monographs and Books	5
CDs	10

### D.Net Publications during July 2006 to June 2007

Category	Code	Title	Author
		Pallitathya Help Line: <i>A Precursor to People's Call Centre</i>	Ananya Raihan, Mahmud Hasan, Mridul Chowdhury, Forhad Uddin
		Annual Report	D.Net
Monographs	30002	পলিতাথ্যা হেল্পলাইন: <i>প্ৰকৃতকালীন জনস্বাক্ষর কেন্দ্রের পূর্বসূরী</i> Kgb l t q j t _ i i q l v K e P	Abb' i v q n v b m a u w i Z (Kgb l t q j _ w D g v b i v B U m B i b l i o t e c a t q u J f l w . t b t U i t h s _ c k k b v)
Working Papers	WP 10012	ICTs and Access to Information: How to Make it Work for Promoting human Rights	Ananya Raihan
	WP 20002	Accessing Finance and Women Led ICT Enterprises: A policy Agenda	Ananya Raihan
	WP 40001	Computer Learning for Underprivileged Rural Youth: A Critical Reflection of D.Net's Intervention	Anir Chowdhury
	WP 60003	WSIS Issues if Debate and Possible Position of Bangladesh Delegation for PrepCom-3	Mridul Chowdhury
	WP 60004	Millennium Development Goals in Bangladesh and info and Communication Technology	Ananya Raihan Mahmud Hasan
	WP 60005	Floating Exchange Rate System: An analysis	Ananya Raihan
Occasional Papers	OP 10001	Digital Review of Bangladesh: A Preliminary Exploration	Ananya Raihan Shah Md. Ahsan Habib
	OP 10005	A Guideline for Environmentally and Socially Responsible Business Practices in the Financial Sector	Ananya Raihan Shah Md. Ahsan Habib
	OP 60001	Rethinking Non-Resident Bangladeshis' Contribution to Bangladesh Economy	Ananya Raihan
	60002	কগল তজ ত_ি ইকিউকেপ mgmvgwqK Bmjmgm	Abb' i v q n v b
	OP 60003	Venture Capital: Are We Learning from Others	Ananya Raihan
	OP 60004	Implication of Globalization for the Insurance Industry of Bangladesh	Shah Md. Ahsan Habib
Research Papers	RP 40001	Bridging Digital Divide for Rural Youth: An Experience from Computer Literacy Programme in Bangladesh	Ashirul Amin

# Core Activities

## Internal System Development (Intranet) and Management

The intranet is a vital part of D.Net's internal process, where information distribution is simple, efficient and paperless. The more automated an internal infrastructure is, the more time and energy can be given to research and development work. D.Net currently has a basic intranet through which the staff can access the already developed internal system. This includes attendance, institutional address book, library database, supplies inventory system, etc. Among these the attendance tracking system has reached full utilisation both from the staff and management side; the address book has managed to make our direct mail campaigns much easier; and the library database helps to search and surf through the ever growing collection of publications. At the moment, D.Net is in the process of developing more web applications to automate operations, administration and management tasks. This coming year, D.Net plans to have more tools for event management, leave management and internal memo approval among others.

## Resource and Documentation Unit

The Resource and Documentation Unit (RDU) obtains about 1,240 items in its collection. D.Net is constantly acquiring new materials to add to this enriched collection. Some are bought, some collected while many others have been gifted to D.Net by individuals and organisations.

The collection includes books, newspapers, CDs, DVDs and other important internal and external publications.

An online management system has been developed in the past year with the help of which the staff are able to check the status of various items. In future, a modern library system with a comprehensive archive of all research oriented publication is being planned to be developed for the use of the D.Net research team.

## Partnership Building

D.Net signed a number of agreements with various organisations this year. They are:

**Microsoft:** D.Net and Microsoft Bangladesh Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly implement Community for Learning Information, Communication and Knowledge (CLICK), a project that aims to ensure access to livelihood information and IT skill enhancement for the underprivileged. A press conference and the MoU signing ceremony was held at the D.Net office on March 28, 2007. Firoz Mahmud, Country Manager, Microsoft Bangladesh Limited and Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net, signed the MoU on behalf of the two organisations.

**BGASA:** D.Net and Bangladesh Golden Agri-Seeds Association (BGASA) signed a MoU on March 20, 2007 to work together to publish a magazine for the agricultural producers, scientists and researchers on theory and practice of sustainable agriculture. Rubaiya Ahmad, Chief Executive Officer, BGASA and Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net signed the MoU on behalf of these two organisations. Naimuzzaman Mukta, Member, Board of Directors, BGASA and Ajoy Kumar Bose, Operation Director, D.Net, were also present at the ceremony.

**DKF:** D.Net and Digital Knowledge Foundation (DKF) signed a MoU on January 20, 2007 with an objective to work closely together in order to promote the telecentre movement in Bangladesh especially in line with goals and objectives of Mission 2011. T.I.M. Nurul Kabir, Chairman, DKF and Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net, signed the memorandum on behalf of the two organisations. Mahmud Hasan, Programme Director and Ajoy Kumar Bose, Operations Director of D.Net were also present at the ceremony.

## Other Activities

### Multimedia Content and Communications

D.Net, has managed to develop expertise and content through different research, various programmes and projects, that has vast profit making potentials. D.Net is thinking of creating a subsidiary to explore such a potential. Multimedia Content and Communications (MCC) is the first of it's kind in this effort.

There is an available market for media and content experts. MCC hosts a team of such experts who can provide this service to private parties for profit. It will also be the marketing arm of JEEON's content and other D.Net products to the private sector.

MCC is also developing it's own assets and services that will increase it's chance for profitability within a short period of time.

### Ekushey Boi Mela

D.Net participated in the Ekushey book fair organised in Bangla Academy premises, for the first time in 2007. Prof. Rehman Sobhan, the noted economist and Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) inaugurated the D.Net bookstall.

D.Net presented many books, magazines, CDs and various publications at the book fair. Among all its publications, *JEEON* CD content proved to be the most popular. The whole content was divided subject wise in eight CDs, namely: agriculture, non-farm activities, education, health, law and human rights, appropriate technology, disaster management and awareness. The visitors were provided with the opportunity to tour the content, sitting at the stall with the help of computers. The CDs with the content on agriculture, non-farm activities and health created much interest among the visitors.

A documentary about Tanguar Haor, the great natural water body in Sunamganj district which is a seasonal habitat of the migratory birds was also shown at the stall. Dr. Ronald Halder, noted naturalist and director of the film permitted D.Net to sell the documentary and utilise the money for the development of 'Gunijan Programme' ([www.gunijan.org.bd](http://www.gunijan.org.bd)). The gunijan programme is an internet based initiative to make a bibliographic archive about the eminent personalities of Bangladesh who have made significant contributions at both national and international level.

The visitors at the stall could visit other websites of D.Net as well. Some of them included [bdresearch.org.bd](http://bdresearch.org.bd), [pallitathya.org.bd](http://pallitathya.org.bd), [abolombon.org.bd](http://abolombon.org.bd) and [dnet.org.bd](http://dnet.org.bd).

D.Net had published 13 books and research papers of different kinds on the occasion of Ekushey Book Fair 2007. A significant publication which managed to make a mark was the Bangla translation of *Human Rights and Poverty Eradication: A Talisman for the Commonwealth*, a report originally published in English by the Commonwealth Human Rights organisation. New publications along with the old ones were also sold at the fair. Telecentre Medical Directory, having separate versions in Bangla and English and Esho Computer Shikhi, a computer-beginners' guide in easy language turned out to be popular publications, liked by the readers. Education CDs for the students on mathematics, geometry and other subjects produced by Foundation for Education, Research and Innovations (FERI) were also sold and displayed at the stall.

D.Net's participation at the Ekushey book fair received a lot of publicity and coverage by the media.

### **Picnic at Nuhash Palli, Gazipur**

A picnic was arranged on December 15, 2006 at Nuhash Palli, Gazipur. Present and former D.Net staff along with their family members participated in the picnic. Sports were arranged for children and adults. A cricket match was also enjoyed by the staff. The day passed with great enjoyment and merriment. The jubilant event finally came to an end with the prize giving ceremony which was followed by a short cultural show. It turned out to be an eventful and memorable day which gave the D.Net team more energy and vigour to work hard and use their creativity in the days to come!

### **SOFT EXPO 2007**

D.Net participated at BASIS SOFTEXPO 2007, the nation's largest software and IT enabled services (ITES) exposition, for the 2nd time. Bangladesh Association of Software & Information Services (BASIS), the national association of Software and ITES industry in Bangladesh organised this mega exposition from March 28 to April 1, 2007.

BASIS SOFTEXPO is the biggest showcase in the country for software products and services; ITES and ICT system solutions. This year over 120 ICT companies exhibited their products and services during the five day long event.

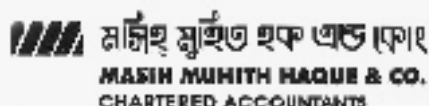
D.Net's stall created a great enthusiasm and awareness among the visitors particularly among the students and young entrepreneurs. The main attraction of D.Net stall was the JEEON CD content. Visitors were also very inspired to hear about the story of Pallitathya and other programmes.

### **Pohela Boishakh**

D.Net celebrated the Pohela Boishakh 1414 in the convention hall of the office. Infomediary trainees along with the D.Net staff participated in the programme. The programme started by the popular and most loved Boishakhi song 'Esho He Boishakh Esho Esho'.

A parody presentation was also arranged which gave an extra pleasure to all. Special Bengali food was arranged for all, and everybody enjoyed and made new resolutions in the new year!

# Financial Report



## AUDITORS' REPORT

We have audited the accompanying Balance Sheet of ***D.Net - Development Research Network*** on June 30, 2007, the related Income & Expenditure Account and Receipts and Payment Account for the year then ended. The preparation of these financial statements is the responsibility of project management. Our responsibility is to express an independent opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA) as adopted in Bangladesh. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all materials respect, the financial position of ***D. Net - Development Research Network*** for the year ended June 30, 2007 and the result of its operations for the year ended as per accounting policies summarized in note-3.00 to the financial statements.

Place: Dhaka  
December 01, 2007

  
(Masih Muhith Haque & Co.)  
Chartered Accountants



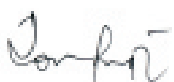
UTC Building, Level-13, 9 Park Road, Dhaka-1215. Phone: 9130675, 9144257, Fax: 9146651, 9146652, E-mail: [masih@masihbd.com](mailto:masih@masihbd.com)  
The International Group of Accounting Firms : affiliated offices in principal cities throughout the world.



## BALANCE SHEET

As at June 30, 2007

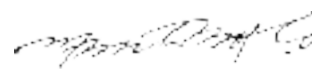
<u>Property &amp; Assets</u>	<u>Notes/Sch</u>	<b>2006-2007 Amount (Tk.)</b>	<b>2005-2006 Amount (Tk.)</b>
A. Fixed Assets (At cost)	Sch/ 5.00	6,951,475	5,731,418
B. Current Assets		9,840,726	6,296,100
Advance and Prepayment	6.00	440,062	461,775
Fund Advance	7.00	667,813	-
Staff Personal Loan	8.00	23,500	-
Bills Receivable	9.00	81,000	347,610
Cash and Bank balance	10.00	8,628,351	5,486,715
C. Current Liabilities		3,187,952	1,453,542
Provision for Depreciation	11.00	2,767,245	1,410,955
Tax Payable (Salary)	12.00	98,473	-
Bill Payable	13.00	181,000	-
Outstanding Liabilities	14.00	141,234	42,587
D. Net Assets (B-C)		6,652,774	4,842,558
E. Total Assets (A+D)		<u>13,604,249</u>	<u>10,573,976</u>
F. Financed By			
Fund Account	15.00	12,636,550	8,655,277
Loan & Advance	16.00	(50,000)	301,000
Bank Loan	17.00	500,000	1,100,000
Internal Project Loan	18.00	517,699	517,699
Total Liabilities		<u>13,604,249</u>	<u>10,573,976</u>



Chairperson of  
Governing Body



Executive Director/  
Member Secretary of  
Governing Body



Masih Muhith Haque & Co.  
Chartered Accountants

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended June 30, 2007

Particulars	Notes	Amount (Tk.)
<b>Income</b>		
Foreign grants/ donation	19.00	10,232,019
Local grants/ donation	20.00	15,560,226
Donation received	21.00	4,201,000
Foreign grant received by mother a/c	22.00	6,137,815
Project income	23.00	3,205,565
Sales	24.00	167,879
Miscellaneous income	25.00	196,500
Training exp.	26.00	15,139
Bank interest	27.00	183,639
Membership fees	28.00	19,000
D.Net contribution		66,488
Transfer		2,465,735
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>42,451,005</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salaries/allowances	29.00	6,775,816
Honorarium		2,716,075
Office rent	30.00	923,380
Stationary		642,641
Printing and publication	31.00	908,272
Internet & communications	32.00	924,780
News papers & periodicals		6,036
Repair & maintenance		711,604
Office general expenses		242,161
Local conveyance		56,042
Domestic travel		1,183,427
International travel		299,106
Utilities	33.00	326,359
Entertainment/ refreshment		101,010
Seminars, Workshops, meetings and cultural functions		1,429,056

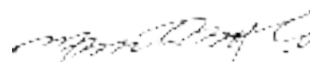
Resource material		31,492
Domain registration		80,008
Advertisement		130,338
Staff training & development		67,499
Audit & professional fees	34.00	75,000
Insurance premium		2,830
Tax on salary	35.00	105,503
Training expenses		333,174
Research expense		2,848,625
Medical support to staff		6,915
Registration fees		46,325
Bank charges		41,968
Legal fees		15,000
Retreat		57,132
Rental		73,000
Overhead		180,179
Foreign grant transfer to project		10,232,019
Transfer to D.Net Core		4,480,000
Computer & peripherals (CLP)	36.00	1,060,670
Depreciation		1,356,290
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>38,469,732</b>
Excess of income over expenditure		3,981,273
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>42,451,005</b>



Chairman of  
Governing Body



Executive Director/  
Member Secretary of  
Governing Body



Masih Muhith Haque & Co.  
Chartered Accountants

## Our People – Governing Body

### **Governing Body 2006-2007**

1. Dr. Toufic Ahmad Choudhury, Chairperson
2. Mr. Anir Choudhury, Member
3. Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Member
4. Mr. Fahim Mashroor, Member
5. Mr. Azmat Khan, Member
6. Mr. Mahmud Hasan, Member
7. Mr. Mridul Chowdhury, Member
8. Dr. Shah M. Ahsan Habib, Member
9. Mr. Ajoy K. Bose, Member
10. Dr. Shahnaz Karim, Member
11. Dr. Ananya Raihan, Member Secretary



## **D.Net**

### **Development Research Network**

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[www.dnet.org.bd](http://www.dnet.org.bd)