

Community podcasts

A podcast is an audio recording that can include community interviews, conversation, news, health information, music and drama in the same way as a radio show.

Podcasts are particularly useful in areas where there is no existing radio coverage, or where local radio stations do not want to broadcast community-centred content. Podcasts can also be used in contexts where certain discussion topics are too sensitive to be broadcast on public radio.

Rather than needing to tune in to a radio station at a specific time, people can listen to podcasts when it is convenient for them, and as often as they like.

Creating and using community podcasts



1 Using simple recording equipment (for example, a mobile phone), community members talk about issues that are important to them.



3 The memory cards are distributed to community listener groups who gather around locally-sourced speakerboxes to listen to, and discuss, the podcast episodes. These groups include the most vulnerable members of the community, and each group has a facilitator to help ensure everyone's views are heard. Podcasts can also be shared with people via the internet, or via Bluetooth where there is no internet connection.

Speakerboxes

Speakerboxes are electronic devices that can play audio files such as podcasts and music. The files are stored on removable memory cards. The devices have built-in speakers so small groups of people can listen at the same time.



5 Large speakerboxes can be used to play podcast episodes in public places such as market squares and health centres.

Raising health awareness

In a remote part of India, Adivasi communities do not have access to radio, television or mobile phones. Many people cannot read and there is a lack of health awareness.

Regular podcast episodes featuring community stories are providing the opportunity for people to meet in groups, ask questions, discuss sensitive issues and learn more about healthcare. Communities have reported changes in hygiene practices, better care for mothers giving birth and improved knowledge about drinking water as a result of the podcasts.



2 A local podcast creator group puts together each episode and saves it onto memory cards.



4 During the listener group discussions, people might record their thoughts on a mobile phone. These audio clips can then be included in future podcast episodes.

Training

Training may be needed to ensure that enough community volunteers know how to record content and put podcast episodes together. A project such as this should be community-owned from the start, with particular emphasis on involving people whose views are not traditionally heard, for example young people, women and people with disabilities.