SUCCESS STORY

Using Digital Data Collection Tools to Maximize Impact

Paper-based data collection can quickly consumes many organization resources: staff, budget, time. Digital tools can offer faster and more efficient way to collect data and report, however, many Cambodian civil society organizations still use paper-based systems for collecting data from their target audiences. MEDIA One (Media for Education and Development in Action), a Cambodian NGO working to address the need for more inclusive media and equal access to information across Cambodia, uses a combination of media approaches to help elevate underrepresented voices and to engage disadvantaged communities with critically needed information and opinions. Radio programs are one of MEDIA One’s core program activities, and listeners’ feedback has always been considered as a central component to make their radio program more attractive and user-focused.

Prior to 2015, MEDIA One had trouble collecting feedback from listener groups to design their programs quickly and efficiently. MEDIA One was awarded a grant from USAID’s Development Innovations (DI) project to test digital data collection tools, and see if they would help maximize the impact of their current development efforts. MEDIA One had extensive experience collecting opinions from citizens in Prey Lang with USAID’s Supporting Forests & Biodiversity (SFB) project, and were eager to optimize their processes. Under the DI grant, MEDIA One was able to successfully customize a mobile application using the CommCare, the most widely adopted mobile platform for low-resource settings. They used the tool on SFB-supported radio program for online radio programming, capturing audio recordings and collecting feedback from their target audiences, including listener groups, community reporters, forestry leaders and community people. Three unique CommCare applications were built for each set of outreach workers: listening group facilitators, community reporters, and community forest leaders. More than 45 people were trained on how to use the CommCare system. The system helped them capture information from 2,065 community members, and helped them design their radio content and submit more than 100 reports to MEDIA One’s HQ in real time.

Since CommCare the applications were introduced to outreach workers, many have given MEDIA One positive feedback, especially on the ease for storing documents and issuing timely reports. Mrs. Mao Chanthoeun, an outreach worker, said that “CommCare can record information and send very fast on time and store documents such as comic book, pictures and radio episodes”, which makes her job easier.

In addition to the radio program, MEDIA One also created a multimedia comic book with audio conservation messages, which helped improve awareness for non-literate community forest members. Mr. Inn Nam, community forest committee member of Kbal O Thnong community forest stated, “I distributed 25 hard copies of the comic book last year, and I found that most of them cannot read, so they did not realize much of the education messages. Now, it is very good that MEDIA One developed a digital comic book with attractive audio to help community members understand key messages”. He stated, “CommCare is really good and better than printed comic book as it explains issues well through fun characters. Now, community forest members have better understanding of key conservation topics and have increased their participation in the forest patrol”.

MEDIA One reports that the project funded has built up both their institutional and individual staff capacity in utilizing technology tools. “Although the SFB-supported radio program is finished, MEDIA One’s staff still use this tool to collect data from project audiences during field monitoring visits. Staff now can customize and edit the tool by themselves for future projects. MEDIA One is now interested provide training or technical support on the customization of CommCare for other organizations who wish to use this tool in their development programming”, said Mr. Borey Koy, Executive Director of MEDIA One.

Disclaimer: This Success Story is made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government.

Find out more about Development Innovations’ activities and services:
www.development-innovations.org

Telling Our Story
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
http://stories.usaid.gov