



Communication and Poverty

"We poor people are invisible to others – just as blind people cannot see, they cannot see us."

– Can Anyone Hear Us? : Voices from 47 Countries
Consultations with the Poor Project, Poverty Group, World Bank

"40% of Argentine children live in poverty. A recent study shows that 1.3% of the stories about childhood and adolescence in national and provincial papers focus on poverty and social exclusion.

This is a profound and unacceptable injustice."
– Social Journalism Association, Buenos Aires

Relevance

Poverty includes communication poverty. People living in poverty face communication deficits of several kinds: They are largely excluded from public communication systems, their voices are not adequately heard by the wider society, their concerns are not adequately represented in the media, their access to information is deficient. The relative silence of the voices of people living in poverty in public communication processes is a key dimension of their powerlessness, and is closely correlated with the extreme inequalities that underlie human development failures. Strengthening the voices of people living in poverty improves understandings and actions of people living in poverty and of the wider society aimed at addressing poverty, injustice and inequality and can inform and influence public agendas locally, nationally and internationally.

Ambition

- Quantitative and qualitative changes in media coverage of poverty related topics. At present, media coverage of poverty related topics around the world is largely non-existent or de-contextualised and stigmatising.
- Recognition and acquisition of communication rights by and for people living in poverty.

Priorities

- Generation, gathering and sharing of knowledge, strategies, capacity and resources for engaging media in quality poverty reporting; building and strengthening networks for sharing lessons learned and experiences.
- Establishing and implementing civil society and media partnerships and strategies for more and better poverty reporting linked to media professionalism and responsibility.

Support for small scale initiatives to build awareness and acquisition of communication rights for people living in poverty.

Selected projects and partnerships

WACC's Communication and Poverty programme works with partners in Asia, Africa, Caribbean, Latin America and the Middle East.

ASIA India

World Association for Christian Communication - Asia Region: Developing Poverty Reporting Standards for the Asian Media

CARIBBEAN Haiti

Sosyete Animasyon Kominikasyon Sosyal (SAKS): Community media training for human rights and local development

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina

Social Journalism Association: Journalism and Poverty – the challenge of inclusive communication
Centro Nueva Tierra: Popular communication network for democracy, citizenship and wealth distribution

Bolivia

Cabildo Indigenal de la Santísima Trinidad: Indigenous Communication Centre

Colombia

Fundación Sumapaz: Poverty and the City: A Women's View

Mexico

Didaxis: The Coal Widows

Peru

Natura Institute: Strengthening Poor Women's Communication and Advocacy Capacity

MIDDLE EAST Israel

Hanitzotz Publishing House: "Six Floors to Hell" documentary on Arab Israeli workers

Special Initiative: Poverty Reporting Pilot Project in India

Pilot project in India (2008 – 2011) to develop evidence based poverty reporting standards, to engage media houses in adopting poverty reporting standards as part media professionalism, and to encourage them to assess the quality of their poverty reporting based on national standards and implement editorial changes. Lessons learned and experience gained will be used in later extension to other countries within Asia and beyond.

<p>Goal: Broad understanding and concern in Indian society of poverty's causes, consequences and solutions will influence public agendas for better action on poverty reduction. Better environment for holding governments accountable for poverty reduction.</p>
<p>Purpose: Quantitative and qualitative changes in the media coverage of poverty in all forms of Indian media.</p>
<p>Outputs: A systematic body of evidence on the state of poverty reporting in India A national poverty reporting standard for the media in India A national network of media practitioners, NGOs, academics and others advocating for the adoption and implementation of poverty reporting standards in India</p>