

## Editorial

Effective content development is indispensable to ensure maximum benefit of ICT for the marginal people. Nowadays PC penetration is satisfactory and internet connectivity is no longer a distant reality due to nationwide mobile internet service by the mobile operators.

Although infrastructure development is a crucial consideration to spread ICT at the grassroots level but it is equally important to develop relevant content for the community people. Because content is a unique source to disseminate real life information to the people.

Content is basically a digital representation of information. There are several categories of content such as educational, livelihood, agricultural contents etc. People in the rural parts of the country come across these contents through telecentres. It has observed that content is considering as an authenticated source of information for the rural people to change their ineffectual traditional process and help them to adopt new way to leverage their activities.

Farmers who have little or no access to modern agricultural information can easily get the right solution from the telecentres by using content. For instance, a farmer can easily identify the diseases of the crops and then use right pesticide to get right from it. D.Net has developed a content base “Jeeon” which incorporates different agro related solutions along with other livelihood related reformation.

Educational contents also opened up a new horizon for the students to explore new ideas and enrich their knowledge as well. Students now learn math, English, geography from the interactive online and offline content. Unlike books these contents bring versatility to gather knowledge in an easiest and fastest way. D.Net has developed content on English learning namely “Computer Teaches Everyday English (CTEE)”. D.Net through rigorous research at the grassroots level identified the easy ways to teach English and based on these CTEE came into reality.

For effective content development we need to address two vital issues such as i) develop contents in local language ii) assess the requirements of the grassroots during content development. Content development in local language is an effective way to utilise information to empower rural lifestyle. Community people in many circumstances show their reluctance to come across new technology due to the language barrier. In this regard, content in local language will increase the participation of the community people in technology related activities.

Right projection of local needs is invaluable to develop effective contents. People belong to different demographics have both cultural and ritual diversity. As a result, it is obligatory to discover local requirements and customize the content development accordingly.

Beside content development, it is also essential to address capacity building issue. This means develop technical capacity of the people who will use this expertise to increase their financial capability and at the same time share knowledge with others to create knowledge based society and face the upcoming challenges.

## Technology for Women

Women have a unique role in human civilisation. Succession of civilisation is indebted to maternal role of women. Women’s economic role is in home and away from home but role of men is limited at away from home. Social role of women is appeared as regulator for achieving social development goals in many countries. If we cannot promote women as innovator of technology permanent termination of gender inequality cannot happened. We have to go beyond for achieving this goal. Though there are lots of criticisms of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but we have to say that it gives emphasis on health, education and empowerment of women which is really appreciable. This hand book will help to achieve the target of MDGs at grassroot level.



D.Net worked in a project titled “Achieving MDGs: Development and Promotion of Handbook on “Technology for Women”, financed by Canadian International Development Agency- Program Support Unit (CIDA-PSU) with a view to play a positive role and contribution in the technology oriented development agenda. The basic aim was to re-emphasise the role of women and help them understand the role of domestic stakeholders and technology in empowerment of women and poverty alleviation.

The contents included in this handbook is not something new. These knowledge and technology were previously invented but they were unused though they had lots of potentiality. The handbook is an effort to raise the issue for involving technology and women in mainstream. The main user of this handbook will be the employee of the grassroots level organisations who will encourage and train rural women to use the knowledge.

D.Net organised a National Workshop on “Achieving MDGs: Development and Promotion of Handbook on “Technology for Women” on 5 March 2009 at 9.30am at Meeting Room 1, IDB Bhaban. Architect Yeafesh Osman, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Science and ICT was the chief guest on that occasion. H.E. Mr Robert McDougall, High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh was the special guest on that occasion. The workshop was aimed to mainstream the discussion on technology for development and how women can participate meaningfully



in technology development and appropriation process. The handbook of 'Technology for Women' launched in the programme.

Honourable State Minister, Architect Yeafesh Osman told, Development partners would have to attain the Government programme of 'changing ages'. If we fail to deliver

the technology to the general people, especially for women, country wide development will not possible.

H.E. Mr Robert McDougall told that the publication of handbook is not only a recognition but also contribution to technology and development agenda. The book will not only help increase the knowledge of technology but also able to solve any problem for a women.

Inauguration session chaired by Ms Shirin Akhter, Founder President, Kormojibi Nari and President, Bangladesh Jatio Sramik Jote. Working Session was chaired by Ms Farida Akhter, Executive Director, UBINIG whereas Ms Afrina Tanzin, Research Associate, D.Net made a presentation on the Handbook of Narir Jonno Projukti. Dr. Ananya Raihan,

Executive Director, D.Net made a presentation on Achieving MDGs: Women and Technology.

Dr Meghna Guha Thakurta, Executive Director, Research Initiatives, Bangladesh; Mr Kazi Rafiqul Alam, President, Dhaka Ahsania Mission; Ms Ferdaus Ara Begum, Additional Secretary, DCCI were present as Panelists. Ms Angela Marianne Kuga Thas, Gender Evaluation Methodology Research Coordinator, Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) shared the Global Experience on Technology for Women. ■

## D.Net and Nayantara Communications Sign MoU

Last March 2009 D.Net and Nayantara Communications signed a MoU for promoting pre-school education materials at grassroots level. Nayantara Communications will provide 52 episodes of Sisimpur in all telecentres of D.Net to demonstrate them to the rural children. Md Khalilur Rahman, Project Manager, Outreach, Nayantara Communications visited D.Net office and explained the objectives and importance of this programme.

The aim of the project is to develop audio video educational curriculum for ensuring pre-school education for 3-6 year aged children. Nayantara Communications producing Sisimpur programme as a partner of Sesame workshop of USA. D.Net will demonstrate this programme at their 25 Pallitathya Kendras so that underprivileged rural kids can have access to pre-school educational materials.

For further information about Sisimpur please visit <http://www.bracnetsisimpur.com> ■

## Second Gunijan Digital Biography & Photography Exhibition

A five-day long Digital Biography & Photography Exhibition titled 'Jibon O Chitrey Gunijan' was arranged at the La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dacca from 6th January to 10th January, 2009 by Gunijan programme.

The exhibition was inaugurated by the renowned photographer Sayeeda Khanam while the inaugural programme was presided over by human rights activist Hameeda Hossain. The exhibition was arranged in association with Alliance Française and sponsored by Rahimafrooz (Bangladesh) Ltd. and technical support was provided by Global Brand Pvt. Ltd.

The exhibition displayed 55 photographs of eminent personalities, taken by four photographers -- Din Mohammad Shibli, Partha Pratim Sadhu, Arman Hossain Bappi and K.M. Asad and highlighted biographies, audio-visual interviews, writings etc. of the public figures, which were displayed on laptops.

Among the guests, Rongolal Sen, Shamim Ara Toly, Sukumar Borua, Ila Majumder, Sudhin Das, A.M. Harun-or-Rashid, Mozaffar Ahmed, Kazi M. Badruddoza, Dr. Nurul Islam, Suhel Ahmed Chowdhury were present in

the inaugural ceremony of the exhibition.

Throughout the exhibition, some of the personalities came to the venue and shared their experiences with visitors, especially children. Among them were Rashid Haider, Farida Parveen, Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Aroma Dutta, Hashem Khan, Muhammad Zafor Iqbal, Mohadeb Saha, Halima

Khatun, Rahiza Khanom Jhunu and Sumon Zahid (son of martyr journalist Salina Perveen). They described their childhood memories, talked about our history and specially, muktijhuddho. They advised the children to know more about our cultural heritage and about our country and to love the country. ■



## Ekushy Book Fair

Eminent writer Selina Hossain inaugurated D.Net well furnished and eye catchy stall at 'Amor Ekushey Gronthomela 2009' on 3rd February 2009 at 4.20 pm. She praised D.Net's initiatives and its publications. She added that D.Net publishes its research and case studies to promote development of the country which helps different institutes, researchers and development workers to gather updated knowledge. In this fair, D.Net has decorated its allocated stall (Stall no. 397) with D.Net's Research Note, Monographs, Books and CDs. This year D.Net added some new publications like 'Telecentre



Operational Manual', a research paper titled 'Negotiating Trade Agreement: A Formula to Make it Pro-poor', monographs - Pallitathya: An Information and Knowledge System for the Poor and Marginalised ; Experienced from Grassroots in Bangladesh (Abridged version), Towards Knowledge Society: A Handbook of Selected Initiatives in South Asia, Education in Transition: Policy Performance . Way forward, book - 'Esho Computer Shikhi (2nd Edition)' and research note titled 'Integrating Access to Finance and Access to Information: Economics of Bank-Telecentre' etc. ■

## CTEE Lunching

February 12, 2009 at 5pm D.Net launched lunch an English learning CD name "Computer Teaches Everyday English (CTEE)" at Nazrul Moncho of the Amor Ekushey Gronthomela. This ICT based education content was



inaugurated by Dr. Shamsul Bari, Chairman of RIB (Research Initiatives, Bangladesh). Mrs. Shamsun Farouque, VAB Computer Literacy Volunteer, Newjersy was also present as chief guest.

D.Net (Development Research Network) has developed this easily perceivable research-based educational content to accelerate English proficiency of young learners at grass root level in Bangladesh. At the same time, the precise concentration has been provided to support the English teachers to get better linguistic approach. One of the main objectives of this research-based educational content is to assist people to improve computer operating skill. Volunteer Association for Bangladesh in New Jersey (VAB-NJ) is the donor partner to develop the content.

The major characteristic of this content is that a prominent expert group of researcher worked at grassroots level of various schools in Bangladesh to develop the learning method. The content are distributed as per requirement of our learners through teachers views to make it easy and teaching friendly.

**The CD contains total 11 stepping lessons. These are:**

- Lesson 1 : One day at Sonapur High School
- Lesson 2 : My family
- Lesson 3 : Helping Ma at home
- Lesson 4 : Visiting rural hat-bazar
- Lesson 5 : A story from grandmother
- Lesson 6 : Tale of a city
- Lesson 7 : Visit to a city
- Lesson 8 : Childhood fun: Kiting
- Lesson 9 : Pahela Boishakh
- Lesson 10 : A balanced food habit
- Lesson 11 : Beyond our planet

**The discussed grammars are:**

- Alphabet
- Parts of Speech
- Number of noun and the rules of changing number
- Gender of noun and the rules of transforming Gender
- Articles and the rules of using article
- Verb to 'Be' and 'Have'
- WH questions and the rules of forming WH questions
- Tense and it's classification

In order to make it more beneficial, there has been also added dictionary, poems, English hand-writing and exercises with different grammatical format. It is to be anticipated that this educational content will play a potential role to reduce the English panic among the students. The content price is Tk. 100.00 but it will be sold by special reduce price for the fair. ■

## CLP Changed a Life

Zahid-Al-Mahadi and Ajoy Kumar Bose, D.Net, Dhaka



When Mohammad Zaharul Islam Khan Liton (31) came out of prison in Amman, Jordan, his life was at the lowest point. Chasing his dream to make his fortune, Liton had sold a piece of land he inherited from his father to pay the agent who promised a job in Greece. But route to Greece, while waiting in Amman for a connecting flight, the agent leaved

Liton in a land where no one understood one word he said. He was promptly arrested and confined for 10 months. Life was never easy for Liton but he always had an enterprising slant. In 1997, while he was barely 16, Liton lost his father during SSC examination. With his father's demise, he was at the helm of the family and wanted to start a small business. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, that dream never materialised. That's when he thought he would get a head start by earning lots of money in a rich foreign land. By a brutal turn of fate he, returned empty handed from Jordan.

His two sisters helped Liton by selling their ornaments and giving him BDT 30,000. He bought a mobile phone, a chair and a table and started a new business at his cousin's shop by renting mobile phone service. It was nothing spectacular, but he managed with his monthly income that averaged about BDT 4,000. A few years later he bought an old computer. He then expanded his business to include composition and printing business in Ashulia, Savar, Dhaka. This was the beginning of "Liton Computers". That is when he got a break. He received hands-on training on computer at a Computer Literacy Center (CLC) funded by Bank Asia Ltd. under the bank's Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) program. That formal training changed the complexion of his business and his life. He has now acquired some of the detail skills that were difficult to learn on his own.

Liton's confidence and enterprise was now sky high. He expanded his business, set up a digital studio. He rented a larger space in Ashulia and started his own computer training shop for the community people. In Ashulia, most of the people work in the export processing zone (EPZ) and

computer skills are highly valued. But computer training facilities are either not available or too expensive. Stars lined up when Computer Literacy Program (CLP), Bank Asia Ltd and D.Net collaborated and provided Liton with the minimum skills he needed. In turn "Liton Computers" is now offering computer training to the community people, youths and students. Liton charges very reasonable fees. Liton will allow payments by installments for worthy candidates. Within just one year Liton's life changed. He now boasts of having trained about 1,000 students. Many students got better jobs at EPZ and increased salaries because now they are skilled in computers. Four of his students are working at "Liton Computers". Liton now earns on the average 25,000 (twenty five) taka per month. He is also giving back his due share by helping the community. At "Liton Computers", school teachers get 50% discount, poor students can learn computer at free of cost. ■



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## Founding Anniversary of D.Net

D.Net celebrated its 8th founding anniversary on January 13, 2009 at Santoor in Dhanmondi. Distinguished personalities, D.Net governing body members, staffs and their family members were participated to this grand event.

Participants of this anniversary program reminisced D.Net's journey from the nascent stage to a primer research and action oriented organisation. The prime attraction of this event was the enchanting cultural program organised by the staffs. This refreshing extravaganza encompassed acting, music, raffle draw and others mind blowing events. At the end of the ceremony all attendees enjoyed gala dinner. ■

### Editorial Panel

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