



Training of Grassroots Comics Trainers

Workshop Report, Bhopal, August 2006

बेटी बनी हिम्मत



ARushi Firoz Khan

“Girls turn into strength”. Sahu, a shopkeeper, has a daughter who is going to school. One day Sahu has an accident and is hospitalised. He worries about his shop and his livelihood. His daughter rushes to the hospital and tells her father that she can stand in the shop until he gets better. Sahu is pleased and hopes that everybody should educate their daughters as they can be a strength for the family. **Story and art: Firoz Khan, Arushi.**

This report has been compiled by Leif Packalén and Ms. Maippi Tapanainen of World Comics Finland. Picture credits: Maippi Tapanainen. The workshop was part of a cooperation project between WCF and WCI, 2005-06, and funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation Funds.



Comics Power! The participants and the local testgroups in the concluding group photograph.

Report from a *Training of Comics Trainers* workshop, held in Bhopal, August 20-26, 2006

The aim of the workshop was to train comics workshop tutors, who would be able to independently run local comics workshops in their respective organisations. The workshop was part of a World Comics Finland (WCF) and World Comics India (WCI) cooperation project, with support from the Finnish Foreign Ministry NGO funding.

The workshop venue: Pastoral Centre, Near St. Joseph School, Asha Niketan Campus, Bhopal

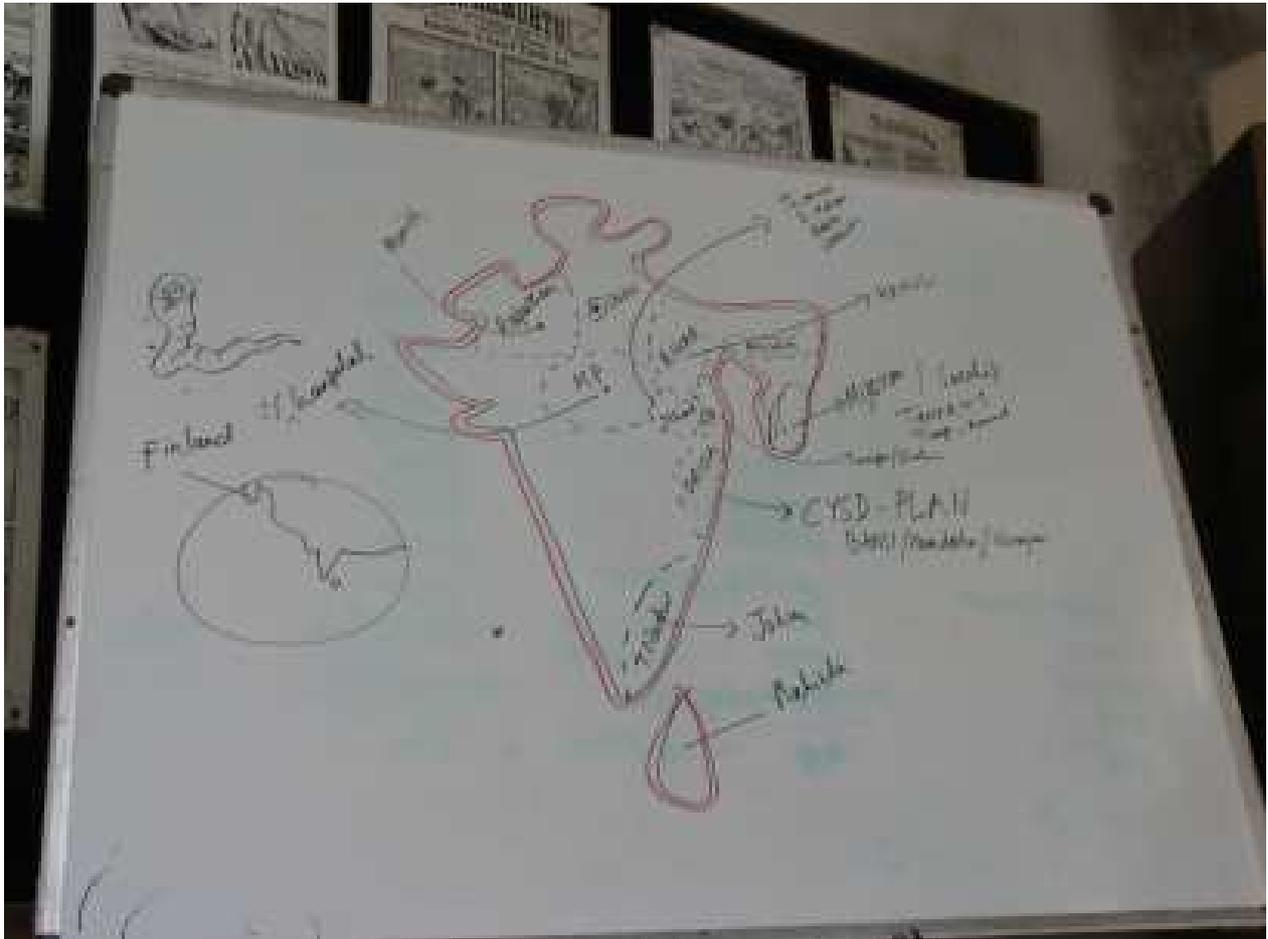
Resource persons: Leif Packalén, (WCF), Ms. Maippi Tapanainen, (WCF), Sharad Sharma, (WCI) and Ms. Reetu Sharma, (WCI).

Participants: 18 tutor-trainees from WCI's partner network in India (see separate list) and as a test group, 31 local NGO-activists from Bhopal (see separate list).

Saturday, August 19

Sharad Sharma and Reetu Sharma arrived in Bhopal and settled in at Pastoral Centre. They arranged accommodation, food, equipment etc for the coming days. The original venue was abandoned due to heavy flooding in that area.

Leif Packalen and Maippi Tapanainen arrived in Delhi at 23.00, and were met by Rahul Pandita and Bittoo Sondhi, and taken to Hotel Star near the airport.



The map showed from where the participants came.

Sunday August 20

Leif and Maippi continued their journey with the Deccan Air 5.55 am flight to Bhopal. Sharad met them at the airport. They settled in and rested during the morning.

After lunch, there was a planning meeting with Sharad, Reetu, Leif and Maippi. As 16 of the participants had already arrived, it was decided to start the workshop with some general sessions already on Sunday.

The resource persons introduced themselves and there was a discussion of the main aims of the workshop.

They were seen as:

- Improve the capacities of the comics trainers by sharing all workshop and campaigning experiences available at the workshop.

- Help the participants to plan follow-up comics workshops and comics campaigning.
- Support the different groups in getting new opportunities to run workshops, help with budgets, networking and administrative support.

A daily schedule was agreed:

8.00 Breakfast
 9.00 – 10.30 Session I
 10.30 Tea break
 10.45 – 13.00 Session II
 13.00 Lunch
 14.00 – 16.00 Session III
 16.00 Tea break
 16.15 – 17.00 Session IV
 Break
 17.30 – 19.30 Presentations, videos, powerpoints, pictures and discussions
 19.30 Dinner



Reetu Sharma, our interpreter, was ready to begin the workshop.

20.00 - Presentations, cultural program, etc

The afternoon was rounded up with short presentations about comics campaigning from the participating groups from Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Monday, August 21

As all participants were now present, a new round of introduction of resource persons and participants was made.

Then followed a presentation of recent comics campaigning in India, Rajasthan, Goa and Africa, Benin and Tanzania. The comics work in Lebanon was briefly explained too.

Leif explained the basics of campaigning theory and advice in campaign planning.

Reetu and Maippi had an interactive session in which the gender-focus was explained. The participants were advised to take the gender-issue into consideration.

A session on workshop requirements was held. The participants were divided into groups and they had to list the six most important elements for running a successful workshop. The suggested elements were then discussed.

The “Training plan for running comics workshops” and the “Wallposter Comics Manual” were distributed to the participants in English and Hindi.

Tuesday, August 22

We started going through the different steps in the training plan. Each step was explained and discussed thoroughly.

Then each group was asked to make a test presentation. The lessons selected were:

- explain the concept of grassroots comics
- demonstrate how to draw human postures
- explain the concept of readability
- demonstrate a critique session

All the presentations were commented and discussed.

Then the groups chose leaders to themselves:

- group 1, John Victor (Tamil Nadu)
- group 2, Ms. Papia (West Bengal)
- group 3, Ms. Laxmi (Rajasthan)
- group 4, Sunder Mohan (Jharkhand)

The leaders reported to the resource persons about the work progress in the groups.

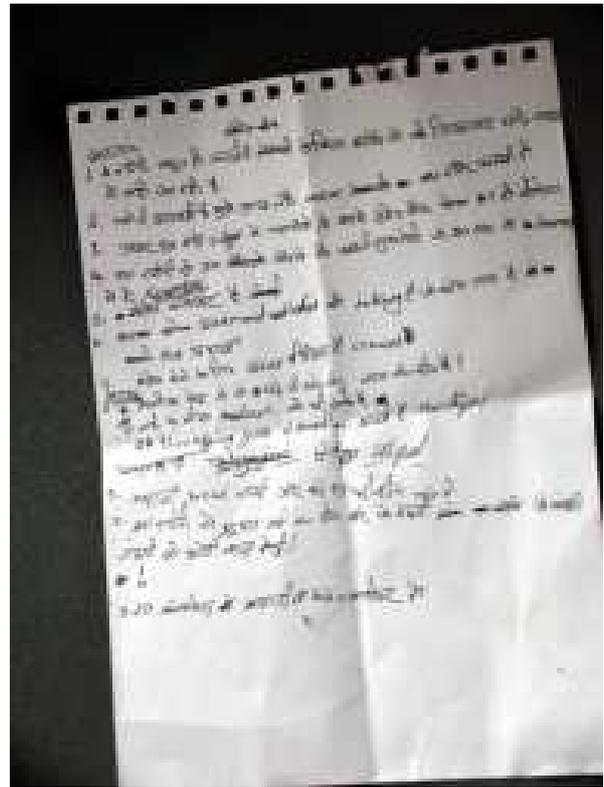
The groups went through the next day's training schedule and divided the training tasks between themselves. The resource persons went through the plans.

In the evening there was a sightseeing trip to the Lake Bhopal and the group had a buffet meal at a lakeside restaurant.

Wednesday, August 23

We had a last minute preparatory session before the test group participants came, stressing that the most important task was to share knowledge. The rooms and the stationery were allotted to the groups. The majority of the test group participants had arrived by 10.30 when we started with a welcome session and an explanation of the World Comics movement and purpose.

Each group had 7 – 8 participants and 4-6 tutors. The tutors started their work according to the schedule they had agreed on the day before. Translation was somehow problematic in some groups as all test group participants spoke Hindi



All stories were first written down.

only.

By lunchtime all groups had decided on their themes and were working on their stories. The stories covered issues such as: right to education, corruption, alcoholism, communalism, health matters etc.

The afternoon was spent breaking up the stories into four panels and doing drawing exercises.

After the test group participants had left, the tutors and the resource persons had a session in which the day's experiences were discussed. Some observations:

- All the tutors tended to teach, rather than to divide the tasks between themselves.
- Most groups had some problems with communication and translations.
- The groups were requested to prepare a new task division list for the next day.



The participants got last minute guidance before the testgroups arrived.

When the training was finished for the day, we had two presentations about comics activities, one from Sri Lanka, the other from Assam.

After dinner we looked at two videos from Goa (workshop 2005 and campaign 2006), Goa slideshows and some children rights animations.

Thursday, August 24

In the first session we had a meeting with the tutors, and went through the groups' task lists. This was followed by going through how to analyse visual scripts, which all groups had on their program later that day.

The groups proceeded from where they had finished the previous day. No group was lagging behind, all were comfortably within the schedule.

During the day, Leif and Sharad made short video interviews (32 minutes) with ten participants.

By the end of the day, all of the participants had started their work on the final artwork. We had a short feedback session with all the tutors.

In the evening Maippi and Reetu interviewed group I and group II

separately in the Magazine Room. In the Main Hall, the Rajasthan and the Orissa groups presented the activities of their movements. The video "Swear by the River" was shown again for the benefit of the Madhya Pradesh participants, who had not seen it.

After supper we showed workshop videos from Jharkhand, Mizoram and Tamil Nadu. We also viewed the interviews made during the day.

Friday, August 25

The day started with a session in which the critique procedure was repeated and we stressed that the tutors should prepare their critiques very well before publicly speaking about the participants' comics.

By lunchtime the majority of the participants was either ready or in the final stages of inking. The copies were made during lunch break (five copies of each wallposter).

Then the critique sessions in the groups started. After finishing them, all participants and the tutors were called for a feedback session. The local participants were in general very positive to having learnt the new skill of making comics. The tutors' comments were reserved for later in the program.

After thanking the local participants, there was a group photography session, and then the local participants left the workshop.

The tutors gathered for a feedback session. We limited the feedback to the three-day period with the local participants. Some problems of tutoring were mentioned, mainly problems with translations.

Maippi and Reetu continued with the interviews of groups III and IV. Sharad gave his feedback to the trainers, mainly on allowing too much text in the comics.

After dinner the Mizoram, Jharkhand and West Bengal teams gave presentations on their activities.



Saturday, August 26

Maippi and Reetu gave a summary from the interviews made during the previous days. The summary is attached.

At 9.45 the whole workshop visited the adjoining school "St. Joseph's School". We were given a group of about forty students (about 14 – 16 years old). Leif and Sharad held a small presentation and then the students gathered around the comics tutors, who each had a wallposter comics which they showed and explained in detail to the students. After this there was a short question and answer session.

Some of the students, mainly girls, said they liked the concept and were interested in its success. On the other hand, some students, mainly boys, thought comics were a step backwards in this hitech age.

At 11.00 we had the tutors workshop's own feedback session. All groups had prepared their feedback reports, which could be summarised as follows:

- The workshop had boosted the tutors and they felt much more confident to go on now in their own localities. Especially the two first days had prepared them well for the task of training local participants.
- The language and communication problem slowed down all processes.
- The coordination between the tutors and the resource persons went well, although discipline was not always good.
- Some participants would have liked to get more feedback on their own performance.

Concluding speeches were held and the certificates were distributed.

A good number of the participants left immediately after lunch. The group which



The comics were also presented to the students of St Joseph's School in Bhopal.

was left, had a session on workshop planning, budgeting and reporting.

By the evening most participants had left.

Sunday, August 27

Reetu, Sharad, Leif, Maippi and Mahinda left by JetAirways 9.40 for Delhi. The rest of the day was free.

Monday, August 28

We had a meeting at WCI's office in Sharad's home. We went through accounting matters, reports and other documentation of the workshop.

In the afternoon we left for the Comics Café at motorcycle racer cum activist Bittoo Sondhi's basement showroom in

Lajpat Nagar.

We displayed a collection of comics (mainly mainstream) which had been gathered in Finland for the Comics Café Library.

NDTV, a Delhi-based TV-news channel, made an interview with Sharad and Leif. It was aired the next day.

At 5 pm the program at the Comics Café started with Leif showing videos from Benin, Tanzania and Lebanon. A lively discussion followed on the grassroots comics as a medium. There were 18 people in the audience.

The main questions were about how grassroots activists could use comics as a genuine, representative medium. The discussion went on until 8.30 pm.

The event was seen as very successful by the WCI activists.

Tuesday, August 29

The morning was spent preparing for the departure and after lunch we had a final meeting at WCI's office. We went through money matters, finalised the reports and participants' lists and shared picture and other files. We also planned for Sharad's visit to Finland for the forthcoming AEPF meeting in September 3 – 6.

Concluding remarks

Both WCI and WCF were happy with the outcome of the workshop. A new batch of comics workshop tutors will now be available for NGO-activities in different parts of India.

The tutors were confident and ready for action. They were very pleased with meeting their colleagues from different parts of the country.

The greatest challenge for WCI in the future will be how to give back-up support to the numerous partner organisations in so many corners of India.

September 1, 2006

Leif Packalén



Leif spoke at the Comics Cafe in Delhi about his experiences from a comics workshop in Lebanon.

Table: Age, sex and origin of ToT-workshop participants

| NAME (partic/trainer) | AGE | SEX | STATE | WCI (years) | WORKSHOPS |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Utpal | 30 | male | Assam | 1 | 1/1 |
| Debajyoti | 22 | male | Assam | 1,5 | 1/1 |
| Rahul | 30 | male | Bihar | 3 | 1/3 |
| Babita Sundi | 27 | female | Jharkand | 3 months | 1/1 (Bhopal) |
| Thomas Sundi | 40 | male | Jharkand | 9 | many |
| Lakhindra | 30 | male | Jharkand | 4 | ~30/15-20 |
| Sunder Mohan | 20 | male | Jharkand | 6 | 10/5 |
| Tawna | 22 | male | Mizoram | 6 | 6/3 |
| Tlangi | 21 | female | Mizoram | 5 | 3/2 |
| Kennedy | 20 | male | Mizoram | 1 | 3/1 |
| E-ngi | 16 | female | Mizoram | first | first |
| Champalal | 27 | male | MP | 7 | 4/4 |
| Bansidharh | 32 | male | Orissa | first | first |
| Nandeshu | 19 | male | Orissa | 2 | 3/3 |
| Niranjan | 22 | male | Orissa | first | first |
| Hansaram | 23 | male | Rajasthan | 1,5 | 2/2 |
| Lakshmi | 14 | female | Rajasthan | 2 | 3/4 |
| Manish | 24 | male | Rajasthan | 3 | 4/3 |
| Mahindra | 27 | male | Sri Lanka | | 2 / 2 |
| Rushdie | 22 | male | Sri Lanka | 1 | 3/1 |
| John | 37 | male | Tamil Nadu | 9 | many |
| Papia | 26 | female | WB | 2 | 2/3 |
| Bhola | 35 | male | WB | 1 | 1/1 |
| Tumpa | 20 | female | WB | 1 | 1/1 |
| | ca 24,5 years | 18 males 6 females | | | |



Mangal Singh was still finalising his artwork at the closing of the workshop.

Participants of the Bhopal workshops

Assam: (Nest)

Debajyoti Bora
c/o-Kanaklata Bora
Village: Gohiantekela Goan,
Po-Jorhat-2
Dist-Jorhat (Assam)
Tel: 9854279676

Utpal Neog
c/o-TonkeswarNeog
Po- Bahguri/Dergaon
Dist-Golaghat. Assam
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e-mail: ta_hussain@sify.com

Bihar: (Paridhi)

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Nayatola, Bhikhanpur Bhagalpur,
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Jharkhand: (WCI and JOHAR)

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Gaddi Tola, Chaibasa,
West Singhbhoom, Jharkhand

Madhya Pradesh:

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Mizoram: (Mizoram Artists' Society)

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R K Sanghmingthanga

Ms. C.Tlangthansiami (Tlangi)

Ms. Lalengvari (Eng-i)
New Serchhip, Serchhip: Mizoram

Kennedy Malsawmtluanga (Kennedy)
Ramthlun veng, Serchhip, Mizoram

Orissa: (CYSD)

Nandeshu Rao
Niranjan Mahakud
Bansidhar Barik
Nandeshu Rao
Niranjan Mahakud

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e-mail: kjr@cysdplan-international.org

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Email: manish-singh-rathore@
yahoo.co.in

Hansaram Solanki (Vikalp)
Village post-Hathma, Teh-Ramsar,
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Ms. Lakshmi Dave (Vikalp)
c/o Vikalp, near Police line, Laxmi Nagar
Barmer

Tamil Nadu: (WCI)

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Tel:+91-9345787606
email: jhncvtrdss@yahoo.com

West Bengal:

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Tel: 0094716802847

Mahinda Rathnayaka (Social Welfare Mandram)
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Tel: 0094512223815
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Resource persons:**Finland:** (World Comics Finland)

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आस्था से खिलवाड़



'PRADEEP DANGI'
MCRPVV
BHOPAL

"Misusing trust and devotion". A holy man told the villagers that one of the goddesses in the temple was sipping milk. The villagers brought milk to the goddess and were happy until they found out they had been cheated. The holy man had collected the milk and other offerings for himself. He was chased out of the village. The villagers were upset of having been fooled. Story and art: Pradeep Dangi, MCRPVV.



Group number three training their testgroup.

Bhopal Comics workshops, Test Group participants:

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Sangeeta Patidar | Samavesh | 07271-275173 |
| 2 | Karan Rathor | Jan Saha Sansthan Devas | 07272-408090 |
| 3 | Niharika Jha | Journalism Student | 09928206882 |
| 4 | Sanat Kumar Tiwari | Samarthan, Ajamgarh | 07730-278251 |
| 5 | Rajesh Kumar Patel | " " " | |
| 6 | Gyan Chand Barkhane | Jivodaya, Itarsi | |
| 7 | Sachin Kumar | " " | |
| 8 | Bagas Lal Ueke | | 07572-272205 |
| 9 | Sankar Bhusera | | |
| 10. | Sahamet Sangsthan , | Kasela | 07572-272205 |
| 11. | Anil Pandey | Dainik Bhaskar, Reporter | 0 9829145281 |
| 12. | Rajesh Muni | Sudhar Sangstha, Bhopal | 09926453709 |
| 13. | Prakash Malviaya | | |
| 14. | Hiran Khera, | Hoshangabad, Bhopal | 07570-222969 |
| 15 | Pushpam Kumar | M.C.R.D.,University, Bhopal | |
| 16 | Dharmendra Tripathy | Makhan Lal Chaturbedi | |
| 17 | Sandip Dangi | M.C.R.P.V.V, Bhopal | |
| 18 | Sonu Verma | Arushi, Bhopal | 07555-274637 |
| 19 | Mangal Singh | " | |
| 20 | Firoz Khan | " | |
| 21 | Vibha Rathor | Samarthan | |
| 22 | Kapil Raj | NIWCYS, Shahpur, Baitul | |
| 23 | Deepak Rathor | Samarthan | |
| 24 | Pratibha Rathor | Samarthan | |
| 25 | Savitri Pandam | Adivasi Sanrachna Sansthan | |
| 26 | Mohan Yadav | " " | |
| 27 | Sunita Ketwas | " " | |
| 28 | Kunvar Singh | Pradeepan, Baitul | |
| 29 | Manju Mali | Bachpan | |
| 30 | Pannalal Masani | " " | |

Interviews with participants of the Training of Trainers-workshop in Bhopal, August 2006.

The participants were chosen from different NGOs in the cooperation network of World Comics India. The interviews were conducted by Ms. Maippi Tapanainen and Ms. Reetu Sharma, both resource persons at the workshop.



Mr. V. John Victor Doss, 37, (WCI) Tamil Nadu

Issues:

John has made comics about numerous different issues.

Distribution:

John has made wallposters and booklets; his comics have been published in local newspapers and magazines. He has also worked with hand puppets.

Feedback:

John has got mostly positive feedback. Especially people in villages have showed strong emotions when they have seen his comics. However, he tells that cooperation is better and easier with small NGOs than bigger ones.

Future:

Earlier John worked in a Plan International's project. After the tsunami in 2004 he lost his job because the project was cancelled. Promises to open it later have not

materialised. John plans to establish his own communication & information centre in 2007.

Problems:

John said that it is a big problem that trained girls leave comics after getting married. He thinks that the best age to train people to do grassroots comics is between 14 and 20, because then people can on the one hand focus better on making comics and on the other hand they can use what they have learned when they mature. Young people have also an ability to understand comics better than older ones.

New ideas:

John would like to work with drop-out students, children with mental disorders, caste problems, girls' education, etc. He would like to work as a consultant for NGOs, train trainers and publish comics.



Mr. Rahul, 30, (Paridhi) Bihar

Issues:

Deforestation, pollution, slum dwellers - especially children, sanitation, this year

especially Ganges dolphins.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

Rahul works with slum dwellers and villagers. The response he has got from the slums has been very good. Because most of the people are illiterate, comics are a very important way of communication. Comics have helped people to speak openly about different issues. They have also made people proud of the posters they themselves or their children have drawn.

Slum girls have had an exhibition about gender sensitive issues and inter-caste marriages.

In the villages people are used to different kind of posters. One-panel posters are the most popular ones and people also like two-panel posters (first panel: question, second panel: answer.)

In addition to comics, radio is a helpful tool to spread information, and Rahul has also made radio programmes.

Future:

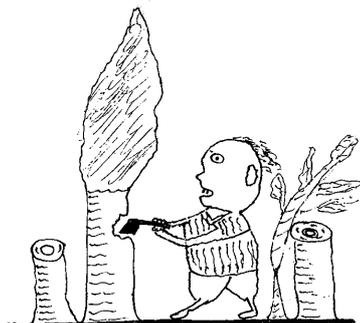
Rahul will continue to use comics also in the future.

Problems:

One-panel wallposters are more accepted and people are used to reading professional comics. However, four-panel wallposters are now getting more accepted. Only the parents are interested in their children's comics, other people not very much. Some people would prefer coloured posters.

New ideas:

Rahul said that this kind of workshop gives him energy. He now plans a workshop against a government policy which results in fishermen's displacement.



Detail from Pushpam Kumar's story "Life Giver", see p. 32.



**Thomas Sundi, 40, (Johar and WCI)
Jharkhand**

Issues:

Corruption. Witch-hunt, drug abuse, violence against women, displacement and re-settlement, development policy, education, and, social development.

Distribution:

Wallposters, strips, booklets, also newspaper comics.

Feedback:

Thomas prefers to work with NGOs rather than with children. The NGOs have their special issues and after the workshops they get many posters which handle the same topic. This type of work is very popular in one of the districts of Jharkhand.

Thomas has helped other cartoonists to get their work published, which is also a notable effort.

The comics have resulted in social changes and they have been a good medium for awareness. Information comics have guided for example displaced people to find help.

Future:

Cartoons and comics are part of Thomas' life. He is very optimistic even though in the beginning of WCI he could not believe in this kind of success.

Problems:

No problems, he gets a lot of support.

New ideas:

Thomas has a plan to make a book together with Lakhindra and Sundar Mohan. He intends also to spread comics as much as possible.



**Ms. Babita Sundi, 27, (JOHAR and WCI)
Jharkhand**

Issues:

Corruption.

Distribution:

Wallposter.

Feedback

Bhopal course has deepened Bapita's self analysis and given her technical skills, such as keeping in focus.

Future:

Bapita continues work with comics.

Problems:

Bapita gets a lot of support because it is team work.



**Mr. Mahindra Rathnayaka, 27,
(Social Welfare, Mandram)
Sri Lanka**

Issues:

Violence against women.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

When an NGO was looking for a trainer they chose Mahindra. He has got a lot of good feedback especially from women.

Future:

Comics training is very popular. 35 NGOs are going to train 100 people to use comics.

Problems:

No problems, wallposters are working well.



Detail from Pushpam Kumar's story "Life Giver", see p. 32.



**Mr. Bansidhar Barik, 32, (CYSD)
Orissa**

Issues:

Bansidhar works with questions like social stigma and education. He has not used comics before.

Distribution:

Wallposter (Bhopal).

Feedback:

Bansidhar has not yet had any feedback.

Future:

Bansidhar has participated in many kinds of workshops during the ten years he has worked with NGOs and children. He plans to tell about comics to children and NGO-people and he is also going to inform local journalists and other media about grassroot comics. After the Bhopal workshop Bansidhar is going to begin a campaign to get people to vote. He will use for example rallies and postcards.

Problems:

None.

New ideas:

Bansidhar will possibly use comics in his job.



**Ms. Papia Pal, 26, (DAS)
West Bengal**

Issues:

AIDS, illiteracy, child marriage, sanitation.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

Positive. Papia is a teacher and children like to draw comics and their parents like to look at them.

Future:

Papia plans to organize workshops. She believes that comics are the best method to inform children 7 – 10 years old.

Problems:

Smaller children (4 – 7 years) cannot draw. Positive feedback helps.

New ideas:

Papia will work in rural areas with many kinds of problems, e.g. illiteracy and alcohol abuse. She helps dropouts to come back to school. In her view grassroot comics is the best medium for her target groups.



**Mr. Raltawnkima Ralte Kawlni
Chalchung "Tawna", 22, (Mizoram
Artists' Society)
Mizoram**

Issues:

Water, environmental awareness, shift cultivation, development, corruption.

Distribution:

Wallposters, cartoons and other artistic work, mostly unpublished.

Feedback:

In Mizoram, people are interested in art and everybody likes wallposter comics. People use to copy Tawna's comics and he has advised them to make also their own comics. Some of his comics have influenced some people a lot.

Future:

After returning to Mizoram, Tawna will organize more workshops.

Problems:

Tawna said that he has limited influence on the organizing of comics workshops in Mizoram. He would like to work with NGOs but usually the participants are students. Mizo people sometimes complain about the

quality of wallposters as they would like to see more artistic posters. To work alone without education is sometimes very hard. There is no art school in Mizoram and there is no way to become a professional artist.

New ideas:

Tawna hopes that WCI and WCF would organize courses to give trainers more skills in drawing. He said that participants do not respect their trainer if he/she can't draw. Training would give self-confidence to trainers.

Maybe because Mizo people are used to reading literature they need applied models of grassroots comics, Tawna said; they demand more elaborated storytelling.

He is also drawing a picture book of Mizo folktales.

He also proposes that WCI/WCF would organize a comics convention. Comics are very popular and a convention might give good publicity to grassroots comics.



**Mr. Hansaram Solanki, 23,
(VIKALP), Rajasthan**

Issues:

Women issues mostly. Female foeticide. Girls' health and education.

Distribution:

Wallposters which have been distributed in many villages and schools; children have also carried posters home.

Feedback:

People have begun to understand for example the legal points of many issues (female foeticide, girl murders etc.); also those who do not care have woken up to see the problems. Hansaram is very happy with the Rajasthan girl campaign which has caused many successful stories, and for example motivated girl's education. Also the local administration has noticed problems better than before. Comics have given people both information and self reliance.

Future:

Hansaram plans to use comics as much as possible. At every library centre a comics course will be arranged. New campaigns and exhibitions will also be organized.

Problems:

None

New ideas:

Many principals and teachers have said that they want to use comics when teaching ethics and moral questions.



**Mr. Nandeshu Rao, 19, (CYSD)
Orissa**

Issues:

None.

Distribution:

None yet.

Feedback:

None yet.

Future:

Nandeshu will introduce comics in a magazine and tell his organization about grassroot comics. He also plans to organize workshops.

Problems:

None

Mr. Rushdie Nazeer, 22, (Oxfam) Sri Lanka

Issues:

Gender issues, domestic violence, child abuse, health and hygiene, alcoholism, AIDS, smoking.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

Many NGOs have contacted Rushdie to get comics integrated in their programmes. There would be much more work and proposals than Rushdie has time to do.

Future:

Only one workshop has materialised, many proposals have been made. People are interested in wallposters and want to get more ready-made comics. To participate in workshops people need attractions like good food.

Problems:

The main problem is that people are interested in wallposters which are made by somebody else. "Not our problem" –thinking. When the participants come from different parts of the island, also their culture and traditions are different. The resource person should know a number of cultures to understand every participant's own "language" which is practically an impossible request.

New ideas:

In Sri Lanka there is an Act regarding posters so distribution is difficult. Now Rushdie uses notice boards, school cantinas, school magazines. A good method is to distribute comics with newspapers (as inserts) but it costs a lot.

Rushdie's target is to train university students to use grassroot comics when they get employment. This means that it is a long-term project; to see the effects takes at least a year or two. (Changemaker's method: Rushdie trains students how to make and use comics and when they begin their future work they will train local people and so on).

Girls' education is a problematic issue in Sri Lanka. Rushdie said that the problem is the parents' attitudes. They give sometimes negative feedback and same themes must be



released time and time again before attitudes change. Repeating makes people believe that the particular issue is important.



Ms. C. Tlangithansiami "Tlangi", 21, (Mizoram Artists' Society) Mizoram

Issues:

Corruption, AIDS, drugs, forestry.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

Tlangi has got only positive feedback. She has argued about the issues with her audience, but almost everybody has liked her posters. Some people are not used to reading

comics and she must explain them how to do it.

Future:

Tlangi plans to publish a booklet on the issue of corruption. She will also introduce her comics in newspapers and magazines.

Problems:

No problems, except lack of self-confidence.

New ideas:

Tlangi has not worked with comics for a couple of years but now she will begin comics-work again.



**Mr. Niranjana Mahakud, 22, (CYSD)
Orissa**

Issues:

Education.

Distribution:

Wallposter.

Feedback:

Tutors liked Niranjana's artwork but told him to use less dialogue. (Bhopal)

Future:

Niranjana works in a tribal area. He plans to organize workshops at every village's children's club (46 together) and also one big workshop to train trainers. Help is needed, he

said, and believed that Lakhindra will help him to organize a ToT -workshop.

Problems:

Niranjana is a beginner so no problems yet. He said that he lacks some confidence, but he trusts that he can cope with possible problems



**Ms. Lakshmi Dave, 14, (VIKALP)
Rajasthan.**

Issues:

Mostly women issues, also alcoholism and the caste issue.

Distribution:

Wallposters, booklets, postcards, strips.

Feedback:

Everyone Laxmi has asked has told that her posters include clear messages and there is no need to use more text. Some people would, however, prefer coloured posters.

Future:

Laxmi guarantees the use of comics in future. She wants to create dialogue with people of her own age. If I speak as a young girl nobody pays attention, she said. Comics give her strength. She will train her schoolmates to use comics.

Problems:

Laxmi said she has problems with drawing, she is too slow. Sometimes it is hard to find effective titles.



**Mr. Lakhindra Nayak, 30, (WCI and JOHAR)
Jharkand**

Issues:

Alcohol, drugs, smoking, HIV/AIDS, migration, development, tribal questions, women and gender issues. Most of Lakhindra's comics are without text.

Distribution:

Lakhindra's wallposters are printed and distributed weekly to villages. He has made popular booklets and some people also order comics from him.

Feedback:

Lakhindra has got a very positive feedback.

Future:

Lakhindra continues to work with WCI and he also plans to publish a comics book.

Problems:

Language (English) is a problem sometimes, as well organizing workshops. Sometimes it is hard to get people to speak about their issues.

New ideas:

Lakhindra will make comics about the culture of Jharkhand. One big issue is "What's going on in India", for example what multinational companies are doing to tribal people.



**Mr. Utpal Neog, 30, (NEST)
Assam.**

Issues:

Local governance, empowerment of women.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

People appreciate comics. They also like black-and-white posters more than coloured ones. People have proposed their own issues.

Future:

Utpal works with children who have plenty of problems. Many issues are easier to tell by comics than by any other method. Utpal will also contact local magazines and newspapers.

Problems:

How to make a clear message and get people to read it. He would also like to have more sketching skills.





**Mr. Manish Singh Rathore, 24,
(WCI)**

Rajasthan

Issues:

Female foeticide, violence against women, HIV. When Manish has been a trainer, people have dealt with domestic issues, veil use, sati, corruption.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

All response Manish has got has been good. He has worked with NGOs which have also asked him to continue.

Future:

Manish will be in touch with his fellow activists and NGOs as well, and he will organize workshops with them. He is also interested in campaign work.

Problems:

Everything is OK.



**Ms. Tumpa Adhikari, 20, (DIKSHA)
West Bengal**

Issues:

HIV/AIDS, children's rights.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

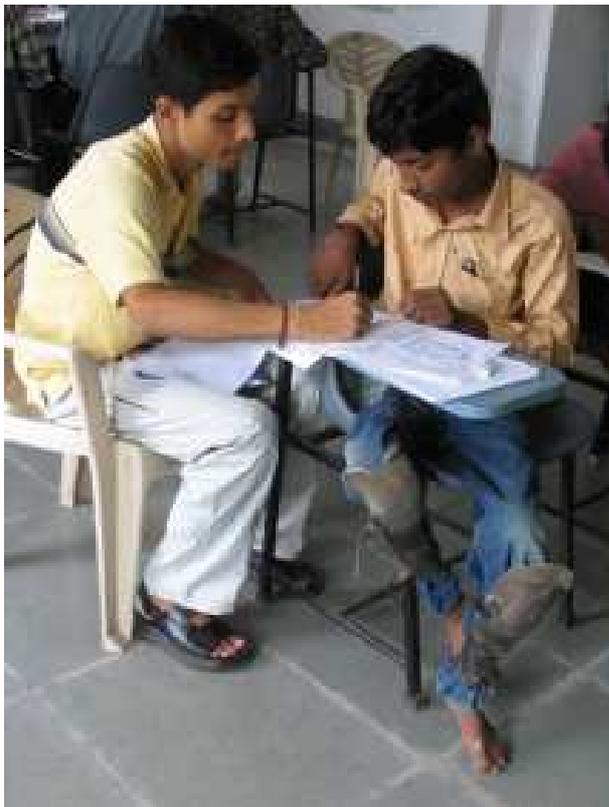
When Tumpa and her team made comics about children's issues they wanted to invite parents for discussions, but they were not interested. Later their own kids made posters and then the parents got more interested.

Future:

Tumpa has got an offer to make a comics book (funding is clear) and now she is considering whether to focus on the book or continue work with children.

Problems:

It is difficult to help the community when the issue is for example AIDS. Grassroot comics are people's own medium which helps them to forward their own activities, it is not for money collecting NGOs. People are interested in money; even the Pastoral Centre's Sister asked Tumpa and Lakshmi why they do comics work without fee.



**Mr. Debajyoti Bora, 22, (NEST)
Assam**

Issues:

Local governance, women in governance, women's awareness.

Distribution:

Wallposters, strips.

Feedback:

Debajyoti uses comics along with other media like street theatre. He said that it is very easy for local people to identify and recognise the issues. Also local people tell stories which Debajit and others modify to comics or theatre.

Future:

Debajyoti works in the slums. His organisation gives him a lot of freedom, and he has plans to use comics and street theatre together. He also plans to draw pocket booklets.

Problems:

Money for the use of media in social work.

New ideas:

Debajyoti works with illiterate people in tribal areas. He suggests that WCI/WCF would organize a special workshop to train how to make comics with a minimum of text.



**Mr. Sunder Mohan, 20, (WCI and
JOHAR)
Jharkand**

Issues:

Corruption, witch-hunt, radioactive materials, child labour.

Distribution:

Wallposters and booklets.

Feedback:

Sunder Mohan has got only positive feedback. He makes a monthly comic publication and if it sometimes is late people come and ask for it.

Future:

Sunder Mohan will organize workshops in 3 districts, and he will also publish booklets regularly (four times a year).

Problems:

Sunder Mohan has not faced any problems.





**Mr. Bhola Nath Gosh, 35, (CINI-ASHA)
West Bengal**

Issues:

Bhola works with issues like child abuse, parenting issues, child labour, trafficking.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

The Bhopal workshop is Bhola's first one.

Future:

Bhola is working with community volunteers on the issue of child labour. He is interested in using comics. His plan is for example to spread posters against child abuse (street children, living at railway stations). He would like to utilize comics as a medium in educational and health questions. He is also going to tell authorities about the impact comics can make in the community.

Problems:

For illiterate children pictures are important. The target of the centre for street children where Bhola is working is to put children back to normal life.

New ideas:

Bhola is very interested in campaigns and would like to get more information about the campaign at Rajasthan. He is also interested in networking.



**Mr. Kennedy Malsawmtluanga, 20, (Mizoram Artists' Society)
Mizoram**

Issues:

Deforestation, pollution, corruption.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

People love comics and ask for more.

Future:

Kennedy will make as many comics as possible and distribute them around Mizoram.

Problems:

The costs are a problem. Kennedy would also like to have education in arts which is impossible in Mizoram – there is no way to become a professional artist and to leave Mizoram is very hard due to the language.

New ideas:

The most important thing is to begin work with NGOs. People can't pay for making comics by themselves (one A4 copy costs 5 rupees).



**Ms. Eng-I Lalengvari, 16,
(Mizoram Artists' Society)
Mizoram**

Issues:

Runaways from school, alcoholism.

Distribution:

Wallposters.

Feedback:

Good.

Future:

Eng-i plans to make as many comics as possible. She wants to change social life through them.

Problems:

None.

**Mr. Champalal Kushwaha, 27,
(Gram Seva Samiti)
Madhya Pradesh**

Issues:

Gender-issues, abortions, capacity building, bio-fertilization, contract farming.



Distribution:

Wallposters, booklets, strips, newspaper comics, 2 books.

Feedback:

Champalal said that comics have got a new role at grassroot level and reactions are positive.

Future:

The NGO where Champalal is working will organize two workshops for destitute children. Oneworld India is going to train NGO-workers to use comics for capacity building. Champalal has founded a platform for comic discussions.

He will also organize child work and produce AVAS -wallposter.

Problems:

Champalal said that he needs training for simplifying comics. If people are not confident with their artwork, they have a tendency to tell everything by words.

New ideas:

ToT-workshops should increase the trainers' skills on simplifying comics. Sketching workshops for trainers are also needed as the trainers should be more skilled than the participants.

He also plans to identify more volunteers and organize workshops as soon as possible.

Summary of the participants' interviews at the trainers workshop, Bhopal 21-26.8.2006.

The issues:

The participants have coped with numerous different issues depending on local issues. Mizo participants treat mostly environmental questions, while participants from urban areas have a lot of problems with for example children's abuse and pollution, as well tribal areas have their own questions.

Women and gender issues are very popular. Two women and most of the men have dealt with gender and/or women questions. Widespread issues are for example girls' education, violence against women and female foeticide.

Children issues are also favoured. Children's rights, child abuse, child labour and trafficking as well the school drop outs got many references.

Every Mizo participant has treated environmental issues like water problems and deforestation. None of them mentioned any gender question which probably tells about Mizoram's matriarchal tradition. Participants from Bihar and Assam have dealt with pollution, radioactive areas and Ganges' dolphins.

Also displacement and re-settlement were among issues.

Social problems like drug and alcohol abuse were common issues. So were many social questions like tribal peoples life situation, caste problems, corruption and health problems like HIV/AIDS.

Distribution:

All participants have made wallposters. Many of them have also published booklets, strips and postcards. Some participants' comics and cartoons have been published in newspapers and magazines. One of them had published two books and three of them intent to make one.

The feedback:

Almost all feedback participants have got has been positive. They have got feedback from NGOs and members of target groups. At Rajasthan also administration has noticed problems through comics campaigns.

Sometimes people have complained about the art work or lack of colours. In the other hand people have also been pleased with black and white graphics.

As a feedback can also been seen social changes which have caused by comics, like girls grown attendance at school in Rajasthan.

The Comics have also provoked discussions and strong emotions.

About the future:

All participants intend to use comics in future. Most of them have clear ideas, plans and proposals concerning future activities such as workshops and publications.

The problems:

In Sri Lanka different cultural backgrounds and traditions cause sometimes problems with explaining and understanding the grassroot comics process.

Work with illiterate people requires special skills, in particular storytelling without words.

Some participants self evaluated that their sketching and story telling skills are incomplete. Some participants said that it is hard to handle same problems time and time again.

New ideas:

Participants expected new workshops for trainers. They would like to grow drawing talents to get respect from their own workshop's participants. Also they would like to have more training to do comics without words. This is very important when people work with illiterate people.

Workshops are also necessary because trainers motivation, new ideas and experience sharing.

Maippi Tapanainen

मुक्ति



Ku. Sunita Ketwas

NIWCYD Ghorodongri Betul
(M.P.)

“Freedom” A rich man used to buy produce from the village women at a very low cost. The women decided to form a self help group (SHG). They saved money and in the end managed to cut out the middleman and their economic situation improved a lot. Story and art: Ms. Ku Sunita Ketwas, NIWCY.



लालचका फल

अगस्त 2006

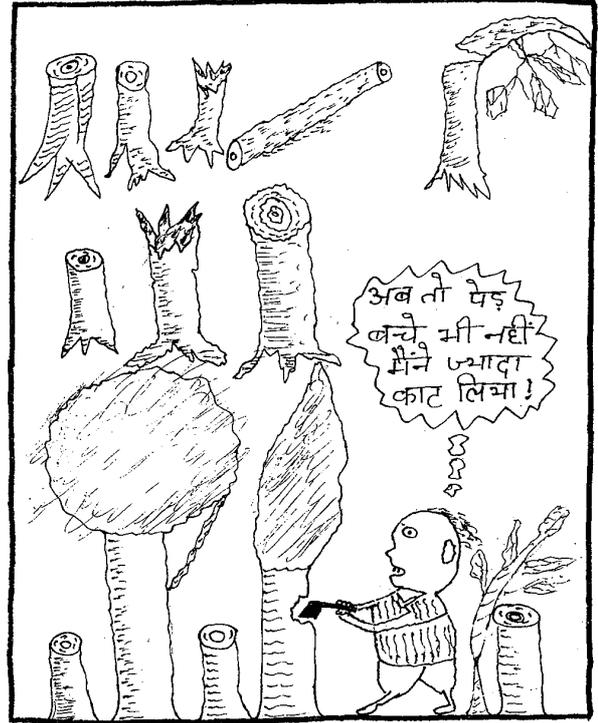


प्रकाश मालवीय

हिरनखैड़ा 9 Th
07570-222969

“Result of greed”. A village received money for road construction. The sarpanch (leader) diverted some funds. The villagers decided to remove the sarpanch from his position. In the end he lamented - Why did I have to be so greedy? Story and art: Prakash Malviya.

जीवन - दाता



PUSHPAM KUMAR (S.J.)
 70 MAKAN LAL CHATURVEDI
 RISTRIYA PATKARZTA
 UNIVERSITY, BHOPAL (M.P.)

"Life giver". Ramu, a villager in Rampur wanted to cut some trees when he realised that there were no more trees to cut. Later he fell sick and the doctor said it was due to unhealthy surroundings. Ramu decided to make an effort to plant trees to save the children of the village from the same fate. The villagers were happy for the change in Ramu. **Story and art: Pushpam Kumar, Bhopal University.**

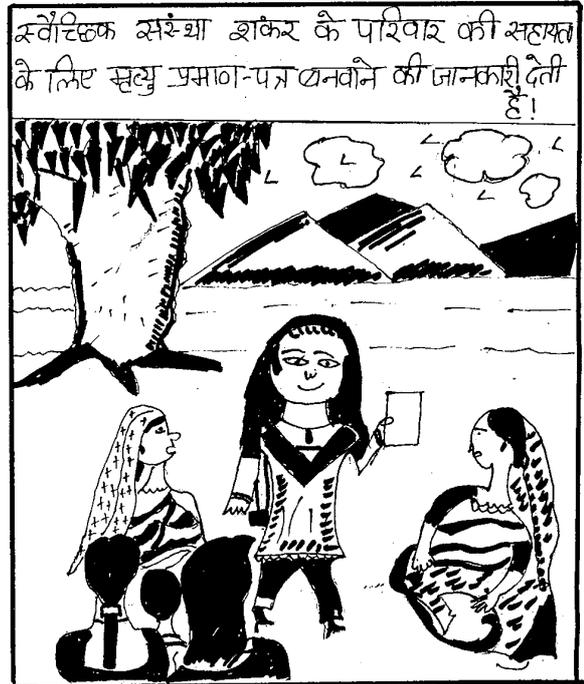
सबक



SANKAR BHUSARE
Sahmet Kesla (M. P.)

“Lesson”. The ration shopkeeper told the villagers that his grains were finished. But a villager saw him selling grain to an outsider in the middle of the night. The villagers had a meeting and decided to remove the shopkeeper from the village. The shopkeeper asked the villagers for forgiveness and promised that he would never do black marketing again. Story and art: Sankar Bhusare, Sahmet Kesla.

▶ अधिकार हैं सशक्त हथियार ◀



क. विभा राठोर (समर्थन) सीहोर

“Your right is your weapon”. Shankar’s family was very poor. He died suddenly. The widow could not get a death certificate before an organisation helped her to claim her right. The organisation insisted that due to the Right to Information Act in India, the widow should get the certificate within three days. The widow was relieved, because now she could claim for a pension after Shankar’s death. Story and art: Ms. Vibla Rathore, Samarthan.



At the workshop the different groups in the WCI network had an opportunity to tell about their own activities. Here Champa Lal shared his experiences about running workshops in M.P.



“Freedom” A rich man used to buy produce from the village women at a very low cost. The women decided to form a self help group (SHG), which improved their economic situation a lot. **Story and art:** Ms. Ku Sunita Ketwas, NIWCY. This strip is converted from her wallposter on page 30.

Grassroots comics, why, what and for whom?

Grassroots comics are becoming increasingly popular as a powerful tool in campaigns. They are used by civil groups and movements which have something to say and know their target groups well.

Grassroots comics are made by the activists themselves who are aware of the local issues and problems. No professional artists are needed as it is the story and the drama, not the expertise of the drawing, that matter. Also humour can be used to express serious issues.

Grassroots comics can convey a serious message effectively in wallposters and small booklets using low-tech printing. They can also be published as strips in journals.

Grassroots comics give a voice to groups, such as community-based groups, which normally have little or no access to media. They are well suited for local campaigns and peer communication, also among children and youth. They have been successfully used in campaigns involving human rights, health, environment etc.

World Comics Finland and **World Comics India** have arranged a number of workshops and together worked out methods of producing grassroots comics. All manuals, in several languages, samples, presentations etc are available on the recently updated websites www.worldcomics.fi and www.worldcomicsindia.com We hope that the sites will give inspiration to people who look for an inexpensive and efficient grassroots campaigning tool.

Visit the websites: www.worldcomics.fi and www.worldcomicsindia.com or contact:

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