

Centre for Communication and Development Studies Annual Report: 2010-2011

About CCDS

The Centre for Communication and Development Studies (CCDS) is a social change resource centre working to strengthen civil society and citizens' capacity to advocate for social justice, pluralism, sustainable development and accountable governance.

We make innovative use of media and communications to empower civil society with information, analysis and diverse perspectives on ways to work towards a more equitable, sustainable world.

CCDS has three main programmes:

1. **Open Space**, our civil society outreach process, uses literature, art, cinema, music, theatre, publications, lectures, workshops and discussions to reach out to civil society, especially youth.
2. The **Open Space Resource Centre**, which provides free in-house access to an eclectic collection of books, periodicals and films on social justice, arts and ideas.
3. Media advocacy through www.infochangeindia.org—a leading cross-sectoral website on rights/development issues, with almost daily uploads of credible and original content by a network of 400+ media and development professional—and *Infochange Agenda*, our print and online dossier which addresses one topical theme each issue.

Introduction

CCDS began the new decade with ambitious plans. In the eight years since inception in 2002, CCDS has quickly become a leader in the field of development communications and innovative civil society outreach, with a particular focus on the urban middle class and youth.

External and internal review processes in the previous year have helped us map the future. In the years to come, CCDS will scale its impact and outreach, building on its strengths and successes and addressing gaps in its capacity. We plan to expand CCDS's tiny in-house team, strengthening both the media advocacy team and the outreach team. We propose to build on our influential and popular media advocacy platform www.infochangeindia.org, with a focus on more multimedia, and migration to a more advanced version of our content management system, which will expand readership to even more than the 600,000+ readers logged this year. We also plan to extend the reach of our civil society and youth outreach programme Open Space, both through digital mobilisation strategies as well as extending our OS Fellowship programme to many more cities.

CCDS accomplished a substantial amount of work in this financial year, highlights of which are documented in this annual report.

This year, CCDS partnered with a large number of educational institutions, including MIT School of Governance, Indian Institute of Planning and Management (IIPM), Institute for Management Development and Research (IMDR), Symbiosis Law College, Symbiosis Arts and Commerce, ILS Law College, Fergusson College, Mahindra United World College, Foundation for Liberal And Management Education (FLAME), Aman Setu School etc. Institutional collaborations were forged with, amongst others, Literature Across Frontiers, Point of View, Network of Women in Media, The Kabir Project.

Opinion-makers, scholars, writers and activists have collaborated with CCDS in its programmes this year – from senior writers Gieve Patel and Ashok Vajpeyi to emerging young writer-activists Sarah Kay and Meena Kandasamy, noted academics and scholars such as Linda Hess, Malashree Lal, Usha Ramanathan, Nivedita Menon, Dilip Simeon, leading journalists such as P Sainath and Nityanand Jayaraman to leading photographers such as Christopher Mark Taylor and Sunil Gupta, young musicians ranging from Hindustani vocalist Pushkar Lele to popular electronic music DJ Ma Faiza, young innovative architects such as Sourabh Phadke, noted documentary filmmakers such as Madhushree Dutta as well as young award-winning filmmakers such as Sushmit Ghosh and Rintu Thomas.

Our choice of subjects of research – from organic farming to common property resources to the ethics of new medical technologies – is as diverse as our choice of subjects for outreach programmes (this year’s Infochange Media Fellowships, supported by Foundation for Ecological Security, focused on the takeover of the commons, and were researched in places as far-flung as Manipur, the Orissa and Tamil Nadu coasts, Goa, Palakkad district of Kerala, the Godavari in Andhra Pradesh, and the urban commons of Bangalore). Our choice of medium is equally open – from public lectures and campus workshops to poetry readings, music concerts, festivals, art exhibitions, publications, websites, seminars and dialogues. We believe it is this open, inclusive, multidisciplinary approach and methodology that makes CCDS’s work distinctive and impactful.

Brief summary of major activities

1. Civil society and youth outreach/capacity-building

Peace, Diversity and Pluralism

Keeping the peace lectures: Open Space organised a series of public lectures under the title *Keeping the Peace* this year, to focus on arenas of conflict – cultural, ecological, human rights-related, political – and the ways in which they may be resolved. Ashok Vajpeyi, chairman of the Lalit Kala Academy, inaugurated the series with a public lecture very close to OS’s heart: the importance of building – and defending -- open spaces for dialogue through the arts and literature, and the threats faced by these open spaces today.



Maja Daruwala, director of CHRI, delivered the next lecture, on the efficacy of the human rights approach to conflict transformation, at Symbiosis Vishwabhavan.

Dr Edward A Rodrigues, sociology professor at Bombay University, spoke about caste as an area of continuing conflict in India. The lecture was held at Fergusson College.

Dr Linda Hess of Stanford University spoke to a packed audience about the new course in peace education that she is developing for Stanford University. The discussion was based on actual experiences in peace-keeping of both the audience and Dr Hess and probed deeply into the psychology of violence and our responses to it.

Dr Nivedita Menon, feminist scholar and political scientist, spoke on women’s responses to conflict in the family and outside it, to an audience of management students at the Indian Institute of Planning and Management.

Dr Dilip Simeon, whose personal trajectory has involved being an active Naxalite to now being a committed peace activist, tried to get students to think beyond the rhetoric of *Hum sab ek hain*, about the violence implicit in public life and in their personal lives. Dr Simeon delivered 3 lectures in all, at IIPM, at MIT-School of Governance and at Fergusson College.

This lecture series will continue into 2011-12, with talks by noted journalist and interlocutor for J&K Dileep Padgaonkar, peace activist Teesta Setalvad, and others.

Feedback: *“I particularly liked Dilip Simeon’s lecture, practically everything about it, it was a memorable one, we still revisit it in some of the conversations that we have...thank you for all the programmes that Open Space has conducted with us, we learnt something from each of them!”* --Alia Farooqui, Fergusson College





Translating Bhakti: Renowned poets Gieve Patel, Priya Sarukkai Chabria and Ravi Shankar shared their experiences in translating ancient mystic poetry – the poems of 8th century Tamil poet Andal, and the 17th century poet Akho who lived in what is now Gujarat, and the inherent ‘modernity’ in the attitudes and thoughts of these ancient seekers.

Valmiki in the 21st century: Sanskrit scholar and translator of the Ramayana and Kathasaritasagar Arshia Sattar took a week-long workshop on the many Ramayanas that exist within the Indian consciousness and that have been reinterpreted in recent films such as *Raavan* and *Sita Sings the Blues*. The workshop sought to release the Ramayana from the unidimensional interpretation of the text by the Hindu right-wing over the last 2 decades.

Literature Across Frontiers: To encourage intercultural dialogue amongst cultural activists and as a sequel to the publication of the multi-lingual, multicultural volume *Other People* this year, OS presented the work of 8 poets, Indian and foreign, who have been translating each other’s poetry. The poets performed in Punjabi, Bengali, Hindi, English, French, Scottish, German and Manipuri at the Kala Chhaya amphitheatre to an audience of 50 people. This was a partnership with Sangam House Writers’ Residency and Literature Across Frontiers which promotes multicultural exchanges through literature.

Kumar Gandharva Darshan: OS presented a tribute to the life and thought of Kumar Gandharva, the classical vocalist and iconoclast who epitomises syncretic traditions and pluralism in music and religion, melding folk with classical, moving with ease from Kabir to Tukaram, in a concert by Pushkar Lele, a young Hindustani classical vocalist who interspersed the recital with audio-visual presentations on Kumar Gandharva’s life and work. This programme was attended by around 500 people, packed into the aisles and some standing throughout the 3-hour concert at SM Joshi Hall.



Sexuality/Gender

Queering Saturdays/ Q Fest: As part of our wider focus on inclusion and identity politics, OS began a sustained process of reaching out to LGBT communities in Pune this year. OS has become a safe space for exploration and discussion of issues related to identity and sexuality, with a fortnightly *Queering Saturdays* forum attended by 20-40 queer people.

A two-day *Q Fest* was organised at a public auditorium in December, attended by roughly 400 people. Film screenings were interspersed with plays, book readings, poetry and music. A discussion on *Queer Identity in the Arts* was held, with Ashish Sawhney (director of *Happy Hookers*), Sunil Gupta (photographer and gay rights activist), Shobhna Kumar (publisher of India’s first queer publishing house *Queer Ink*) and Arun Mirchandani (author) discussing the emergence of a prominent and visible queer presence in mainstream cinema, writing and the arts. Other forums included Ma Faiza (musician, DJ and gay rights activist), Ram Naidu (architect), Bindumadhav Khire and Apphia Kumar (gay rights activist) discussing whether their sexual identity was their main identity.



In January a group of about 30 young people gathered at OS to paint posters for the Pride Parade taking place in Mumbai, in an atmosphere of festivity and solidarity.



The QUEST-Prayatna LGBT support group which has primarily members from Marathi- and Hindi-speaking backgrounds meets at OS every 3rd Saturday of the month.

Violence against women: Open Space, Point of View, and WAVE (Women Aloud Videoblogging for the Environment) organised the exhibition *The Inner Courtyard* in November, of photographs by young Muslim women who have experienced domestic violence. The photographs were exhibited at Tilting Art Gallery as well as at Open Space. Three of the young women photographers interacted with viewers on the last day.

Reading Sita: In continuation of its exploration of popular culture and its influence on societal roles, stereotypes and attitudes, OS held a day-long seminar titled *In Search of Sita*, with readings, recitation, screenings, lec-dems and performances. Is Sita the ‘well-behaved’ woman who allows herself to be controlled by the men in her life? How have the culturally diverse interpretations of Sita/Janaki been sidelined by conservative forces in favour of the meek TV-Ramayana version? Is Sita as an icon relevant any longer? Panelists included Dr Malashree Lal (academic) and Namita Gokhale (author, founder of the Jaipur Literary Festival), editors of the recent book *In Search of Sita*, Dr Rashna Imhasly Gandhi (Jungian psychotherapist), Aman Nath (art historian who made a presentation on Sita in Victorian art), Priya Sarukkai Chabria (poet and writer), Pratima Kirloskar (moderator) and Dr Kshama Vaidya (natya sangeet exponent who has played Sita and other classical figures on the Marathi stage). Madhureeta Anand’s film *Laying Janaki to Rest* was also screened. Roughly 150 people attended.

Feedback: “For me the seminar on Reading Sita worked wonderfully because it touched on several ideas of the nature of identity, and I understood it in terms of not what it has been but what it is today. Sacrifice for a modern woman doesn’t mean the abandoning of her identity but the embracing of multiple identities... The seminar seemed very comprehensive in its approach to the subject matter, and was tightly bound to the ancient texts but very aware of its modern significance.” – Reshma, 30, artist and disability/gay rights activist.

Mother: Caring our way out of the population crisis: Dr Beth Osnes screened her film *Mother*, which talks about the world population crisis and described her work in the USA and globally, teaching mothers to use their voices to speak up for the world’s children.

Democracy/Governance

Minimising biases in the law: Rakesh Shukla, Supreme Court lawyer, took sessions at ILS Law College and Symbiosis Law College on this topic. The workshops, attended by about 80 graduate and post-graduate students and faculty, explained the various ways in which bias creeps into the justice system – through the judges’ own caste, class and communal biases; through the way laws are framed – for example, the language used may be intrinsically unfair to women -- and through ‘trial by media’.

Binayak Sen judgment discussion: In December, eminent human rights lawyers Vrinda Grover and Usha Ramanathan, and historian Dr Uma Chakravathy made a presentation at OS on the Binayak Sen case and the recent judgment. Twenty young people – advocacy interns, law students, journalists and interested citizens -- attended. The presentation and discussion ranged from the legalities of the case to the need to take action against injustice as citizens.

Unique Identity Scheme (UID): More pitfalls than privileges? This panel discussion was hosted at the Symbiosis Inst. Of Computer Studies, but was open to the public and attended by about 50 students and interested citizens. The speakers were Dr Usha Ramanathan (lawyer and legal activist), (Dr Ramakumar, Associate Professor, TISS), Vickram Crishna, (regional coordinator Privacy International in Asia), Anupam Saraph, (then chief information officer, Pune city), Lalit Kathpalia, (director of the Symbiosis Institute of Computer Studies and Research) and Dr Jaswant Krishnayya, (founder-director of the Systems Research Institute, a non-profit think-tank in Pune).

Egypt: New possibilities: Dr Dalia Wahdan, Egyptian anthropologist recently on Tahrir Square, spoke at Open Space about the revolution in her country and its historical and socio-economic background. The session was attended by about 35 students and interested persons.

Students For Free Tibet: 20 Tibetan students met at Open Space to screen films and discuss future strategies for democratic action, including how non-violent strategies could be used in citizen political protest.

Human Rights Day: On December 10, 2010, OS coordinated a multicultural celebration at Fergusson College, with Students for a Free Tibet, Fergusson College Sociology Club, international students from various countries and many students from the Northeastern states sharing poetry and music. The students were happy that they had been brought together through the initiative of Open Space and many of them now attend each others' programmes.

Globalisation and development

Unequal World: The impact of globalisation: This series of interactive lectures/screenings was planned from October 8-16 to give MBA students of Pune's oldest management college, IMDR, an exposure to the flip side of globalisation, which is completely glossed over in their syllabus. The various sessions taken were:

- a. Corporate responsibility: Nityanand Jayaraman, leading environmental campaigner, took this session, using the examples of Bhopal, the BP oil spill and leading Indian corporations. This heated session examined whether profit and environmental sustainability can co-exist.
- b. The informal sector and how it supports our economic boom: Sharmila Joshi, former Senior Assistant Editor of *Hindustan Times* and researcher.
- c. What is Ethical Trade: Seth Petchers of Shop For Change explained the concept of ethical trade and ethical consumption. He described their efforts to promote fair trade in cotton.
- d. Screening of *Nero's Guests*, which sees the agricultural crisis through P Sainath's eyes – discussion on how globalisation has exacerbated the farmers' woes.
- e. Discussion with feminist activist Ranjana Padhi on the effect of farmers' suicides on women in the family, especially in Punjab where her research is located.
- f. Screening and discussion of *Backstage Boys – Punjab's Labour Goes Global*, on the conditions in which immigrants work in the globalised economy.

Social exclusion in Indian society for Mahindra United World College students: OS conducted four sessions with international students of the Mahindra United World College's summer exposure programmes, using games and discussions to help them understand the roots of inequality and the structure of caste and class hierarchies in India.

Screening of Nero's Guests and interaction with P Sainath: A public screening of this film on the roots of the agricultural crisis was held at Symbiosis Law School. An intense discussion with P Sainath followed. The audience of about 100 comprised mostly journalism, law and management students.

Feedback from Dr Kalyani Bondre, Faculty, IMDR: "Very informative, interesting and thought-stimulating. Speakers were well qualified and spoke from first-hand experience and fieldwork. The idea of showing excerpts from documentaries interspersed with the lecture was also very good. Hope to have more such lectures in the future from Open Space."

Environment

(Un)Building Blocks/Unblocking Building: Young eco-architect Sourabh Phadke demystified the process of building by getting participants to actually construct classrooms and composting toilets at Aman Setu school. The workshop ran over several weeks, teaching the participants that everyone can learn to construct safe and appropriate basic structures using waste and natural materials rather than cement, burnt brick and steel. The workshop was attended by 14 people aged 16-40, of whom only one had a background in architecture. The classroom, designed by the 3rd Std students of Aman Setu, and the eco-san toilets, were successfully built.

Feedback: "It will be good to have (more) workshops that bridge theories with action. The former as far as I get it, is OS's comfort zone. This calls for further introspection at the organisational level in order to find a balance if desired in the first place. Though I do understand that every thought is an action by itself. The group was great to work with!" – Sourabh Phadke, 28, architect and Open Space resource person.



Pune Tree Fest: In late-July, OS initiated work towards the Pune Tree Fest, a week-long celebration of nature through art, poetry, music and activism. Multiple events were held between September 23-October 2, at multiple venues -- including 'Tree Poetry' at the sprawling Empress Gardens, where poems were read, and a drum circle and two local bands performed in a festive atmosphere with stalls put up by Daily Dump (a composting system), handicrafts store Either/Or, and an organic farm. An exhibition of photographs was held at the Balgandharva Art Gallery, where David Attenborough's *The Private Life of Plants* was also screened. Importantly, the Pune Tree Fest pulled together the energies and support of different groups including CSOs, the Garden Department of the Pune Municipal Corporation, the Pune builders' association and over 300 BCom students of Symbiosis College who signed on as volunteers.

Media and creative expression

Spoken Poetry for empowerment of youth: Sarah Kay, popular young poet from New York, conducted a series of workshops in Pune at our invitation, at different colleges and at a popular cafe. Sarah is co-founder of *Project Voice*, an organisation that uses Spoken Word poetry to empower young people, especially those from difficult or disadvantaged backgrounds. She took two sessions with students at Symbiosis Arts College and Symbiosis Law College. We then organised a performance at the popular Mocha café, where other young poets also recited their poetry. Sarah also took a two-hour Spoken Word workshop at OS, which was attended by about 25 people.

Non-fiction writing workshop: Poet and writer Priya Sarukkai Chabria took a rigorous workshop on memoir, biography, writing for the media, reviews, etc. There were 13 participants, between the ages of 19 and 26.

Blogging workshop: Neil Sequeira, founder of BUZZ Factory, conducted an introductory session on blogging for 25 participants, ranging from college students to people in their 50s, all of whom wanted to know how to maximise the impact of their blogs, market them, and reach more readers.

Silence is Space: Christopher Mark Taylor, internationally renowned photographer spoke at OS on the technical and aesthetic aspects of photography.

Cinema City exhibition: In keeping with our efforts to bring innovative ways of documenting our changing cities and economies, OS brought to FTII, Pune, Madhusree Dutta's exhibition *Cinema City*, comprising of installations, screenings, photos and live interactions which explored the invisible city that supports the film industry of Bombay. Screenings and a panel discussion on the 'City and the Imagination' were also held.

Filmmaking workshop: Filmmaker Nitin Das conducted a two-day intensive workshop on digital filmmaking for a group of 18 students and young working professionals. The workshop looked at a range of issues from the technical basics to how to market your film, online resources etc. The participants also made, viewed and critiqued a two-minute music video.

Feedback:

"I write poetry on social issues, and now I plan on making super-short films, something like 'moving poetry'. This might first become a hobby and then turn into something more meaningful." – Rajashri Gandhi, second-year student, Fergusson College.

Theatre of the Oppressed: A 3-day workshop by visiting U.S. theatreperson Trisha Wagner introduced young people to Augusto Boal's notion of *Theatre of the Oppressed*, a powerful transformative tool in dialogue-building.

2. Knowledge-building for social change: Research, communications and media advocacy

www.infochangeindia.org

Roughly 250 original, by-lined articles have been uploaded on www.infochangeindia.org this year. Hundreds of news updates compiled and written inhouse are also uploaded on a daily basis. The focus of research this year has been on the takeover of common property resources.

We awarded four Infochange Media Fellowships on the natural commons this year, in collaboration with Foundation for Ecological Security:

- Anjulika Thingnam Samom researched the problems of communities denied access to Loktak Lake, Manipur's largest freshwater resource, which has been dammed.
- R Uma Maheshwari reported on the inland fisherfolk of the Godavari, who stand to be displaced and robbed of their livelihood by the Polavaram Project, and who do not qualify for compensation.
- Jyothi Krishnan studied the transition of Kerala's traditional kulams (ponds) from commons to privately-owned reservoirs, depriving many communities of access to water.
- Aarthi Sridhar reported on coastal commons, and the restricted access of fisherfolk to beaches, thanks to tourism, development of ports, marine protected areas etc, with field reports from the Orissa and Tamil Nadu coasts, and Goa.

We also carried detailed analyses of the impact of the crippling rise in food prices; the poor implementation of the Forest Rights Act; several stories on water and sanitation in India; several stories on Maoist extremism and the government response; coverage of the Binayak Sen judgment and its implications for freedom of expression; a review of the Narmada Bachao Andolan at 25, and other allied stories.

Infochangeindia continues to be India's leading cross-sectoral portal on social justice and sustainable development in India, logging roughly 2,000 visitors to our site every day. Our content is reprinted, cited and referenced in scores of online and print mediums worldwide.

Agenda (quarterly print and online journal)

Coastal communities: This volume of our quarterly journal (print and online) explores the challenges posed by liberalisation, mechanisation, commercial development and climate change to India's impoverished and marginalised coastal communities. It brings together research from several different locations along India's 8,000-km coastline -- the Sunderbans, Andaman & Nicobar, Kerala, Kutch, Mumbai and Orissa, revisiting some of the Orissa villages we had mapped in 2005, since submerged by rising ocean levels. Featuring articles by noted environmental researchers-writers Richard Mahapatra, Aarthi Sridhar, Sudarshan Rodriguez, as well as activists working to represent the voice of fishworkers such as Thomas Kocherry.



New agriculturist: A frequent criticism of *Agenda* (and much of other social change journalism in India) is that we don't focus enough on positive trends. This issue of *Agenda* went beyond the agricultural crisis and the factors that are responsible for it, to document the good news: with roughly 45,000 certified organic farms operating in India, there is finally a rejection of resource-extractive industrial agriculture and a return to traditional, sustainable and ecologically safe farming. This is a rare volume of research on the efforts of rural revivalists who are rejecting the corporatised, high-input model of agriculture and following agro-ecological approaches in which shared, distributed knowledge systems provide ways to adapt to changing climate and a shrinking natural resource base. There are stories on farmers in Sangli, Tamil Nadu, Yavatmal, Gorakhpur, the Sunderbans and Wayanad. As



well as one on a farmer who has developed and distributed indigenous seeds to 2 million farmers across 14 states.

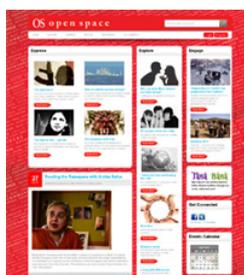
Ethics of new medical technologies: New medical technologies are selling us dreams of genetic engineering, stem cell treatments to eradicate all disease, perfect bodies, perfect babies and super vaccines. This volume asks whether these technologies are relevant to our needs and what we must consider when making decisions related to them, as individuals and as a society. Articles have been written by leading public health experts including Amar Jesani, Sandhya Srinivasan, Sarojini NB, Amit Sengupta, Vijay Hiremath, as well as medical practitioners reporting their ethical dilemmas, and consumers.



Enclosure of the commons: This volume of *Agenda* brings together a year-long study by CCDS of the takeover of our natural common property resources by market forces, infrastructure development and archaic rules of land acquisition. The poor are being squeezed off the lands, forests, waters and coasts that their survival and identities depend on. *Agenda* maps the history of common property use and regulation by communities, policies such as eminent domain which allowed the colonial administration, and now the independent state, to take over lands and forests, and looks at the impact of this trend on food security and livelihoods.



Relaunch of the OS website



The new OS platform was launched this year, aiming to engage with young people whom we cannot physically reach. The site includes a community function, blogs, software that allows users to post their videos, photos, art etc online, integration with social media networks and Facebook in particular, where OS has a very active community of fans numbering roughly 1,000. The content is rich but readable and accessible, with integration of audio and video. Much of the content on OS has been written by young writers. All OS publications and learning material is available for free download. All our public lectures and other resources will now be streamed online, helping us reach much further than the cities in which we are physically located. Chat, forums and other functions are built into the platform and will be activated in the coming months. More special sections such as the one on diversity, *Tana Bana*, are being planned. We are already logging around 2,500 visitors every month to the site.

CCDS films and publications

In Search of My Home: This CCDS film focuses on India's large refugee population and the absence of a comprehensive domestic refugee law to guarantee them basic human needs and a life of dignity. *In Search of My Home* is a journey with a Burmese and an Afghan family and the complexities in their everyday battle for survival. Weaving their emotional stories of hope and despair, love and loss, the film uses live-action, photography, music and text narratives to tell a story that is absent from India's collective conscience. This film was made by Sushmit Ghosh and Rintu Thomas, young filmmakers from Jamia Millia. The film can be viewed on the Infochange and OS sites.

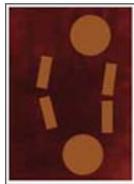


A multi-city release was organised for this film on June 20, World Refugee Day. Screenings were held at OS, at FTIL, for 45 members of the Burmese refugee community in Viaspuri (Delhi), at Pravah (Delhi), at the India International Centre (Delhi) with the Deputy Commissioner from the UNHCR participating. The film was also screened twice at TISS, in Shillong by the Red Door Film Club, at the Centre for Cultural Research and Documentation at Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh), and by groups in Sweden and San Francisco who joined the campaign to screen this film through Facebook, where the film has many fans. The small amounts raised through sale of the film have been given to the two families profiled in the film.

Notes from a Beautiful City: In the run-up to the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, while the rest of the media focused on the magnificent infrastructure being built for the Games, and later the scams that were uncovered, CCDS focused on the invisible people – mostly poor migrant labourers -- who were building this infrastructure

but who were banished from the international gaze before the Games could begin. We made two short multimedia presentations on this theme which are playing online.

Other People, Edited by Arshia Sattar and DW Gibson of Sangam House Writers' Residency, and jointly published by Open Space, Sangam House and InKo Centre, is a multilingual and multicultural exploration of diversity. OS collaborated in this venture because it represents dialogue amongst people, languages and cultures, because it celebrates inclusion and the universal values that bring us together across geographical, linguistic and cultural borders, and because it is open to poetry, fiction, non-fiction and drama. This anthology of contemporary writing brings together the work of writers from cultures and nations as diverse as Korea and Austria, Spain and India and in languages as dominant as English and those as nationally bound as Danish.



Q: Exploring Queer Identity, represents queer concerns and explorations of queer identity in articles, stories, interviews, photographs and art by predominantly gay writers and artists. An excellent example of dialogue across borders, this OS volume features content submitted by contributors all over the world, not just in India.

3. OS Resource Centre

OS now holds close to 3,000 books on a wide variety of subjects from globalization and sustainable development to gender, identity, media, art and theatre. We hold 512 documentary films on social justice and development issues and 403 world cinema and Indian cinema classics. We subscribe to 9 newspapers and 22 magazines/journals. The Resource Centre has over 100 paid-up members (which enables readers to borrow the resources); an average of 4-5 young people use the Centre every day for reading/watching or discussions over coffee (there is no charge for in-house use of the resource centre). The resource centre has been brightened up and reorganised this year. Free wifi access has been provided for students/researchers. Programme staff make it a point to interact intensively with young visitors while they watch, browse, read, and discuss issues of social relevance.

4. Reach of our civil society work

Open Space has reached thousands of citizens in this reporting period. Our large public programmes such as the Kumar Gandharva concert, the Queer Film Festival, Pune Tree Fest, the Cinema City exhibition etc see the participation of 300-500 people and are designed to draw more citizens into the OS network, while also provoking thought and action on sustainable development, human rights, inclusion and pluralism. The bulk of our work this year has been focused and located on campuses, where public lectures and workshops are attended by a class of at least 40-60, and often many more students. The many discussion forums and one/two-day workshops held at OS itself are attended by an average of 20-30 participants, while more sustained trainings that continue over a week are attended by 12-15 participants.

This year, a core group of students and working professionals from the Mahindra United World College, the Fergusson College Sociology Club, the two leading law colleges, the IMDR management institute where the mentoring programme was conducted, and the queer community has coalesced around OS. We are happy that they consider OS a challenging, open and inclusive space where they can learn, participate and interact.

5. Reach of our media advocacy work

Our media advocacy projects continue to be recognised as leading and very credible sources of information by thousands of readers. A total of 686,009 readers visited www.infochangeindia.org in 2010, and read/downloaded a total of 45,30,305 pages of content.

Our content continues to travel far and wide. Scores of popular mainstream websites republish/link to our stories -- including Wikipedia, a host of e-learning websites, jaagore.com etc, reassuring us that use of our content is not restricted to policymakers, development professionals and academics. Mainstream media also continues to use our content. Our credibility is demonstrated by the fact that BBC News continues to provide a link to

Infochange for development news from India for the 10th year running (alongside links to the PM's website, parliamentary website etc: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/country_profiles/1154019.stm).

To give just one example of the impact of our media advocacy at the international level, *The Economist's* 2010 spring edition of *Intelligent Life* (<http://moreintelligentlife.com/content/john-parker/dance-birds-wisdom>) has built a major article around 'The Death of the Seasons', an idea sparked off in their minds by an Infochange series on climate change in Orissa filed in 2005. The journal quotes extensively from this story and also links to the rest of the series on Infochange. There are scores of such examples of Infochange content feeding into knowledge-building and media advocacy for a more sustainable and equitable world.

Infochange was selected this year by the Digital Empowerment Foundation as one of 60 ICT projects that have made a difference in South Asia. A short film is being made by DEF on the impact of Infochange. Infochange is also included in a forthcoming publication titled *Samajik Maharashtra-50* published by Sampark, which is documenting the history of 50 social organisations in Maharashtra that have made a difference over the last 50 years.