



"..... I am very scared and have no one to talk to. My Uncle has been molesting me for years, and now I can't stand it any more. But he tells me that if I disclose this with my parents, they will not believe me and that everyone will think I am a 'bad' girl. Please help me, what should I do?"
- Troubled girl, Dang

".... my girlfriend has threatened to commit suicide if I don't marry her. Although I have promised to marry her, I am very apprehensive that the society will treat me badly and hate me for being involved with a HIV positive person"
- a boy from Pokhara

Quick Facts

1. Nepal's population under the age of 15 years is 39.5% of the total population (Human Development Intex Report, 2006 -UNDP).
2. The legal age for getting married in Nepal is 20 years and above.
3. Forty percent of girls in Nepal marry before the age of 15 and 7 % before the age of 10 (*Early Marriage Child Spouses, UNICEF 2001*)

Publications

The radio program now publishes a central quarterly magazine and five regional monthly bulletins, managed by the network of listeners club members. The publications aims to provide an open platform for networking for the young listeners of SSMK at a regional & central level, while building their capacity in the field of print media. It has become an excellent tool for young people from different parts of the country to express their opinions on matters related to young people and to share issues from their region with those in other regions.

Manka Kura Magazine

"Manka Kura" (matters close to the heart) is the name of the central quarterly magazine and is targeted to rural and semi-urban youth. The core content touches role of youth in politics, self-awareness and positive thinking, social issues, education, capacity building, health, entertainment and sports.

Regional Bulletins

The five monthly bulletins, one from each developmental region of the country are named: 'Hamra Kura' - Our concerns (Eastern), 'Pratibimba' - Reflections (Central), 'Saathi' - Friend (Western), 'Manko Majheri' - The oasis of the heart (Mid-western) and 'Jaagaran' - Awareness (Far-western). Regional bulletins are encouraged to produce content that reflect communities of their own developmental region so that it can be shared with other listeners' clubs from other regions of the country.

Kam ka kura - a new radio program

'Kam ka kura' - New Opportunities is a new radio program on livelihood, education and job skills training, designed especially for those young people who are most disadvantaged when it comes to education and opportunities. The program aims to provide complete information about locally available resources and how these could be tapped on, while also creating linkages with local service providers and disseminating success stories.

www.ssmk.org

The official website of SSMK was launched on 22nd January 2007 with the objective of reaching out with information related to SSMK to listeners who have travelled and live abroad. The website also allows for downloading of the audio files of the radio programs to be listened in any part of the world.



Saathi Sanga Manka Kura

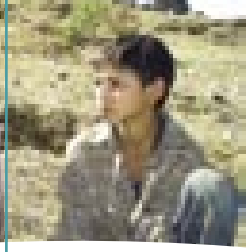
Chatting With My Best Friend

• a youth radio program •



"..... I had to go through so many financial as well as psychological crisis. There were lots of time when I would break down, but these days I can deal with my problems on my own and am able to cope with my emotions ... all the credit goes to SSMK. Dear friends, I want to thank you for being such a true friend and supporting me throughout ..."

- a boy from Nepalgunj, Nepal



Understanding Nepali youth

With little or no access to reliable information and few people to openly talk to, young people in Nepal often find it highly challenging to learn life skills that are necessary to negotiate relationships, continue education, plan a career, or to stay safe from HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. Isolated, confused and often depressed, millions of young Nepalis seek counsel from peers or friends. Turn to their friends for counsel.

Addressing the needs

The young presenters of Saathi Sanga Manka Kura (SSMK), 'talk' to young people through their radio show with the aim to equip them with the life skills to make sound decisions on matters relating to their lives, empowering them to deal with their everyday problems and to tackle peer-pressure and stigmatization.

Engaging the community through listeners' clubs

The radio show's relevance and appeal has spawned a network of over 1,000 listeners' clubs (data as of May, 2007) in mainly all the districts of the country, and the number of clubs are continually increasing. In collaboration with local health centers and village development committees, these listeners' clubs have begun organizing their own activities such as training programs to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and talk programs on gender and caste discrimination. Members of these clubs are playing active roles in engaging their communities and influencing long-term decision-making related to issues that matter to youth. Since September 2004, the SSMK youth production team has been working to integrate more targeted information about accessing services and responding to questions raised by the listeners' club members and the thousands of letters and emails received each month.

Script Sample

Saathi Sanga Manka Kura
Episode # 055

Binayak: Something is bothering you today Binita, what's wrong?

Binita: Well, I was coming to work today, and this guy brushed past me and touched me! Next thing I know I had turned around and slapped him across the face!

Binayak: What?! Did you really? I didn't think you had it in you Binita ...

Binita: Well, I did, and before long there was a large crowd around me. But I am so glad I stood up for myself. That guy got a really good dose of what he deserved. The next time he thinks of harassing a girl on the street, he will definitely think twice.

Program Information

- A broadcast audience survey (February, 2007) revealed 'Saathi Sanga Manka Kura' (SSMK) to have a regular listenership of over 6 million young people and that it is the third most popular radio program following national news and one song based program.
- Initiated by UNICEF Nepal in April 2001 and now produced completely in-house by Equal Access, Nepal.
- The radio program receives around 1000 -1200 letters and 200-400 emails every month from the young people of Nepal.
- Each listener who writes in to the program receives an individual response from the production team, with a specific template response addressing the problem/concern of the letter writer and a life skills booklet.
- Responses to letters are based on UNICEF's life skills curriculum and as per advice from various subject matter experts.
- The program is broadcast through the national radio station - Radio Nepal, the Equal Access Satellite channel and 30 local FM stations through out the country. The program is now looking to expand to reach audiences overseas.
- 1020 listeners clubs (data as of May, 2007) have been formed in mainly all the districts of Nepal, in initiation of young people themselves, who not only tune in to the program regularly, but are also involved in social, developmental & peace reconciliation activities in the community in collaboration with locally based organisations and village development committees.