



SM4E: KOHIMA WORKSHOP, 31st MARCH, 2015

Report

Social media has drastically changed the style of communication. Not too long ago, communication was a cumbersome and slow process. But today the Internet has redefined communication.

Digital Empowerment Foundation with American Centre as an Outreach Partner are doing Social Media for Empowerment Awards, where we recognize and felicitate organizations and individuals who have initiated exemplary ventures using social media for development. And to focus on North-east to increase the effective and intelligent use of social media as a tool for development is a part of the project, because it is believed that penetration of social media in North east is quite low, despite immense potential and possibilities.

Hence, with YouthNet as our local partner, who are also one of our SM4E, 2014 Award winners, we organized a social media workshop in Kohima to ascertain the reasons for apathy in North-East towards social media, and find ways to use social media to pave the way for Digital penetration, inclusion and integration.



Hon. Member of Legislative Assembly, Mhonlumo Kikon

Hon. Member of Legislative Assembly, Mhonlumo Kikon, opened the workshop with his key note. He belongs to one of those rare breed of young politicians in Nagaland who has taken to Twitter quite seriously. He waxed eloquent about the democratic nature of social media. However, this democratic nature could also lead to grave problems. Responses evoked out of tribalism, immaturity, lack of understanding and knowledge about issues could make matters worse. He inferred to mob lynching incident that took place in Dimapur recently, which was the result of misinformation and hysteria. We need to be beware of such irresponsible behaviour. Naga youths are interested in social media, and they are eager to participate. But they should also realize that social media is a very powerful tool, and with power comes responsibility. He stated, that he would appreciate and consider honest criticism that is intelligent and doesn't have shades of tribalism. In fact, politically they gain a lot from social media, especially to communicate and mobilize people. A major part of Narendra Modi's success could be attributed to social media. Hence, social media needs to be used effectively politically and socially.



Amba Jamir, Policy Analyst

Amba Jamir, followed soon after with his presentation on potentialities of social media in empowering public and giving them voice in the formulation of important government policies, which have direct impact on their lives. He is the founder Executive Secretary of 'Sustainable Development Forum Nagaland (SDFN), who also works as an independent Policy Analyst. Social media is the source of instant communication, information, opinions and content. It has unprecedented level of dynamism to facilitate interaction between policy makers and public. Hence, it has the capacity to bridge the gap between government and the governed. Its effectiveness has prompted even traditional media to invest in it intensely. Now, social media is enabling Mass communication. However, he also cautioned against parochial mindset while handling social media, which could lead to social and political problems in more ways than one.



Lezo Putsure, YouthNet

Lezo Putsure from <http://www.youthnet.org.in/>, our local partner, spoke about presence and penetration of social media from the North-East's perspective. They are doing incredible work in using social media to share inspirational works and stories from Nagaland that wouldn't have reached people otherwise. Believing in the power of ordinary people making extraordinary changes, their campaigns are directed towards teachers, government officials and students. He spoke about sweep campaign initiated by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. YouthNet mobilized peoples participation for the cause in Kohima through social media, which turned out to be a huge success. They are involved in many other campaigns where social media is being used extensively for support, cooperation and collaboration, such as- Right to Information (RTI); Nagaland Job Centre, Kohima; NCDC-Professional skills; YNOX- Nagaland's only employment newspaper; YLC- Young leaders Connect; Young Nagas gives back, YNYA- YouthNet Young Ambassadors; IMPACT 5000 by 18 with Dept. of Youth Resources & Sports.



Sunny Sharma, Founder & CEO, Foetron

DREAM BIG-START SMALL-START NOW! That's how Sunny Sharma, Founder & CEO of <http://www.foetron.com/> began his presentation. He spoke about the use of social media for development from a national perspective. Participation is the key to get noticed. The Ice Bucket Challenge, began to promote awareness towards the disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and encourage donations to research. It went viral instantly and became one the most talked about campaign. So much so that, even celebrities around the world were seen taking Ice Bucket challenge. However, it was modified in India as Rice Bucket campaign, where Indians were encouraged to donate a bucket of rice to the under-privileged. It caught on and went viral quickly, and had Indians participating in huge numbers. We need a big campaign like this to come out of Nagaland. To be at the right place at the right time, one needs to be at many places at many times. And social media provides us the possibilities and opportunities to do that. Sunny stressed on the need to not re-invent, but to build on top of successful campaigns; collaborate; and stay connected for maximum visibility. He further spoke about his successful

ventures- the Mobile WebApp for Aam Admi Party mobilized intense support for AAP and won them Delhi election; and Gurgaon Police App bridged the communication gap between Gurgaon Police and residents. To build the cities of tomorrow, focus on leveraging the cognitive surplus of the people rather than their reactions. An entrepreneur is, who jump off a cliff and make a plane on the way down.



Yanpvuo Yamfo Kikon, Founder of Naga Blog

Nagaland government has been on an upswing of late when it comes to Information and technology, and Yanpvuo Yamfo Kikon utilized this opportunity to speak eloquently about their initiatives. Yamfo not only works with the IT department of Nagaland government, but he is also the founder of <http://www.nagablog.com/>. Nagaland Board of School Education has digitized and facilitated online verification of class 10th and 12th marksheets. NPSC (Nagaland Public Service Commission) has reached the advanced levels of maturity in Public Service Delivery through electronic means. They are offering prelims forms online. This has created a movement of sort in the

social media with people demanding more digital intervention in the government. It is time to turn the pyramid upside down. Social media allows for power to flow from down to up than the other way around. Those who wouldn't adapt would become dinosaurs.



Dr. Tali Ao, Librarian

Dr. Tali Ao is a librarian and an archivist by profession, who thinks deeply about the status of social media in North-East. He believes, collaboration is the key. Campaigns built around recreational activities can be used most effectively to mobilize people for a social cause with the help of social media. He took pertinent examples to enumerate the potential, possibilities and impact of social media as an effective tool- such as Acaut Bike rally that was organized in North-East to raise awareness against racism. It was promoted extensively through social media and managed to get huge support.



Lawrence Miglialo, Social Media Manager, Barefoot College

“The Destiny of Man is to unite, not to divide. If you keep on dividing you end up as a collection of monkeys throwing nuts at each other out of separate trees”, Lawrence Miglialo started with this profound statement. He is the CCO & Co-Founding member of Valhalla Movement; internal marketer & social media manager for Barefoot College; and blogger & social media manager for sustainable human. Social Media stands for immaculate exposure. Lawrence gave an international perspective regarding the impactful ways of using social media for development. He spoke extensively about using social media platforms for crowd-funding. Some of the examples he used to elaborate his point are Kickstarter and greenseed.me, and the way they are being effectively used for crowd-funding for development projects. He has helped Barefoot College put in place a comprehensive and efficient crowd-sourcing plan through social media, which is bearing fruits now. Cooperation and creating partners is the key. To increase your digital footprint, he suggests - become an editor to social media pages; become an author in other blogs; become an active representative of your new online partner. Lawrence advocates, Mahatma Gandhi style 'Satyagraha' is the need of the hour.



All the speakers invariably stressed on collaboration, connection, unity, generating voice and integration while speaking about social media. Social media can be used effectively in Politics, Administration, Governance, Knowledge & Awareness. However, everybody cautioned against irresponsible usage of social media. It is a very powerful medium. Hence, it is important this power is used with utmost responsibility. We've had enough instances where irresponsible behaviour by a few has led to irreversible drastic consequences for many. Exodus of North-East Indians from Bangalore in 2012 due to irresponsible hate SMSs and MMSs is one such case. And more recently, mob lynching incident in Dimapur.

By this time molten of emotions had begun to churn for a fierce release. Hence, the moment Q&A session started, participants erupted like a volcano. How can we use social media to address water scarcity problem in Kohima? How can we partner and collaborate to win over hardships that our under-privileged brothers and sisters go through every day to meet their basic water consumption needs? They believed, now they have the power and awareness to bring about a change. It's time to change the status quo. Almost immediately, Whatsapp group was created and brain-storming started to find a solution to the problem that has plagued them for years. They aptly named the campaign 'Mission H2O'.

Mission H2O



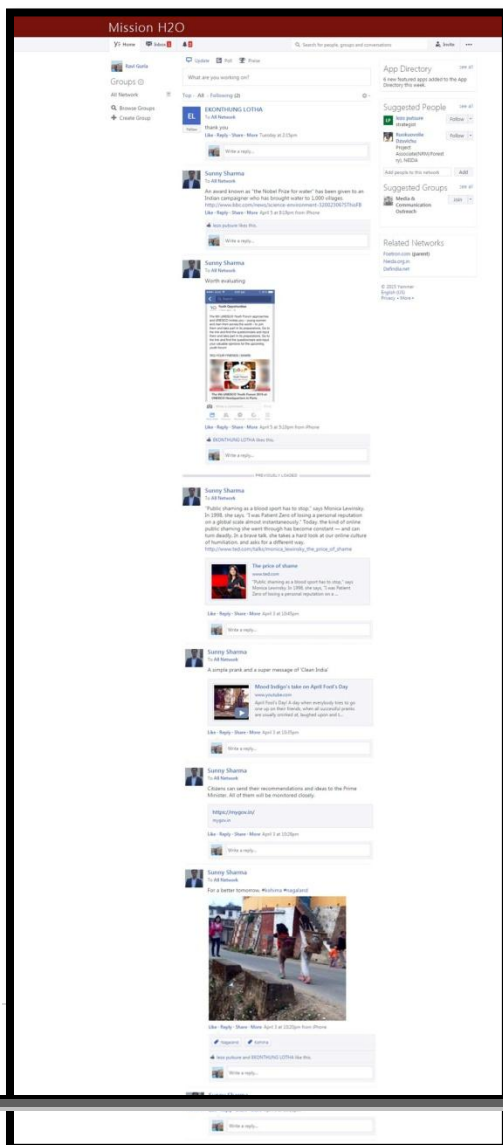
Kohima is perpetually in the grip of a water crisis for many years, despite great monsoon year after year. The irony is, acute water shortage haunts homes, while torrential rains wash down whole mountain sides.

Hence, the shortage of water supply in Kohima is not because of lack of water, but due to poor water management. Against this backdrop, those engaged in private water supplying business in the town through cable and water tankers are thriving and prospering. Roughly, people who buy water spend at least Rs.500 per thousand liters, whereas, private water tankers reportedly charge Rs.700 per thousand liters. At an average, a family of five-six members use up 1000 liters in three to four days. This works out to spending anything from Rs 2000 to Rs 3000 towards water bills alone. In such a scenario, the less privileged are the ones who suffer most. They have to walk long distances to fetch water physically because they can't afford exorbitant costs of buying water from private suppliers.

The tragedy is in the incapacitated state of collective mindsets to address the issue.

There is a desperate need for a proper watershed management system to be put in place to take advantage of good monsoon in the region. If each and every home starts storing rain water, then shortage of water can be addressed. Community based water-management system is an extremely effective practice to fulfill the basic water consumption needs of the people. However, lack of awareness, initiative and mobilization is keeping people from utilizing the abundant resources they are blessed with to address their problem.

Yammer- Mission H2O



Social Media workshop in Kohima turned out to be the platform that not only brought productive young minds together, but it paved the way for collective consciousness to see the problem from a new perspective. Exposure to number of successful campaigns using social media inspired the participants to re-orient their thinking. A belief had emerged that anything can be achieved with right thinking, application and efforts in place. People have achieved so much just by the virtue of utilizing the power of social media to their advantage, then why couldn't people of Kohima.

Sunny Sharma created a yammer account 'Mission H2O' and brought all the participants under one social media



platform to give a wider reach and purpose to the discussions.

Soon it started filling up with ideas, suggestions and pictures of the ground realities. Discussions about best water management practices from around the world began. Never before such determination has found voice. Social media is indeed about unity. There is nothing that cannot be achieved if people unite.

YouthNet has taken the responsibility to take the feedbacks to the Nagaland government. Water management experts are being consulted from around the world to find cheap and efficient solution that is most effective to the region.

Timeline is being drawn in collaboration with the Nagaland government and people. It certainly looks like the solution to the water scarcity problem in Kohima after all is much nearer than it ever was.

Social Media Workshop in e-Assam

This workshop was an extension of the workshop that was held in **Kohima on 31st March, 2015**. The workshop aimed at facilitating NGOs and individuals in using social media for self-development and was held at **NEDFI House**, Guwahati, Assam on 10th April, 2015 during e-Assam.

The “e-Assam” is a best practice network programme in Information Communication Technology (ICT) for development initiatives in and for Assam and is initiated by the North East Development Foundation, Digital Empowerment Foundation and supported by the Department of Information Technology, Govt. of Assam and AMTRON. It has knowledge support from the Open Knowledge Community (A knowledge platform of UNESCO in India & Department of IT & Electronics & IT, GoI).

The Social Media Session gave a platform to the practices where social media is being used as a development tool. Various social media best practices from across North East came and elaborated on the work they are doing with the help of social media.



The projects brought together in the Social Media for empowerment session envisages bringing into light the innovations/innovative ideas of the youth into the public fold and link it up with social media for development of the much potent state of Assam. The session was moderated by Mr Osama Manzar, Founder and Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation and was chaired by Mr Sunil Bhatt, Consultant (Change Management), SeMT Mobile, Department of IT &C, Government of Nagaland.

Case studies:

- The presentation by Sunny Sharma, Cloud Evangelist: With the use of social media, he attempts to solve serious public issues. The idea does not seem like rocket science, but let us not give on the young man so easily; he is drawing crowd and brain storming them to solve the water crisis situation of Kohima and apparently people are contributing, here social media is being used as a very effective digital tool. Moreover, his company Foetron Inc is doing a great deal in scaling up small scale entrepreneurs through the use of this digital platform.
- Special Report Mizoram: It is not merely a facebook group, it is text, it is literature; it is a buzz word in Mizoram. This facebook community has lakhs of followers and is a major platform for give and take of information, knowledge in Mizoram and around the world
- YouthNet, Nagaland: This organization has an appetite to turn job seekers into job givers. They are a buzz word in Nagaland, they not only create opportunities but also advocates for the right cause. They are a savior to the youth.