

Creating an Information and Knowledge System: The D.Net Way

...the experience in resource mobilization

“They think of their own programs and then go out and get support.”

Harriet Skinner wrote this of Development Research Network (D.Net) in 2006, reflecting the essence of D-Net’s paradigm of work and resource mobilization since its genesis in 2001.

Starting with a core fund of US\$ 3000 created by its founding group, as of 2007, D.Net boasts of US\$ 1.2 million in its resource pool. This case traces the process of D.Net’s growth as it unfolded over the years, in response to the organization’s financial needs and demands on its work in the field.



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A model to start with...

The foundation of D.Net was laid with the first of its kind research project called “e-Readiness of Bangladesh”, initiated by a group of 18 individuals, including economists, researchers, academics, NGO professionals, expatriates and software professionals. Subsequently, the founders committed themselves to using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for poverty alleviation and economic development in Bangladesh, by establishing D.Net as a non-profit development research organization.

The mission was defined to build, “*A society where information and knowledge play their designated role of facilitation in participation of all stakeholders for generation of wealth and its equitable distribution for poverty alleviation.*” The core objectives of D.Net to achieve this mission were identified as follows:

- ⊙ Undertaking and promoting study, research and dissemination of knowledge for national development and poverty alleviation, through the use of ICT;
- ⊙ Integrating ICT in areas of agriculture, health, education, legal & human rights, awareness building and capacity building for development;
- ⊙ Developing business models on ICT services for livelihood improvement both, in urban and rural areas;
- ⊙ Promoting policy influencing campaigns in Bangladesh and abroad for enhancing participation capacity of common people;
- ⊙ Generating capacity at the grass root level to understand implications of ICT for livelihood in rural areas.

As an applied research organization, D.Net decided to work with the model of formulating innovative ideas and projects around different themes (using ICT), and piloting them to test their feasibility and viability in the local context.

This initial model managed to attract a number of stakeholders including policy makers, NGOs, academics and the private sector to D.Net’s action research work. The organization then used this to expand its projects at the grass root level or by involving other organizations to take them forward. It focused on providing its knowledge and technical know how to the replicating organizations so that D.Net’s expertise could be utilized to the best possible extent, and, it strengthened partnerships in the sector. In this way, D.Net was able to achieve important milestones over the years, building both, its work and the resources that it generated for the same.

Resourcing itself

Right from the beginning, D.Net used its internal capacities to generate funds for the organization and its various programs. Different stakeholders were tapped to provide in-kind support to D.Net’s initial activities. For example, some software companies were requested for help to develop their website and related software for which D.Net paid them later. Other research organizations and journalists were asked to volunteer for various initiatives and some staff members provided time at D.Net with a nominal payment in return.

Further, D.Net decided to offer research based consultancy services, so that it could share its expertise and earn income for itself at the same time. These services were available for international organizations, business chambers and government departments. Since D.Net’s core team included professionals with knowledge and skills in research projects, they were the best human resource for such work. Further, they even volunteered their time for these projects and contributed the total income for institutional development. These funds were useful for implementing other programs that D.Net planned, to meet its overall objectives. This method of raising funds for D.Net’s projects was termed as “*The Robin Hood Model.*”

The underlying motive for adopting such a strategy was to make D.Net's name known to relevant stakeholders. This strategy helped D.Net in attracting two to three national and international funding institutions for implementing some of its independent research and action agendas. However, since the initial funding was too small to cover the operation costs of these projects, D.Net worked with minimal staff and the core team investing its time and inputs without any honorarium or salary. A popular saying in D.Net at that time was, "*our office starts when other offices close.*" As a result of the voluntary contributions of a number of people, D.Net initiated some great ideas and managed to complete some independent research projects early on in its organizational life. In a way, these steps laid the ground for an inbuilt system of resource generation and even helped in the expansion of D.Net's work in Bangladesh.

However, along with expansion came challenges that constantly pushed D.Net to the boundaries of innovation and experimentation, especially vis-à-vis its financial resources' needs.

Challenges...along the way

During the initial stages of the organization's history, D.Net faced the classic problem of what comes first, '*the chicken or the egg.*' Even though D.Net's projects were innovative, attracting donors required some real demonstration on the issues. While without funds D.Net could not initiate such projects at the first place, donors were unwilling to invest without demonstrated success. In response, the D.Net team, decided to start projects on a limited scale, with available resources and only later, approached donors.

However, despite the relative success in raising funds in its initial phase, D.Net was not able to generate adequate financial resources for realizing all its objectives for a long time to come. This was because of the second major challenge, i.e., the need to respond to growing demands on the organization and manage the concomitant increasing expenses:

Meeting overhead costs

With expansion of work, meeting the overhead costs of the organization became a major challenge and D.Net could hardly cover 50-60% of these costs being incurred across different projects. Donors were more interested in covering program costs and D.Net's consultancy work could not meet the overhead costs on items such as purchasing equipments, generators, office infrastructure, and decoration and renovation.

Supporting non-funded action projects

Of the 50 D.Net projects (either pure research or applied research projects), less than 40% of the projects still receive donor funding. And yet, D.Net has continued these projects by directing resources from its limited core funds and utilizing voluntary staff time to cover their basic costs, due to the intellectual merits of these initiatives. For example, the Gunijan initiative (www.gunijan.org.bd) runs with voluntary inputs of a group of journalists and D.Net staff, but lacks support to continue in full swing. The BORN program (www.bdresearch.org.bd) started by D.Net in 2001 continues to run with internal core funds of D.Net. The project benefits the research community of Bangladesh as research organizations (members of this endeavour); share their knowledge products with its web audience. However, the small amounts of money generated from membership subscriptions, is not sufficient to meet the operational costs of the project. And, most members are not willing to pay the membership fees due to the lack of understanding of the benefits of such an online knowledge platform. It is clear that these projects would not have a long lifespan unless they are sustained financially.

New concepts, more resources

When conducting its various action research projects, D.Net found that several new ideas would germinate and there would be an interest to pilot and/ or replicate them. However, this was not possible in most cases, due to resource constraints and restrictions imposed by project funds. For example, D.Net is a leading Bangladeshi institution in developing digital local language content on various livelihood options and support. Known as JEEON-IKB, which stands for 'life-livelihood' (JEEON) Information and Knowledge base (IKB)ⁱ, this information is available for local communities to access through a telecentre model. And, while the initial stage of content development was supported by different donors, it was difficult for D.Net to meet the costs related to new demands from users during the project delivery phase since the organization only had restricted donor funds.

Similarly, while developing the digital content, D.Net felt the need to create a village database as well as a local system of collecting information from the villages. Again, this idea was unique, but indigenous content collection is an expensive exercise and cannot be sustained at the ground level, without substantial funding. Further, while working with different grass root organizations for replicating the Pallitathyaⁱⁱ (telecentre) model, D.Net found that promoting rural businesses for creating more non-farm economic opportunities had a huge potential. This would, however, require additional funds, especially for developing products, marketing tools and building capacity of the grass root telecentre workers. D.Net recognized that it had several ideas worth developing into small interventions that would make big differences, but resource constraints were a barrier for scaling-up these initiatives.

More demands, limited resources

Since D.Net aims at supporting other organizations, especially local NGOs and self-help groups, to replicate the models that it has developed there is a huge demand on its expertise. Currently, 40 groups are being supported to set up telecentres. And, a larger number of local organizations expect capacity building, monitoring and know-how support from D.Net, which it is unable to provide due to lack of sufficient resources.

Scaling up, business planning

For an organization like D.Net with several projects that had moved beyond their pilot phase and showed potential for sustainability and replication, the next step was to develop business plans to enable investments from venture capitalists and private sector. Partnerships with businesses seemed worthwhile to raise 'unrestricted funds' and set up self-dependent or commercial operations. However, business development requires certain skills with costs, and this is what D.Net needs to seek for moving ahead on this.

Human Resource Development

Recognizing the need to have quality level staff to manage and operate its various projects, D.Net has made consistent efforts to develop their leadership qualities and other skills. Despite this investment in internal capacity building programs, it faces the danger of losing out on skilled professionals to other organizations capable of paying higher salaries. On reflection, sometimes, D.Net's core team feels that it may be a '*human resource development institute*' for other institutions. At the same time, D.Net realizes that unless it is able to offer competitive salary packages to potential employees, retention will always remain a problem area.

Institutionalizing resource mobilisation...the journey

Strategies and Processes

Posed with the above challenges, D.Net recognized the need to work at different levels to build its resource base. Generating funds for its programs had been an important aspect of D.Net's work since its inception in 2001. As its expanse of work grew, the organization's financial stability was critical. It was clear that this would be possible only if D.Net made additional efforts to enable a regular inflow of resources along with its consultancy services' and donor funding strategy.

Friend building

Building networks with friends and eminent personalities of the country to share D.Net's ideas and concepts has been a significant step towards self-reliance.

This process resulted in positive responses from friends who introduced D.Net to many other organizations. For example, Professor Anisur Rahman, father of the concept of Participatory Action Research and member of the first planning commission of Bangladesh, referred D.Net to a local research funding organization named Research Initiatives Bangladeshⁱⁱⁱ. Following this, D.Net was granted a fund of US\$ 30,000 to carry out a needs identification research and RIB also supported field level experimentation by D.Net.

Others like Professor Zafar Iqbal, an eminent scientist of Bangladesh, who was introduced to the work of D.Net, shared this information with some of his non-resident Bangladeshi friends so that the organization could be supported by them. Many expatriates have, since the past five years, been supporting the work of D.Net, especially the telecentres' project in community schools. In fact, starting with five schools in 2004, D.Net is now operating 60 school based telecentres as a result of this support. The motivating factor for the expatriates is that, D.Net offers to establish a centre at a school located in the place where s/he was born and brought up.

Similarly, in 2004, Dr. Rehman Sobhan (a prominent economist of the country), introduced and referred D.Net to Ms. Nancy Smith (a representative of IDRC visiting Bangladesh), for a research partnership opportunity with IDRC.

This kind of networking and sharing of ideas with individuals has given D.Net greater confidence to reach other potential supporters, expanding its friends' circuit across the world.

Full-time commitment of founders

From the very beginning, the founder core team of D.Net had facilitated all its projects and programs on a voluntary basis. However, as the number of projects grew, the demands on their time increased. This further meant that their '*bread and butter*' issues needed to be addressed which D.Net attempted to accomplish gradually. In 2003, one director (Ajoy K Bose) joined full time, as D.Net mustered resources to support him for about a year. Later in 2004, another founder director (Mahmud Hasan) joined the team full time. In 2005, D.Net's founder executive director (Ananya Raihan) joined the team. The Ashoka Fellowship received for his innovative thoughts on ICT and development, helped cover part of Dr Raihan's remuneration for working at D.Net.

Attracting a seed grant

D.Net was able to get its first seed grant from the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) in 2004 to implement a project titled Pallitathya HelpLine^{iv}. Though this was a small project it received a lot of attention by the national and global ICT4D (Information and Communication Technology for Development) community and, D.Net even received the Global Gender and Information and Communication Technology award in 2005. The seed

grant was also responsible for creating a ripple effect on donors' interest in funding D.Net. To start with, IDRC and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)^v committed further support to the HelpLine project up to August 2008. D.Net was also able to bring on board the largest mobile telecom operator in Bangladesh, Grameen Phone, to launch a nationwide *Health Line*. The project was also implemented in many other countries like Uganda, Sri Lanka, Mali and others. Other locally supported projects, along with the seed grant helped D.Net strengthen its financial resources.

Establishing partnerships beyond funding

In an attempt to build relationships along side fund raising, D.Net has always established a good communication system with its donors and kept their overall interests in mind along with the project focus for D.Net. For example, when D.Net got support from the Manusher Jonno Foundation, it decided to promote the right to information issues through its telecentre model as that forms a core agenda for MJF. This effort was appreciated by MJF which on its part, has linked D.Net with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and also referred D.Net's case study in its international network.

D.Net's partnership with IDRC for a research project under its Pan Asia Network (PAN) research grant has led to favourable results for the organization. The relationship with IDRC has in fact, created more space for D.Net to showcase its model to a broader audience; provided an opportunity to participate in different events; publish case studies on its work in IDRC publications; establish links with other projects of IDRC like the PAN localization project; and engage as international experts, especially for the Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) and Outcome Mapping (OM).

Matching Grants with different donors

Involving more than one donor for an ambitious project has worked well in case of D.Net. For example, in a particular case, D.Net conducted a research project with help from a local research institution. Following the research, D.Net prepared itself for product development and grass root level implementation. However, the donor was not strong enough to support such a large venture, so it was mutually decided that D.Net would approach other local donors. Subsequent negotiations led to the identification of such donors who were willing to match the grant for the successful completion of the project.

Motivating private sector

D.Net began to think of involving the private sector in its work because of the fact that it uses ICT, which is something that corporates are focusing on these days. D.Net also sees the potential of the private sector as a strategic resource partner due to its ability to invest in a nationwide replication of an initiative, sponsor public events and more importantly, offer unrestricted resources. Through different fund raising events aimed at corporates, linkages have begun to emerge for private sector investment in D.Net's projects.

Showcasing D.Net projects

D.Net has consciously participated in different networking and outreach events to showcase its work and create more visibility and impact. In many cases such participation has yielded positive results much earlier than expected. For example, when D.Net shared about its work with the Commonwealth Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) team in Colombo, they responded immediately with a commitment to support some D.Net activities.

As the above efforts began to translate into reality, D.Net could see that the funds generated would help it overcome some of its challenges. Parallely however, D.Net also knew that the time to formalize the process of resource mobilization had come, especially if it wanted to build long term project funds or unrestricted funds.

Capacity building and Organizational development

D.Net was on the lookout for learning opportunities to understand the art of resource mobilization so that it could incorporate the same internally. Fortunately for D.Net, it received an offer to join IDRC's Capacity Building for Resource Mobilization (CBRM) program, as a member of the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP).

The workshop, held in Colombo in May 2006, was attended by two core directors, also founders of D.Net, and helped build their capacity to formalize the organization's resource mobilization strategy. Meanwhile, in 2005, D.Net had initiated a process of organizational strategy planning that would help it revisit the organization's vision and mission, restructure itself and create a road map for the future. Several meetings and consultations (including board members, staff and stakeholders) were held for this purpose and it took almost a year to take shape, getting ready towards the end of 2006.

Titled Mission 2010, D.Net identified six thematic areas around which its organizational and programmatic interventions were planned for the next five years:

- ⊙ Access to Information and Knowledge
- ⊙ Enhancing Business Competitiveness for Economic Growth
- ⊙ Governance and Human Rights
- ⊙ Human Resource Development
- ⊙ Institutional Capacity Development
- ⊙ Economic and Development Policy Research

Incorporating the learning's from the IDRC supported workshop on resource mobilization, D.Net created a separate program head on 'Resource mobilization and partnership development' so that it received the desired attention by the organization.

With the resource mobilization strategy incorporated into the Mission 2010, it was time for action on this front. D.Net received a small seed grant from GKP and IDRC to implement the ongoing and planned activities based on the thoughts for resource mobilization and undertake some specific activities to strengthen its resource mobilization plan:

- ⊙ collecting information on prospective donors, organizations, individuals who could provide financial support in accomplishing Mission 2010;
- ⊙ formulating a strategic, target oriented resource mobilization plan to attract different donors, organizations, and individuals for supporting Mission 2010;
- ⊙ capacity building of staff and board members for resource mobilization;
- ⊙ dissemination of Mission 2010 and work plan of D.Net to a selected group of donors, organizations and individuals;
- ⊙ preparing a selected number of proposals for mobilizing resources in line with the resource mobilization plan of Mission 2010.

Visible Impacts

Equipped with a clear plan as above, D.Net began to see positive outcomes quite soon in the process of institutionalizing resource mobilization. Its database of information about donors, institutions and individuals who can support and partner with D.Net across its different projects is ready. Based on a comprehensive mapping of donors, selected information has been gathered on their ongoing activities/ program, funding or partnership policies, existing partners, regions of operation, funding range, and funding time periods. D.Net has even been able to create a matching list for its different activities with specific donors' interest areas, including those who have agreed or are in the process of negotiation to support different programs/ areas of Mission 2010.

Table 1: Mapping D.Net’s current work and possible funding sources for 2006-2007

Themes	Donors/ Partners
Access to Information and Knowledge	Association of Progressive Communications – Women’s Network Supporting Program, South Africa** CARE Bangladesh** Global Knowledge Partnership, Malaysia* International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada* IDRC- PAN Localization, Canada* Intel Corporation, Bangladesh** Manusher Jonno Foundation, Bangladesh* ORBICOM** Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation, Bangladesh** Telecentre.org , Canada* UNDP Bangladesh*
Enhancing Business Competitiveness for Economic Growth	Bangladesh Enterprise Institute* Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries*
Governance and Human Rights	Manusher Jonno Foundation, Bangladesh* Ain-O-Salish Kendra, Bangladesh* Bangladesh Legal Aid Trust, Bangladesh* Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives, India*
Human Resource Development	Voluntary Association for Bangladesh, USA* BRAC-IED, Bangladesh* Microsoft Corporation, Bangladesh* UNESCO Bangladesh*
Institutional Capacity Development	BRAC University, Bangladesh* CARE Bangladesh** Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation, Bangladesh** Intel Corporation, Bangladesh**
Economic and Development Policy Research	Sarvodaya Fusion, Sri Lanka* Traid Craft , UK* OXFAM GB Bangladesh*

* agreement signed ** negotiation in progress

D.Net has prepared promotional material on different programs and activities that it can use with the specific aim of mobilizing resources for the organization.

Brainstorming discussions for the board and staff members are being frequently organized to create an ownership of the process, and, to motivate them to tap their respective networks to sponsor and fund the activities placed in Mission 2010. Resource mobilization issues have now been adopted as a regular agenda in all of D.Net’s Executive Committee and Governing Body meetings. Staff is being encouraged to take responsibility of resource mobilization so that they are more responsive to project operation as well as mobilizing resources for project continuation. D.Net has set up a system by which even for non-funded projects, the project leaders have to take a loan from the core fund to manage the ongoing operational expenses of the project. The attempt is to create a sort of awakening within the whole team about resource mobilization. In fact, people within D.Net are now thinking and driving for resource mobilization and a positive competition has started within the organization.

The process of outreach with potential donors, partners and sponsors has gained momentum. During the last four months of 2007, D.Net organized many fund raising meetings with different national and international organizations including, Manusher Jonno Foundation, UNESCO Bangladesh, Microsoft Corporation, Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation, Intel Corporation, CARE Bangladesh, CEMCA, Telecentre.org, BRAC, Intel Corporation, UNDP Bangladesh, and OXFAM GB. In collaboration with the Voluntary Association of Bangladesh, D.Net also organized a fund raising event at New Jersey, USA on 14 July, 2007 where several expatriates made a commitment for supporting the organization’s work. D.Net also got commitment from non-resident Bangladeshis to expand this fund raising initiative to other parts of the USA, the UK. and even Australia.

D.Net has been successful in getting support from the private sector for expanding its projects at the grass root level. *Bank Asia*, one of the leading commercial banks in Bangladesh, has helped set up computer learning centres at three schools and is now keen to support another

six such centres. Besides, an agreement has been signed with a well-known computer magazine, *The Computer Jagat*, through which D.Net is inviting the corporate sector to donate used computers for the village level schools and telecentres operated run by the organization.

On September 4, 2007, the Chairperson of the United Nations Global Alliance for Information and Development (UN-GAID) and Intel head, Dr. Craig Barrett visited Bangladesh to see the potential for launching the World Ahead Program of Intel. During his visit he met with D.Net team who showcased their most popular '*Pallitathya Help Line*' project, where the mobile lady^{vi} demonstrated how her job could be improved if she had the *Classmate PC*^{vii} with her. The Intel team found this idea very innovative and exciting as an option for livelihood enhancement and has expressed interest in testing the feasibility of using Classmate PC for information dissemination

D.Net has made proposal development an integral part of its effort at resource mobilization, in line with Mission 2010 and this has already resulted in several projects getting required funding. In 2007, D.Net prepared and submitted 40 proposals to different organizations. Already, over 20 organizations have committed to support some of D.Net's activities of Mission 2010 (as shown in Table 1 above).

D.Net knows that dependency on donors is not in its long term interest. In fact, D.Net's resource trajectory shows that in the first few years, major financing was done from the organization's own sources (mainly members' contributions and consultancy income) and donor funding came in gradually. Over the past three years, however, D.Net is focusing more attention on self-financing, as demonstrated in table 2 below:

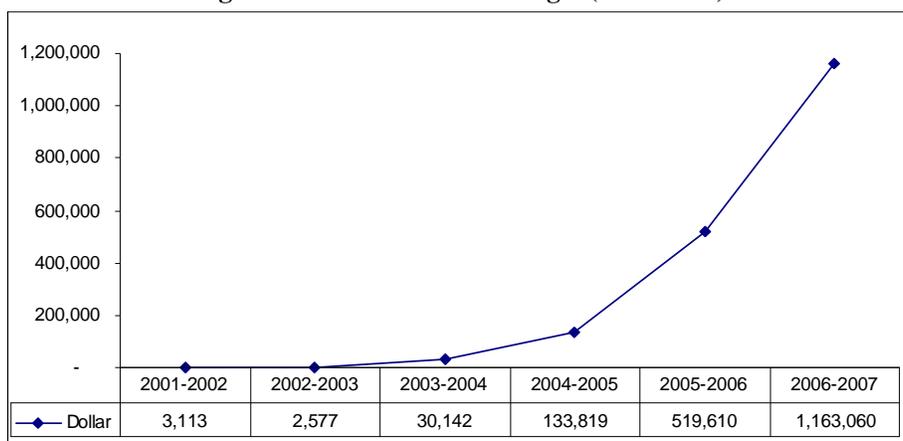
Table 2: D.Net's annual budget and funding sources (2001-2006)

Budget (Financial year)	Total Budget (USD)	Funding source % (USD)		
		D.Net own sources*	Domestic Donors	Foreign Donors
2001-2002	3,113	100%	0%	0%
2002-2003	2,577	82%	18%	0%
2003-2004	30,142	32%	68%	0%
2004-2005	133,819	15%	23%	62%
2005-2006	519,610	64%	10%	26%
Total	1,852,321			

*D.Net's own sources: Membership Fees, Consultancy and Individual Donations etc.

The resource mobilization drive at D.Net has changed the fund flow situation of the organization, as reflected in the graph below, almost doubling the annual budget in 2006-2007, as compared to 2005-06:

Figure 1: D.Net's Annual Budget (2001-2007)



Lessons learned

As D.Net reflects on its journey of resource mobilization, several lessons emerge on this concept and process, shared here for others to note as they embark on similar paths. Some of these relate to the way resource mobilization works as an overall strategy and others are internal to an organization's management.

The first learning is that, resource mobilization strategies are integral to the functioning and sustainability of non-profit organizations. This draws from the fact that most of their facilities and services are either free of cost or at subsidized rates, and therefore, do not have the capacity to re-generate funds incurred. Consistent efforts at resource mobilization actually help such organizations generate continuous funds to service their recipients, i.e., the poor and disadvantaged.

Secondly, experience suggests that resource mobilization is not a one-time job and needs to be seriously considered at all stages of an organization's lifecycle. And, though it can start at any point, the key ingredient for success is building and honouring relationships with supporters.

The third is that, while implementing a resource mobilization strategy, the '*one size fits all*' approach does not work. It is important that an organization understands a particular funding agency's agendas and priorities. In fact, it may work well for an organization to put on a funding agency's shoe while writing proposals!

Fourthly, educating donors on new issues and subject areas that they have not supported earlier is necessary for successful resource mobilization. This is not always easy, as in D.Net's experience where ideas and projects related to ICT are not only new, but also have a high chance of failure due to the very nature and scope of impact.

At an organizational level, involvement of the board is crucial for a credible process of mobilizing resources. At the same time, the staff must be integrated into the process. They must understand that it's not the sole responsibility of top management to garner resources for the organization. Board members can apply their influence but it's the staff that can better demonstrate to potential funders. Besides, making staff members accountable and engaged with institutional development requires that, they have a sense of ownership with the organization and one that translates into their commitment to mobilize resources as well.

Finally, the benchmark for successful resource mobilization does not lie in the amount of funds generated by an organization but how much visibility and credibility it creates for itself and its work.

D.Net believes that its journey for resource mobilization continues with each passing day and the learning from its varied experiences. At the end, it is the only way that D.Net can become self-sustainable and achieve its mission to the fullest extent.

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ⁱ D.Net has produced nine CDs under this program, which are being used in different information centres across the country. A comprehensive online version (www.jeeon.com.bd) is also now available for wider access.

ⁱⁱ Pallitathya Kendra is a physical place in the community where villagers come to access livelihood information. In the Pallitathya Kendra there is an 'infomediary' to assist the villagers by searching or reading the relevant content using the JEEON-IKB database or connect the villagers with the help desk through mobile phone for expert advice on certain livelihood issues. D.Net has experimented with four Pallitathya Kendra's on a pilot basis since late 2005 and more that 15,000 villagers received services from this Kendra and now this model is being replicated throughout the country as well as globally.

ⁱⁱⁱ See www.rib-bangladesh.org for details.

^{iv} *Pallitathya Help Line*[®] is conceived and piloted by D.Net in Bangladesh. This project uses the mobile phone that has remarkable success in Bangladesh with more than 85% of geographical coverage, to bridge the gap between information providers and the villagers. Under this project, a barefoot lady moves in the villages with a mobile phone to assist villagers in calling a *Help-desk* where a group of experts respond to queries. Please visit www.pallitathya.org/projects to learn more about this project.

^v Manusher Jonno Foundation is a local donor supporting human rights based projects. www.manusher.org

^{vi} The *mobile lady* concept is unique as it involves a rural barefooted lady moving around the villages along with a mobile phone to connect villagers with a help desk where a group of experts are respond to villager's queries. This *mobile lady* concept is now transforming into that of an 'info-lady', where that rural lady will now move around the villages with a PDA, where a bunch of services will be added, like, information services, overseas calling services, photography services etc

^{vii} *Classmate PC* is a special type of laptop built by Intel Corporation which can run with battery and is being used for students. D.Net is trying to adopt this PC for creating new employment for rural women through integrating livelihood information and Internet with it.