



MEDIA, ART AND CULTURE

Central to culture is freedom, and in particular, the freedom to decide what we have reason to value, and what lives we have reason to seek.

- Amartya Sen

In August-September 2005, Art and Culture was recognized by the Trusts as an emerging and growing area of engagement and the Trusts decided to proactively look at Art and Culture projects and 'up' the engagement in the Arts. While there was no formal mandate then, the enhanced budget of the Trusts made it possible to explore newer, underdeveloped areas of funding such as projects related to the Arts, without cutting into the overall budgets of the core sectors. In addition, the interest within the Trusts to develop a mature Art and Culture portfolio was high, as the importance of this area of work and potential link with other sectors, such as Education and Livelihoods, became more and more evident.

In the ensuing months a sector scan was done by the Trusts and several leading art and culture practitioners and academics were consulted. During this period the parameter of the portfolio was expanded to include Media as this was seen to be an integral part of the development discourse. As a result the following thrust areas were identified as key areas of intervention in grant making.

Thrust Areas:

- To build and promote arts scholarship and archival facilities
- Protection and conservation of cultural heritage and dying art forms
- To support research and development activities of the Arts
- To provide support to media projects engaged in the development discourse as well as to support cutting edge and newer technologies

By February 2007, 'Media, Art and Culture' was formally hived off into an individual sector. In 2007-2008, the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Allied Trusts had disbursed Rs 102.62 million to Media, Art and Culture (MAC) projects.

The scan and the approach paper included in the Strategy Plan for MAC projects identified Arts Scholarship as the area most deserving of attention and engagement. The past year 2007-2008 has dovetailed with the suggestion and 31 percent of all projects belong to the Arts Scholarship thrust area.

Key grant making strategies have included:

- Creating academic scholarships such as funding fellowships and academic/university departments
- Encouraging the traditional system of guru-shishya learning
- Encouraging innovative programs

In addition to Arts Scholarship, Media projects which were practically non-existent have been introduced into the portfolio over the past year so that this thrust area is now at 19 percent.

Key grant making strategies have included:

- Providing a space for alternative and innovative forms of Media
- Emphasizing the cross-cutting nature of this sub-area
- Use of Media to address gaps in the education system
- Emphasize documentation
- Emphasize the dissemination aspect through different models

Upping the Trusts' engagement in Arts Scholarship and Media is a major highlight



Highlighting social causes through a performance by Darpana Academy, Ahmedabad

and the projects reach both rural and urban beneficiaries.

Three large projects: Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), New Delhi; Drishti, Gujarat; and National Institute of Design (NID), Gujarat were benchmark programs and will make a lasting contribution to our nation building commitment.

The AKF-AKTC grant for the restoration of Humayun's Tomb is the first-of-its-kind Public Private Partnership with government agencies and other funders working closely on an integrated project of conservation, urban renewal and development.

The conservation project is underpinned by a well-articulated conservation philosophy that respects both international covenants and indigenous practices. In this respect the project will establish important benchmarks for conservation in India. The conservation work has been conceived in partnership with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), but will be undertaken by AKTC by directly employing craftspeople who will work under their supervision. Besides the necessary conservation works required for the upkeep of the monument, the items of work include rectification of the acts of omission and commission of past interventions. In this manner, the monument will receive a new lease of life, which should suffice for several decades.

The NID corpus grant will put into place a design chair who will work on design solutions for disability — again a pioneering effort and will mark an industry-academia nexus for promoting design to work towards the psycho-social-environmental development of people. A great need exists currently for such collaborative



Restoration work at Humayun's Tomb, New Delhi facilitated by Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture



Tile makers at work on the restoration process at Humayun's Tomb, New Delhi

work which will result in the designing of applications addressing particular developmental gaps/requirements of the society. The grant also looks at funding five diploma projects that promote creative and out-of-box thinking and design.

The innovative community media program of Drishti will build the capacity of articulation and 'give a voice' to 10,000 rural and urban media practitioners. The core activity will be to launch new Community Video Units (CVUs) and Community Radio Stations (CRS) in partnership with NGOs to complement the existing 10 CVUs and two CRS.

Several innovative projects have been supported during the course of the year. Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Art Research's contribution to contemporary Indian theatre is unique. There is probably no other organization in India who combines the knowledge systems of the past with modern aesthetic practice. Not only has this methodology led the performer to deeper levels of engagement with the audience, but it has also led the performer to harness inner levels of untapped energy. Adishakti's grant is to further its research activity for a period of three years.

Darpana Academy of Performing Arts (through the Karmakshetra Educational Foundation), Gujarat will dovetail on its earlier collaborative work "Unsuni" creating a new genre of interactive work — merging realities with the digital world — to tell moving stories of courageous people. Support has been extended for the crucial research and development components of the performance.

Establishing digital community archives and instituting fellowships for local knowledge and

culture for specific groups can prove to be a major step towards empowering those communities and converting their cultural expressions and traditional knowledge into strategic assets. The first step towards constituting such a program is through a grant to the National Folklore Support Centre, Chennai.

Another unique program has been supported through the Orient Foundation, New Delhi which has been archiving and maintaining a complete record on Tibetan and Indian Buddhist history. The New Media Centre of Indian and Tibetan Classical Culture at the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath will provide for the first time a comprehensive resource through which the living legacy of one of the richest periods of Indian cultural history can be explored in depth.

Through its programs, the School of Art and Aesthetics (SAA), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) hopes to produce a cadre of cultural critics, theorists and workers in the cultural field who will help to widen and enrich the cultural discourses on both the practice of art and its academic engagement.

The two major goals are the establishment of a well-regulated academic institution and the holding of annual events that will create a vibrant, energetic learning community for the Arts. With this support, the SAA attempts to go beyond the ordinary for people with an interest in the intellectual understanding of creative life.

In addition, the Small Grants Program has made it possible to address smaller organizations who are doing meaningful work and do not have the capacity to absorb large funds such as Charkha, New Delhi which has funded a media and educational program in the Andaman Islands and



Radio broadcast in the Andaman Islands with young school goers, through the help of Charkha



Godna painting by Bholi Devi, from Madhubani, Bihar who has received help and training from the Dalit Foundation

Himalaya Trust in Uttarakhand which is working on promoting and documenting the story telling tradition of the Himalayas. In addition, the Small Grant to India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore has put into action the preparatory phase to build a holistic program on curatorship in India — the first in the country.

A small grant to Kala Raksha, Bhuj, which has been working on the traditional embroidery practice in Kutch has provided support to two educational resource films documenting the design knowledge of master artisans of Kutch and creating an animated film on Kala Raksha narrative works in embroidery.

The Small Grant to Dalit Foundation for the promotion of Dalit art and culture fulfils two major purposes: Promotion of Dalit art and culture and promotion of the art for educational purposes and awareness generation.

Overall the Trusts have created and supported meaningful partnerships of lasting value and the projects sanctioned in this portfolio present a rich basket of programs covering both academic and research work as well as in setting and creating new norms in many spheres of art practice. Thus, the significant steps to building a holistic portfolio have been taken and several key grants will make lasting impact and add value to the Media, Art and Culture scenario in the country.

INNOVATIVE MEDIA IN DEVELOPMENT

The past two decades have witnessed profound changes in the modes through which knowledge and media and cultural products are produced, circulated and consumed, changes which have had far-reaching implications for society, economy and culture in the Indian context. A critical element in the new scenario is the generation of knowledge and a blurring between money and knowledge on the internet and other media.

Over half of India's one billion population is entirely irrelevant to the global media market boom and will continue to be irrelevant for generations. State run national television programming also use stories set in urban upper class contexts rather than rural life styles. Over all, the State's commitment to public service telecasting has declined over a period of time. Public broadcasting systems and those that are in touch with and accountable to citizens' media needs fail in the competition for this revenue, reducing their coverage. The public space earlier available for serious content essential for a healthy democracy accountable to its citizens has shrunk, while those related to entertainment distant from reality have grown.¹

However, with the growing accessibility of communication and media technology, there are attempts by many movements and groups all across the globe to use these technologies for creating systems of solidarity, support, and networking, to give a voice to marginalized sections of society. This has facilitated the growth of community media the world over; and coupled with the phenomenal growth of the NGO sector and peoples' movements in India, the stage is set for electronic community media to come into its own.

Only in the last five years has the state of technology allowed any mid-sized NGO in India to use technology-based arts and media to accelerate the rate of change. The cost of a video

camera has fallen from a million rupees, to a little over Rs 25,000 for a digital camera. This revolution is being facilitated on the one end by low cost and easy-to-use production equipment, and on the other, by the explosion of television networks, both within and outside India, and online distribution. In radio, the revolution is made possible because only in the last one year has it become legal for communities to own and operate their own stations, a law which Drishti, Gujarat was instrumental in creating.

Indeed, the recent grant to Drishti will promote community video and radio and will build a cadre of thousands of media producers who have a voice not only to air their difficulties and triumphs but also a chance at true empowerment through articulation. Drishti's work is an attempt to draw on the diverse possibilities of media technologies, in a partnership with a range of organizations that have been working to empower and amplify community voices.

The grants to Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), New Delhi and Vikas Samvad Samiti, Bhopal have been made to foster media fellowships to journalists working on relevant development and environmental stories with a commitment to increase awareness on these issues in both mainstream and smaller newspapers and magazines.

The fellows working with Vikas Samvad have already made an impact on the Right to Food campaign in Madhya Pradesh and brought attention to the neglected area of Bundelkhand.

The innovative media campaign run by Akshara, Mumbai through its parent organization Front for Rapid Economic Advancement of India (FREA-India), has successfully launched the 103 helpline which facilitates complaints and records cases of violence against women. This model was developed with the help of the Mumbai police and will be shortly upscaled all over Maharashtra. Its success has come largely

¹Anjali Monteiro and KP Jayasankar, Review of Drishti proposal for the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, 2008.

through the awareness of the 103 number that has been imaginatively displayed on hoardings, panels at traffic signals, posters and pamphlets.

Established media partners such as the *Economic and Political Weekly* (Sameeksha Trust) and the infochange website (Centre for Communication and Development Studies, Pune) have been able to consolidate their work in the area of development communications. Their considerable reach and influence in the field of development journalism both through academic writing and discourse as well as through readable feature stories have been highlighted through notable awards

and citations.

Finally to further our commitment to the field of development media, the Trust has supported the setting up of a diploma program at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. Drawing students from all over the country, the course has now been converted into a degree program.

While, the State and commercial interests continue to control the tele-visual space in the country, the increasingly active role played by the community in both video and radio in India since 1995 and the all-encompassing internet offer interesting and innovative possibilities for free and fast access.

Planning and discussing the recording session along with Drishti volunteers at Ahmedabad

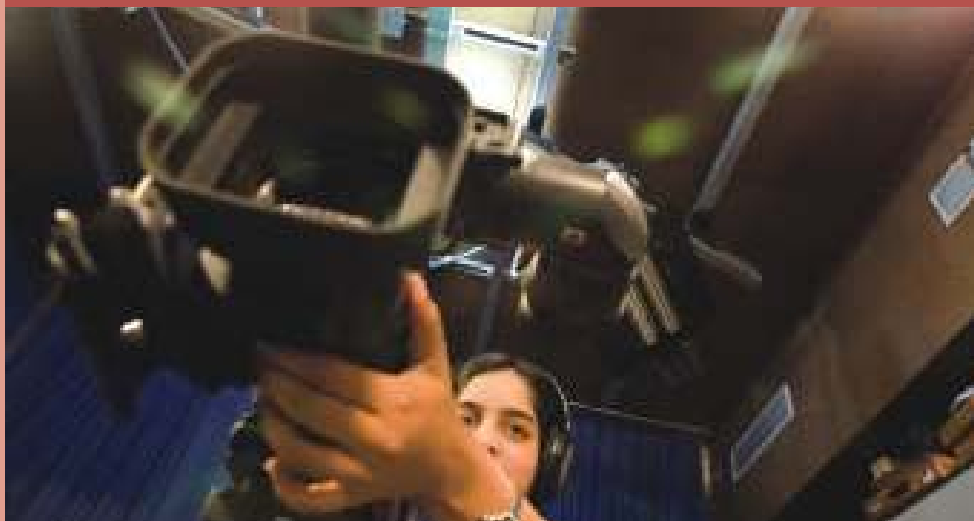




Community video model in action — interviewing the community with help of Drishti volunteers in Ahmedabad



Production class in session at the Centre for Media and Cultural Studies, TISS, Mumbai



Learning to handle the camera at TISS



Panels created by Akshara highlighting the helpline draw the attention of a passer-by at a traffic signal in Mumbai

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Name of Grantee	Sanction Amount	Disbursed 2007-08
	Rupees in Million	
Sir Dorabji Tata Trust		
1 Aga Khan Foundation, New Delhi - Towards the conservation and restoration of Humayun's Tomb, New Delhi.	57.20	17.60
2 Devahuti Damodar Svaraj Trust, New Delhi - Towards the upgradation activities of Manana Library.	1.90	0.17
3 Dhruvad Sansthan, Madhya Pradesh - Towards the core cost of Dhruvad Sansthan's gurukul and setting up the library and digitization activities of the organization.	4.69	1.08
4 Drishti, Gujarat - Towards its community media program.	32.22	8.72
5 Karmakshetra Educational Foundation, Gujarat - Towards researching and developing a performance piece based on stories of courage working towards social change.	2.90	1.40
6 Parzor Foundation, New Delhi - Towards the genetic, cultural and biological studies on the Parsi community.	5.64	1.07
7 The First Dastur Meherjirana Library, Gujarat - Towards a Corpus Grant and a Program Grant. The Corpus Grant is to strengthen its core activities, while the Program Grant is towards the cost of the new building, upgradation and conservation laboratory.	9.27	7.67
Small Grants		
1 Bombay House Jashan Committee, Maharashtra - Towards its cultural activities.	0.01	0.01
2 Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi - Towards the media fellowship program on environment and sustainable development.	0.50	0.50
3 Charkha, New Delhi - Towards the distant areas program in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for its media and environmental education program.	0.50	0.50
4 Chitrika, Andhra Pradesh - Towards undertaking a Pan-Andhra Handloom Market Study.	0.50	0.50
5 Dalit Foundation, New Delhi - Towards the promotion of Dalit art and culture.	0.50	0.50
6 Front for Rapid Economic Advancement of India, Maharashtra - Towards Akshara for its media awareness campaign on Violence against Women.	0.50	0.50
7 Kala Raksha, Gujarat - Towards making two films, which will be used for teaching and inspiring artisans about design, as well as for making the traditional understanding of design known to a national and international audience.	0.50	0.50
8 Paramparik Karigar, Maharashtra - Towards inviting expert textile designer Barbara Arlen from USA to advise the Indian craftsmen/weavers on the latest techniques on textile designing and to help them develop and innovate sustainable products for the export market.	0.45	0.45
9 Somjai Mata Krida Mandal, Maharashtra - Towards the purchase of equipments for their newly constructed gymnasium funded by the Government of Maharashtra.	0.10	0.10
10 Sophia College for Women, Maharashtra - Towards a national conference on Representations of Gender in Popular Literature in January 2008.	0.19	0.19
11 Srjan Odissi Nrityabasa, Orissa - Towards the annual Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Award function for the year 2007.	0.10	0.10
12 Tata Sports Club, Maharashtra - Towards the annual contribution for the year 2007-08.	0.03	0.03
13 The Bombay Chamber Orchestra Society, Maharashtra - Towards covering the cost for the flights of conductors and teachers from Austria and the United Kingdom to encourage and motivate young Indian talent and to celebrate the 45th year of the Society.	0.15	0.15
14 The Himalaya Trust, Uttarakhand - Towards the project titled, Katha Sarovar: A Voyage through Stories.	0.50	0.50

Name of Grantee	Sanction Amount	Disbursed 2007-08
	Rupees in Million	
15 Vikas Samvad Samiti, Madhya Pradesh - Towards support for its media fellowship program.	0.50	0.50
	118.85	42.74
Jamsetji Tata Trust		
1 National Institute of Design, Gujarat - Towards a Corpus Grant, the interest of which would be used for setting up the Jamsetji Tata Chair for Universal Design and towards Research Grants for Student Diploma Projects. A minimum of five research grants will be supported.	32.50	32.50
	32.50	32.50
RD Tata Trust		
1 Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Art Research, Pudhucherry - Towards furthering its research activities in the performing arts and thereby supporting its core costs and costs for external artistes and resource persons, documentation and theatre-based equipment and infrastructure.	7.37	2.03
2 Sameeksha Trust, Maharashtra - Towards strengthening the <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> .	16.90	1.40
	24.27	3.43
Tata Social Welfare Trust		
1 Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta (CSSSC), West Bengal - Towards the CSSSC-Papiya Ghosh Memorial Fund. The grant will support (a) One PhD fellowship over two years (b) Two short-term travel fellowships awarded every year, for two years (c) An annual workshop on a theme that focuses on marginalized and underprivileged sections of the society for two years.	1.46	0.73
2 Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi - Towards the School of Arts and Aesthetics project for education in the Arts and resource building program.	20.10	7.00
	21.56	7.73
Tata Education Trust		
1 Centre for Communication and Development Studies, Maharashtra - Towards creating institutional stability and growth and for the core costs of its website: www.infochangeindia.org.	8.05	2.68
2 National Folklore Support Centre, Tamil Nadu - Towards setting up three community digital archives and six senior fellowships for local knowledge and culture in different locations in the country.	16.60	5.55
	24.65	8.23
JRD Tata Trust		
1 Madras Craft Foundation, Tamil Nadu - Towards its arts management program.	3.65	0.50
2 Saptak School of Music, Gujarat - Towards strengthening and expanding the activities of Saptak Archives.	7.60	2.50
3 Tamil Nadu Kattaikkuttu Kalai Valarchi Munetra Sangam, Tamil Nadu - Towards the development of the Kattaikkuttu Youth Theatre School.	11.10	2.70
4 The Orient Foundation, Uttar Pradesh - Towards the New Media Centre of the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.	4.56	2.29
	26.91	7.99
Grand Total	248.74	102.62