INTRODUCTION
In September 2010 the Danish Development Research Network (DDRN), the Focuss.Info Initiative, the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) joined forces to organise and finance a conference in Bangladesh on how social media could enhance research infrastructures.

For a successful planning and organisation of this conference the co-organisers also joined forces with two Bangladesh partners: the Bangladesh NGOs Network for Community Radio (BNNRC) and the Development Network (D.Net). Among other things, these local partners assisted in spreading the news within the local community and helping to find a venue in which we could host a 2-day conference. As a result, 73 participants attended the Bangladesh Conference which was hosted in the BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka.

Throughout this document the co-organisers and local institutes share their experiences about running the Bangladesh Conference. In addition, the document contains recommendations on how to organise a similar conference.

More information on the Bangladesh Conference can be found on http://www.focuss.info/bangladesh/

STRUCTURE OF REPORT
The evaluation report is divided in three parts. It includes an evaluation of:

- the planning (before the conference)
- the execution (during the conference)
- the results (after the conference)

The document is a workshop and learning report in order to share experiences and inform on how to best organise a similar event.
Before selecting a venue, the co-organisers were first looking into the possibility to join forces with a similar conference. Under the supervision of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), the I-K-Mediary Network was also planning a meeting in Bangladesh. I-K-Mediary also aims at increasing access to and use of research in the development context.

However, the co-organisers decided to organise the conference independently from I-K-Mediary, because the participants of I-K-Mediary were from institutes located all over the world while the target group of the conference were Bangladesh people. Furthermore, the meeting of I-K-Mediary was already planned over four days with several practical workshops. It was believed that by adding two more days to this event participants could experience an overload of social media workshops which then could affect their attention span.

In the first round the co-organisers received 172 applications from people all over the world.

The co-organisers selected the first 40 participants from the 179 applications. By selecting a small group, the co-organisers aspired that the selected people started sharing their participation with their colleagues and friends. This could help to attract the conference more attention from potential participants. That’s why the co-organisers re-opened the application form and invited others to apply to the conference. As a result, 43 applications were sent of which many were from Directors or Heads of Departments.

Another way to attract more attention for the conference in Bangladesh was by announcing the first keynote speaker. Mr Anir Chowdhury, policy advisor within the UNDP-supported Access to Information (A2I) project, confirmed his participation. This confirmation was received very well by the people who were already following the conference on Facebook. The co-organisers were also very happy with this keynote speaker as it was believed that Mr Anir Chowdhury was in the position to explain how the Bangladesh government implements their vision on enhancing access to information and knowledge.
January 2011
Based on the extensive marketing in December 2010, the co-organisers invited the final group of participants. As a result, the co-organisers invited 73 persons while the idea was to invite 60 people.

Based on previous experience from other conferences, the co-organisers knew that there would be a small percentage of people who could not come. They could - for example - not get the arrangements done in time (i.e. for foreign participants to request for visa or for travel grants from their institutions) or because it was free-of-charge it could be easier for them to cancel the conference last minute.

This final group of participants had a great mix between senior and junior, technical and non-technical, and female and male practitioners. The participants could meet each other through the Facebook page, but they could also meet each other via the participant list (see next page). This list was circulated digitally and could be used to find out the existing social media profiles of all of the participants.

By clicking on the icons of the social media platforms, participants were directly being linked to the specific social profile.

Additionally, the co-organisers also managed to invite Daan Boom as international keynote speaker who had a track-record in the domain of knowledge management from various institutes located in South and South-East Asia.

February 2011
The weeks before the actual conference were used to settle the final details with the hotel and conference venue at the BRAC Centre Inn.

As some of the participants were from Nepal and India, the co-organisers prepared official letters. These letters could then be used to obtain a VISA. In addition, participants from outside Bangladesh were given the opportunity to stay over at the conference venue for one night for free.

After five months of planning, the co-organisers finalised the planning a week before the start of the Bangladesh Conference.
DO’S

1. In order to achieve more involvement from local partners, give them a sense of ownership by actively delegating work.

- Agreeing on programme at an early stage in the planning
- Connecting conference participants with each other through social media
- Spreading positive news by selecting one small group, who’ll then share it with their peers (see image on right)
- Using social media for the purpose of marketing
- Shortlisting keynote speakers in good time in order to check availability
- Asking participants to explain why we should invite them to the Conference
- Delegating limited work to local partners (affects ownership)

DON’T’S

- Engaging the participants and other interested parties with the Bangladesh Conference and its objective via Facebook
- In order to achieve more involvement from local partners, give them a sense of ownership by actively delegating work

THE PLANNING

DO’S

1. Shortlisting keynote speakers in good time in order to check availability
2. Connecting conference participants with each other through social media
3. Spreading positive news by selecting one small group, who’ll then share it with their peers (see image on right)
4. Using social media for the purpose of marketing
5. Agreeing on programme at an early stage in the planning
6. Asking participants to explain why we should invite them to the Conference
7. Delegating limited work to local partners (affects ownership)

DON’T’S

1. Agreeing on programme at an early stage in the planning (affects ownership)
2. Using social media for the purpose of marketing
3. Agreeing on programme at an early stage in the planning
4. Asking participants to explain why we should invite them to the Conference
5. Delegating limited work to local partners (affects ownership)

Conclusion:

During the planning the co-organisers of the Bangladesh Conference successfully used the latest communication tools to introduce various aspects of the Conference over time. Each time when there was something new to announce, it was directly being shared and reflected with the ones who were interested in the Conference. This has resulted in the creation of a network of peers from Bangladesh who work or are interested in ICT4D, social media and access to information.

However, during the planning more involvement of the local partners should have been preferred. Through this it would have been clear what the preferences were from the local partner with regard to participants and the date of the Conference.
2. THE EXECUTION

Arrival of participants
The Bangladesh Conference opened its doors to the venue at 11h30. From that time the participants were welcomed by the co-organisers, given their name badges and conference documentation. In addition, the participants were asked to follow the photographer for a picture. This picture would then be used in one of the workshops. In order to retrieve their picture on the Internet, the participants could access it through a specific and personal website address which they received on a paper slip.

In total 53 name badges were taken from the table while 73 participants received an invitation to the conference. In other words, 27% of the ones who were invited did not come. As the Conference was being arranged for 60 participants, the co-organisers already had taken into consideration a group of people who could not come. However, it was anticipated this would have been around 10-12%.

Luckily, on the night before the conference the ISS organised an alumni meeting. During this meeting the co-organisers also informed the people about the Bangladesh Conference. Three persons were interested and asked to be a part of the Bangladesh Conference. They were invited to come and to join the Bangladesh Conference. As a result, there were 56 participants on the first day of the conference.

You can find your picture on: http://focussinfo.squarespace.com/images/DSC0001.JPG

The opening session
The Bangladesh Conference started with an introductory presentation. In this presentation the participants were informed on the idea behind the conference and what the participants could expect during the two days. As explained before, the conference was both theoretical and practical as it was a mixture of theoretical keynote talks and practical workshops on how to use social media to enhance research communication.

Subsequently, the co-organisers and local partners had the opportunity to give a brief presentation (between 5 to 10 minutes) about their organisations and what they were doing.

The Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) - one of the local partners - managed to invite Comjagat. Comjagat is a Bangladesh-based IT-business providing among other things live webcasting. As a result, the complete Bangladesh Conference was being recorded, streamed and - at the end - edited, saved and distributed via YouTube. There are in total 23 video clips available of the Bangladesh Conference.

Opening notes by Richard Santos Lalleman available on YouTube on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgZRL5iHT6

Introduction to D.Net by Ananya Raihan available on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsVZ2OoRSSR

the no-show was higher than predicted even though the co-organisers expected to have encouraged participants through online marketing and a list of high profile participants and keynote speakers.
2. THE EXECUTION

Introduction on documenting the conference

After all the introductions, the participants were divided in 3 groups. The idea was that each group should then focus on a specific social media tool through which they should document the Bangladesh Conference. Each of the groups were focussing on video-blogging, microblogging or blogging.

For the ones who could not attend the conference but who were still interested to follow it live, the co-organisers asked some of the participants to use microblogging (writing short messages via Twitter and each message would have a unique keyword identifying that the message was related to the conference). Other participants were writing articles on the things they were experiencing. These articles were saved in a special weblog dedicated to the conference. The aim with videoblogging was to make video-interviews with participants and save these interviews on the conference website so that these videos could be viewed after the conference.

While running these introductions, the facilitators experienced some issues. One of the main issues was the problem with connectivity. Even though the co-organisers had asked and demanded the venue for a powerful connection, we experienced problems while logging on websites at the same time. Besides the 10 laptops which were rented, there were also around 20 people with their own laptop. This especially caused problems with the workshop on videoblogging as videoblogging demands a powerful connection.

How to document the conference with blogging facilitated by Richard Santos Lalleman. The blogs can be read on [http://www.focuss.info/bd2011/](http://www.focuss.info/bd2011/)

How to document the conference with microblogging facilitated by Michel Wesseling

How to document the conference with videoblogging facilitated by Anja Møller Rasmussen

All the groups in action

there was a high level of practical knowledge with microblogging. On the other hand, half of them did not know how to use blogging. As a result, the more experienced ones explained the others how to use it. Videoblogging was a difficult topic - as it became clear that participants also wanted to know how to transfer pictures from a camera.
First keynote speech by Daan Boom

In between the practical workshops on how to use social media tools to enhance research communication, the Bangladesh Conference included theoretical keynote speeches. The first keynote speech was given by Mr Daan Boom. The co-organisers had asked him to explain why we should think differently in order to embrace the new social media tools for communicating and sharing knowledge. As a result, Daan Boom gave a balanced look at what knowledge management (KM) has been able to do in the last 30 to 40 years. In addition, he drew upon practical examples of how the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) had implemented KM initiatives. These examples were linked to the three pillars of value creation argued by Daan Boom.

The keynote speech by Daan Boom can be seen on http://www.focuss.info/bd2011/2011/3/14/keynote-talk-during-bd11-with-videos.html

Daan Boom argues that economies and societies are not merely built through the accumulation of physical capital and human skill, but on the foundation of information, learning, and adaptation. Daan Boom shows how societies change by using Moore’s law and the technology of the S-curve. Every country is in the transition to move from an agricultural-based society to an industrial-based society to a knowledge-based society and thus moving away from land and labour to capital and knowledge. Daan Boom shows examples of the various initiatives within ICIMOD that assist in developing, capturing, sharing and disseminating knowledge and information. Some example are ICIMOD GIS, ICIMOD Networking, and ICIMOD resources on the Intranet and Facebook and groupwork via Googlessites.

“The take-away message was that when considering social media tools to enhance knowledge sharing and learning, organisations should focus on creating conditions and a culture which means transformation and change.”
During the Bangladesh Conference, the participants looked under the hood of four social media tools. These were Delicious, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Workshop #1: Profiling yourself
The first workshop was about how users of social media tools should profile themselves in order to create a central role in a network in which research information and knowledge is pushed and pulled.

The objective of this workshop was for participants to evaluate their existing or new social profiles critically by asking themselves: “what should I do with my profile in order for others to trust me in their network?”

There were three workshop facilitators and they all focused on four critical social media tools: (1) Twitter, (2) Facebook, (3) LinkedIn and (4) Delicious.

During this workshop it became clear that connectivity was again a problem. As a result, the workshop facilitators changed their focus by reducing the laptops per group. This meant that the workshop changed from experimenting with the tools to discussing the topic of the workshop.

However, the participants knew when they best could use their laptops to experiment with the social media tools. This was during the breaks, because during these times the connectivity was better. There were less people using the Internet. Therefore, participants often continued working during the breaks.
Due to the limited attendance on the 2nd day (it was a weekend day and Bangladesh was playing in the cricket world cup) the co-organisers managed to adjust the programme successfully in order to engage the participants.
2. THE EXECUTION

From 14h00 to 15h00
The second and final day ended with a keynote talk from Mr Anir Chowdhury. As the Policy Advisor of the UNDP-supported Access to Information Program, Anir Chowdhury was being asked by the co-organisers of the conference to show the participants how Bangladesh is adapting to the newest social media tools. Furthermore, Anir Chowdhury briefly touched on how institutions in especially Bangladesh should design themselves in favour of social media and the opening of access to information and knowledge. Anir Chowdhury perfectly succeeded with the material Daan Boom mentioned in his keynote. Where Daan Boom finished by saying that countries are in the transition to a knowledge society, Anir Chowdhury gave practical examples how Bangladesh is creating this knowledge society.

Anir Chowdhury started by highlighting the latest statistics on Internet users in Bangladesh. While there are more than 163 million people, Internet is being used by 6 million. Around 70% of these use mobile Internet. A question was asked whether this was only Internet via a mobile phone or also via USB Internet hubs. Unfortunately, Anir was not able to answer this question based on these statistics. Nevertheless, this question was very useful, because if people are using mobile phones instead of a laptop, it affects the way how they can use the social media tools.

Anir Chowdhury summed up some of the crucial challenges faced by Bangladesh in order to adapt to social media tools. During the planning of the Bangladesh Conference the co-organisers found out that many of the participants did not yet actively used social media tools. Therefore, the workshops were structured around assumption that people needed assistance in setting up their environments. A follow-up in Bangladesh could be to focus more on social networking as a potential productivity tool in workplaces.

Anir Chowdhury showed many examples of initiatives. One of the initiatives is shown in this image. It is a platform that connects teachers who aim to enhance the quality of education. This initiative - and also all of the other initiatives - had a common characteristic: it runs on open-source software.

Anir Chowdhury mentioned in his keynote talk that the new way of working should be fun. However, during the Bangladesh Conference we experienced a recurring barriers which make social media tools more annoying than fun: blocking of websites and connectivity.
During the evaluation it became clear that a more specific and targeted conference would be very preferable.

What has been shared via Twitter?

- #BD11 workforce culture: trust is the lubricant
- #BD11 biggest challenge in BD is the price for Internet access
- #BD11 I got introduced to all this interesting tools, never used them before but will now for research communication
- #BD11 Social media is voices for the voiceless
- #BD11 most popular blog in BD is somewhereinblog.com
- #BD11 We need to be pushed to use the services
- #BD11 Very different knowledge and skills, we need another practical workshop for people with low computer skills
- #BD11 Radio use is also social media how to integrate it into the Internet?

"During the evaluation it became clear that a more specific and targeted conference would be very preferable."
2. THE EXECUTION

**DO’S**

- Networking and informal moments are key to the success of a conference.
- Explaining practical assignments (how to use Twitter, Delicious etc) with theory.
- Letting participants present cases and experiences to others through facilitations.
- Customising workshops & program to the needs of the participants during event.
- Drawing upon practical cases that local participants come across.
- Formalising learning by producing step-by-step guides in Bangladesh.
- Asking participants to use Internet access at the same time.
- Leaving all the participants in one room while 3 different discussions are initiated.

**DON’TS**

- Drawing upon practical cases that local participants come across.
- Letting participants present cases and experiences to others through facilitations.
- Asking participants to use Internet access at the same time.
- Leaving all the participants in one room while 3 different discussions are initiated.

**Conclusion:**

During the evaluation of the Conference it became clear that there is a strong need to follow up initiatives like the Bangladesh Conference.

At this conference the group of participants was quite diverse (from students to researchers to practitioners) with all their own specific needs. However, there were two recurring issues mentioned by the participants:

1. how to introduce and encourage people from rural areas to use social media;
2. what kind of role the radios can play in the concept of social media

It could be an idea to adopt these themes in future initiatives in Bangladesh or South Asia.

It should also be said that due to the efforts of one of the local co-organisers - BNNRC (which is promoting ICT4D through radio communication) - the Bangladesh Conference received a lot of exposure from professionals in the domain of radio broadcasting.

The co-organisers also gained some practical knowledge about how to set up a social media workshop successful. It was first believed that by leaving all the participants in one big room and dividing them in 3 groups, it could create a lively space of learning. Nevertheless, as the three groups were already large, the participants and facilitators needed to increase their voice in order to be heard around the table. It would therefore be better to have different rooms.

Quote by a participant via Twitter: “This conference was a very interesting first step to get acquainted to social media. But how can I embed it in my professional life that focusses around rural areas of Bangladesh? A follow-up is needed”
Networking:
The participants were not only successful in networking during the Bangladesh Conference, but afterwards it continued. First, the participants sent e-mails to each other in which they share cutting-edge information in their specific domain.

Second, social profiles are continuously being updated by many of the participants. Take Sayed Javed Ahmad for example. He has updated his complete LinkedIn profile over the past months and this results in a very extensive description of his track-record. In addition, he connected his Twitter and personal website to his LinkedIn. His public profile is http://www.linkedin.com/pub/sayed-javed-ahmad/2b/941/310. This is very significant, as he called himself the older one in between a bunch of younger participants who grew up with this technology.

Third, participants, co-organisers and keynote speakers still have contact regarding future collaboration. Daan Boom mentioned that he followed-up with one of the participants via Skype.

Collaborating:
Some participants have shown interest in the possibility to become workshop facilitators for the Focuss.Info Initiative. The Focuss.Info Initiative expects them to write a workshop proposal in the near future.

Knowledge:
During the Bangladesh Conference the keynote speakers have been interviewed for 15 to 20 minutes. These interviews will be published on www.focuss.info under the service ‘inVideo’.

The interviews capture a summary of the content of the keynote talks, but also some more in-depth expert knowledge from Anir Chowdhury and Daan Boom.

As a result, months after the Conference there is still a constant flow of communication to participants and other peers in the domain of KM4Dev or ICT4D. Through this type of communication everybody can re-experience the content of the Bangladesh Conference.

The interviews will be accessible on http://www.focuss.info/invideo/