



EQUAL ACCESS

REPORT ON PROGRESS



Our Mission

Equal Access International creates positive social change for millions of underserved people in the developing world by providing critically needed information and education through: locally produced and targeted content; the use of appropriate and cost-effective technology; and, effective partnerships and community engagement.



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we reflect on six years of providing access to information, education and leadership training to rural communities across the world, we are proud to feature stories from our inspirational staff and moving testimonials voiced by our beneficiaries.

Working in rural and underserved regions across Afghanistan, Nepal, India, Cambodia and Laos, we overcome obstacles of poor infrastructure, poverty, lack of connectivity and illiteracy by bringing crucial information to areas with the greatest need. Our radio programs and outreach activities foster education and human development, provide leadership training and motivate individuals to work together to create positive social change.

By combining the power of radio and multimedia broadcasts with direct mobilization activities, we engage communities in dialogue and create a context where dreams for a better life are realized. In rural Afghanistan, women and their families are learning that human rights and women's empowerment are values enshrined in Islam and are now sending their daughters to school and resisting child marriage. In Nepal and Laos, we are teaching nearly six million youth critical health and life skills. In Cambodia, our programming saves young girls from being trafficked. In India, we educate migrants on preventing HIV as they make their way through uncertain new lands.

The testimonials featured in this report would not be possible without the dedication of our beneficiaries, staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Board, partners and our distinguished institutional and individual supporters. This year, we also honor the work of Michael Bosse, our Director of Programs, who has worked closely with us to build Equal Access as an organization and has led our program efforts with dedication and excellence since our inception.

We invite you to support us as we continue to address new issues and reach new countries. Where others see challenges, we work with our beneficiaries to create positive change. By reducing inequity together, we can bridge the gap between poverty and opportunity – empowering millions with the tools they need to improve their lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Gunther".

Mark Gunther
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronni Goldfarb".

Ronni Goldfarb
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Information

*BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN
POVERTY AND OPPORTUNITY*

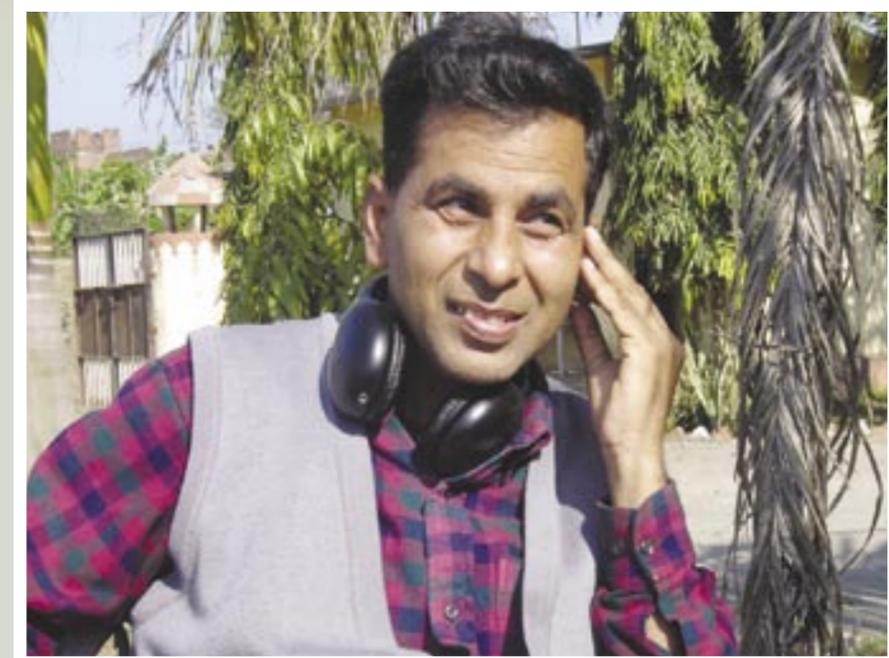
Information is portable, relatively inexpensive and yet is one of the most powerful tools available to create positive social change. For millions across the developing world, illiteracy, poor infrastructure and a lack of practical local information leave individuals and whole communities without this most essential resource. For instance, a youth in rural Nepal might see his only options for improving his life as limited choices between high risk migration to India or a continued life of poverty. →

Our village suffered a lot during the conflict. Equal Access radio programs taught us a lot about Dalit discrimination and brought great change to our village. To abolish caste discrimination we took initiative. Many Brahmins of Nepal do not allow Dalits to use water from public wells and taps. Slowly we started fetching water from public wells along with Dalits. In the beginning it was difficult but we went on collectively and it got easier and more people accepted it. It was all possible because of the radio program.

—LETTER FROM A LISTENING GROUP MEMBER IN DHANKUTA, NEPAL



→ However, a trusted chat show host can help this troubled youth by providing information on alternatives he might not know about such as local training programs or jobs closer to home. For this youth, as with most people, the information source must be trusted, inspiring and reliable – helping him negotiate a range of difficult life decisions. →



UPENDRA ARYAL | CONTENT COORDINATOR—NEPAL

I have been a radio personality in Nepal since 1980 and cannot believe the changes that have been taking place over the last few decades. People are being educated by our radio series and they are telling our leaders how to make changes—they now expect positive change. Because we can give everyone information despite the tremendous poverty and ongoing civil war, now everyone is trying to build a new, peaceful Nepal together and I am very proud to be part of the solution. When I began working in media there was no TV in Nepal and radio became my medium. TV arrived in Nepal but I believe radio is still the most efficient media for effective development communications. Combining all modes from terrestrial to satellite, national to local and, interpersonal to mass media, the Equal Access methodology inspires me to continue developing content and broadcasting this important programming.

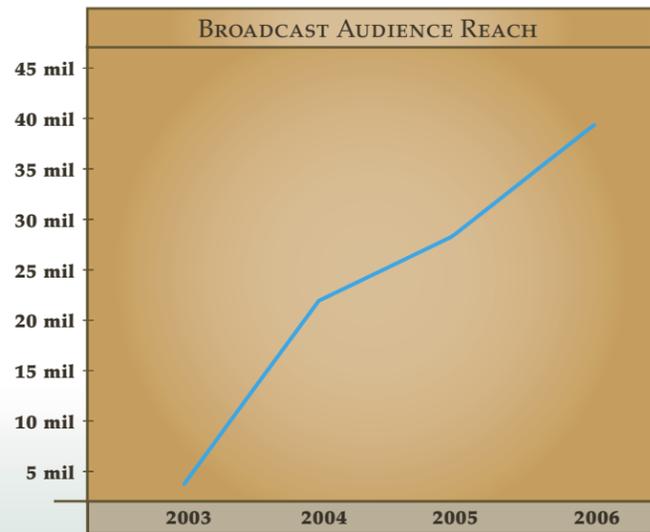


In my community many people listen to the program as it helps them understand trafficking and how it impacts the community. It helps them prepare before they migrate. Our discussions about how to migrate safely are prompted by the radio program. It provides specific information that is very useful for many migrants and would be migrants in the village who could be exploited by traffickers.

—REGULAR LISTENER AND DISCUSSION GROUP MEMBER, CAMBODIA

⇒ Equal Access establishes this trust with millions of people by producing chat shows, serial dramas, print magazines and videos that reach people with the information they need most. By providing critically needed information, we help people help themselves. We regard community-expressed needs and inclusion of local voices as essential to inspiring, motivating, and catalyzing positive change, whether the information is about HIV/AIDS prevention, women’s empowerment or peace building.

Often, radio is the most effective way to reach the most people in remote areas and in urban centers, at home and at work, while playing or in school. By networking together radio stations across each country to participate in the creation and broadcast of different radio series, Equal Access ensures that vital information is delivered to national audiences and that we reach the people who need it most. In very rural and remote areas of Afghanistan, Nepal, India, Laos and Cambodia, we build the capacity of radio stations, set up micro-FM stations, or install satellite receivers so communities can access radio for the first time. ◇



As this chart shows, our total audience reach across all countries of operation continues its rapid growth and is expected to exceed 45 million in 2007.



venu arora | PROJECT DESIGN AND CONTENT CONSULTANT—INDIA

Being at the center of setting up projects in Nepal, India and Cambodia has been an extremely satisfying experience. Seeing the way our participatory radio programs impact people’s lives, helping them to make informed choices, is truly inspiring. Although juggling family commitments, finishing my doctorate, and managing the portfolio of work I do for Equal Access is sometimes difficult, the wide-scale impact we continue to achieve drives me to stretch my creative instincts and be a part of the process that creates so much worthwhile change. It is a pleasure to work with professionals who do not hesitate to listen to and learn from the communities they serve and I am proud to be a member of the Equal Access team.

We uneducated women never used to come out of the house, or speak on any matters and didn't know how. After listening to the program, we are stepping out of the house and putting out our thoughts. I was limited to household chores before and today I run a shop with my husband. Through these radio programs, I have understood that men and women are the two wheels of the same chariot and feel that I too can do something. I learned of women's rights, about the participation of women in the constituent assembly and that caste barriers should not be applied

—LISTENING CLUB MEMBER FROM KECHANA, NEPAL



BIDHYA CHAPAGAIN | ASSISTANT PROGRAM
PRODUCER—NEPAL

Before joining Equal Access, I was a journalist reporting on the dangers faced by people throughout Nepal. Now, as the host of *Naya Nepal (New Nepal)*, I interview people from all areas of my country, starting dialogues and spawning meaningful discussions on the direction of Nepal's future. I see my country in an exciting state of transition and believe there is the potential for a prosperous and peaceful future. My hope is that by initiating this dialogue and providing a voice for everyone, people will sit down, talk and stop fighting each other.



Education

*FOSTERING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
AND PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT*

Without education that imparts essential life skills and inspires belief in one's personal power to affect circumstances, a person faced with difficult decisions will struggle to apply new information or resources in positive life changing ways. A rural woman in Cambodia might hear or see a public service announcement about human trafficking, violence against women, HIV prevention, or the necessity for her daughter to finish school. But, if delivered in sound-bites without social education on how to effectively address these issues in her own life and community, these messages will not help her improve her life or the life of her family. →



YOS “DARA” VONGDARA |
TECHNICAL OUTREACH COORDINATOR—CAMBODIA

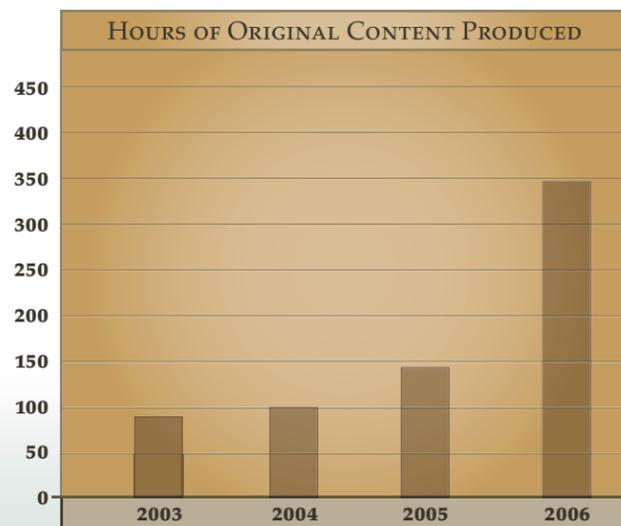
I have been working in radio and television in Cambodia for over 25 years. Since peace has come to Cambodia, I have been involved in setting up many of the FM and television studios and broadcast towers for the media sector in Cambodia. Many of these FM radio stations and their staff have become very important Equal Access partners, and I am excited to work with them again—providing training that supports our programs. I am proud to help produce programming that addresses social issues like reproductive health and HIV/AIDS and to train many people in recording and broadcasting techniques. Broadcast media is an important way to reach Cambodians, especially in rural areas. Working at Equal Access, I have come to understand the importance of connecting media with interpersonal strategies and community-based activities that allow people an opportunity to discuss what they learn and provide input to our programs.

→ Many of our media programs educate people, like teachers, students or justice officials, in more formal learning environments where acquiring interpretative skills and personal empowerment is part of the formal training curriculum. Just as importantly, many of our media programs educate people where they spend the majority of their time; at work, at home cooking, on a bus, in a restaurant or in other social settings. Keeping an individual or a small group audience entertained while educating them requires a strong, gripping storyline or a dynamic chat show host—a reason for the audience to not only pay attention, but to keep tuning back in. Both the engaging characters in our dramas and our on-air media personalities serve as powerful role models that inspire respect for human dignity and belief in the ability to transform one’s life. While a public service announcement can easily be forgotten, a chat show host or exciting dramatic plotline can bring an audience back enough times to not only hear the information, but understand how to use it. →



NADIA RASULI | LEAD SCRIPT-WRITER
—AFGHANISTAN

I am one of the lucky Afghan women who have a university level education and enjoy the freedom to work outside their home. It remains true that a majority of Afghan women are often deprived of a great number of their rights in life. It has been this way for generations, and if we don't do our part in educating people, sitting silently, still waiting passively for change, then it is destined to remain so. Equal Access encourages social change by educating Afghans about human rights in the context of Islam. We do this through human rights workshops around the country, as well as developing and producing radio programs about public health, agriculture, drug awareness and the Afghan constitution. We focus specifically on a broad spectrum of problems that many people, especially women, face in their families and communities. Working as a senior script writer, I help women learn about their rights by writing radio dramas and scripts for the *My Rights, Our Rights, and Others' Rights in the Context of Islam* radio series. By enhancing people's awareness of the principals of Islam and the positive customs and traditions that make ill-treatment of women inexcusable it is my hope that eventually, all men, women, and children will be able to live in an Afghanistan void of ignorance and discrimination.



⇒ While Equal Access excels at providing accurate and timely information, our real success lies in educating our audiences with the skills to interpret and apply new information and in inspiring the imagination and desire of millions of our beneficiaries to improve their own circumstances. ⇒

Nearly doubling between 2005 and 2006, our content production continues its steady growth ensuring more positive social development programming reaches larger audiences.

While listening to the programs we not only get entertained but also gain knowledge and education. This program is useful to millions of youth like me, as well as disabled and old people. I wish this program to progress more and more as it has been the heartbeat of millions of Nepalese.

—LISTENING CLUB MEMBER, GULMI, NEPAL



→ For instance, listeners in Nepal are applying peace strategies learned from our radio series to resist human rights violations in their community. Emulating examples from our women's rights radio dramas on the values enshrined in Islamic principles and the Koran, many Afghan families now renounce early child marriage and send their daughters to school. By increasing the ability of individuals to understand, interpret and act on new information regarding issues like women's empowerment, land law, human rights or health, Equal Access empowers individuals to use information and education as tools for personal development—changing their lives for the better. ◇



BINITA SHRESTHA | TEAM LEADER & ON-AIR
PROGRAM HOST — NEPAL

When I started with *Chatting with My Best Friend*, our Nepali youth chat show, our focus was primarily on HIV/AIDS, but now it's become so much more complex as it incorporates expanded topics like the impact of conflict, living with disabilities, migration, finding a job, running a farm, or starting a micro-savings club. People turn to us for advice on all different kinds of problems—the program's scope is quite large. Now that I'm a well known radio personality in Nepal and abroad, the responsibility of having so many people rely on my voice is often daunting, but I see so many youth literally change their lives because of this radio series. The letters they write and the clubs they bring together are so inspiring that I continue working as hard as possible because I know that I'm empowering them to make their own informed choices.



Leadership Training

STIMULATING COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITIES

Even with adequate information and education, communities usually rely on dynamic, enthusiastic, action-oriented individuals to provide guidance and direction for others to follow and to stimulate empowerment. Unfortunately, untrained leaders sometimes resist or stymie the efforts of people attempting to practice the new ideas modeled on our radio series or seen in our mobile video events. Whether trusted traditional authorities, religious figures, elected officials, teachers, health workers, village elders, youth activists, women advocates, the town busybody, or any committed community member, leaders serve as gatekeepers for and catalysts of community empowerment who must address legitimate concerns that new ideas will lead to better lives than continuing with the status quo. →

I think these programs are the voice of Afghanistan's people and especially the voice of Afghanistan's women. The messages reach far away villages and districts in Afghanistan. They are really very good and precise messages for the improvement of women's status. There are messages about coercive marriages, marriages of girls as compensation for their brothers' and fathers' misdeeds, the encouragement of women to attend health centers, and other Islamic teachings that are desirable for women.

—Ms. FAWZIA AMINI, HEAD OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT AT THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS (MOWA), AFGHANISTAN

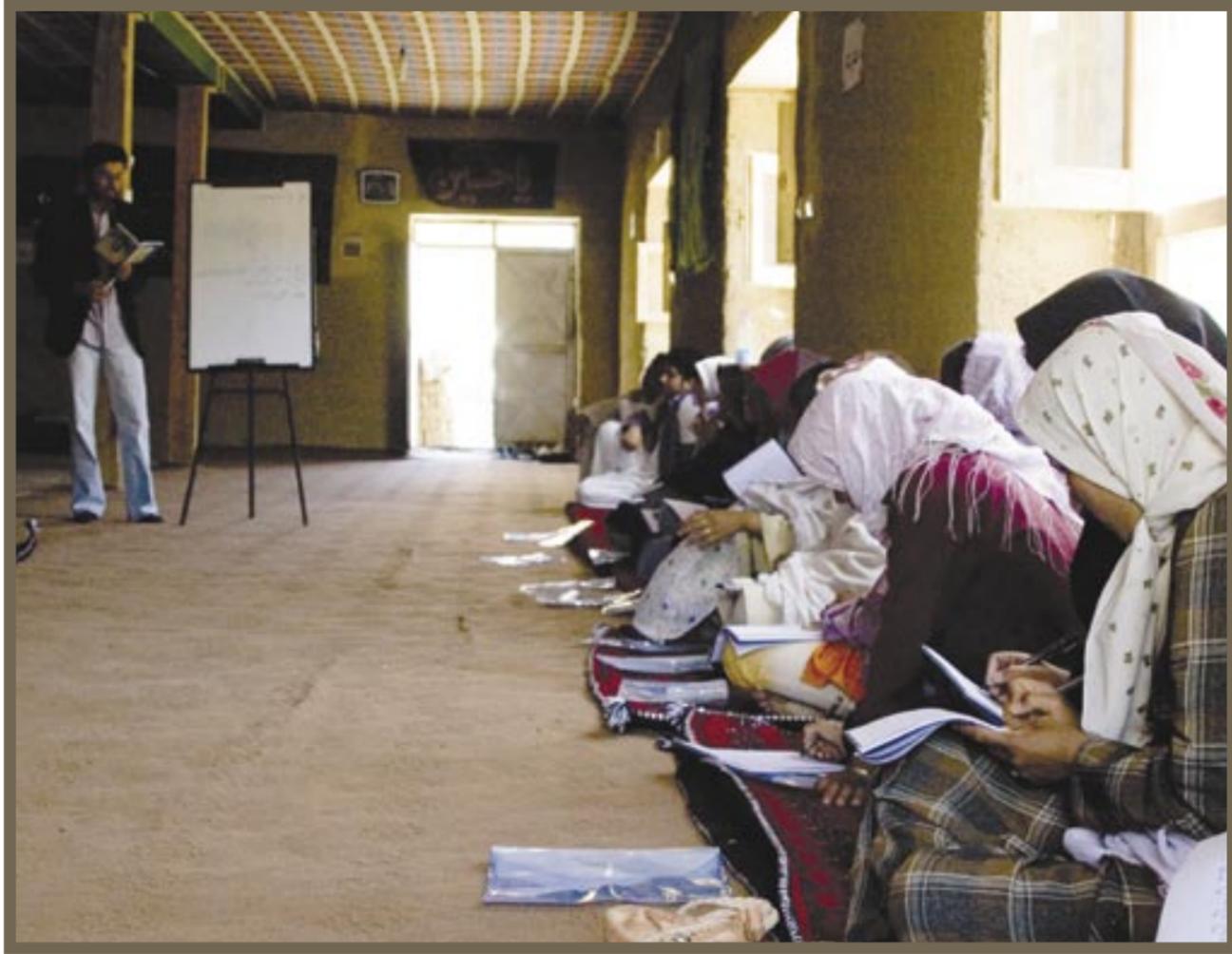


→ While often identifying potential leadership trainees through our partners, Equal Access has the unique ability to reach aspiring leaders among our vast listening audience and invite them to participate in our regional trainings such as the leader of a self-formed listening club or of a newly formed women's savings club. Through our various leadership training modules, trainees increase their ability to facilitate community conversations, answer questions, provide links to resources, and mobilize their communities to apply the new ideas and solutions suggested by our engaging media shows. Through our trainings, community members and specifically appointed leaders alike acquire the skills to envision positive social change and inspire their communities towards shared goals. →



MAHBOUBA SERAJ | PROGRAM MANAGER
—AFGHANISTAN

As a native Afghan who lived in the United States for almost 26 years, I view my return to Afghanistan as a mission to liberate and inform the women who do not have the advantages of family or education like I did. I am here to help the women of Afghanistan who endured so much hardship during the last 20 years and are eager for knowledge and change. Convincing conservative communities to allow women to congregate in a safe place to listen to and discuss our radio series that includes conversations with mullahs, imams and women in these groups about human rights is one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life. As host of *Our Beloved Afghanistan*, I interview the most powerful and the most powerless people in the country and prompt them to share their stories over the airwaves so that others can emulate their successes.



→ For instance, small groups of our trained youth leaders across rural Nepal bring together thousands of their peers for reconciliation activities leading to greater cooperation and increased trust among people whose lives have been disrupted by the conflict. Backed up by success stories and testimonial letters read on our radio series about similar successful efforts at reducing violence and strife, these youth activists initiate and participate in peace rallies, job fairs, sports events and community reconstruction efforts. In Afghanistan, national parliamentarians, regional government officials, moderate religious leaders, legal authorities and local journalists participate in our trainings on how to lead town hall-style meetings about complex issues like the intersection of human rights and Islamic rights with constitutional and traditional law. In Cambodia, our trained village leaders mobilize weekly listening clubs around our radio drama series to directly confront difficult problems that lead to human trafficking, violence against women or land law violations. →



SUSHIL “DEVENDRA” LAL SHRESTHA |

PROGRAM PRODUCER—NEPAL

After working with a youth organization, I started working on *Chatting with My Best Friend*, our Nepali youth chat show, in 2001 and I have seen the chat show grow in popularity – the hosts are now celebrities in Nepal. Especially during this time of unrest, Nepali youths face tough decisions and those who call and write into the show with questions often have no other place to turn. In my role as organizer of youth parliaments and peace and reconciliation activities around the country, I interact directly with thousands of people who rely on our programs and hear their insights. When I go back to meet with the people I’ve trained, they are doing things like building roads, stopping domestic violence, and resisting Maoist recruitment efforts just by following the examples in our radio series. I am constantly inspired to figure out new ways to provide these youth with new ideas for rebuilding Nepal.



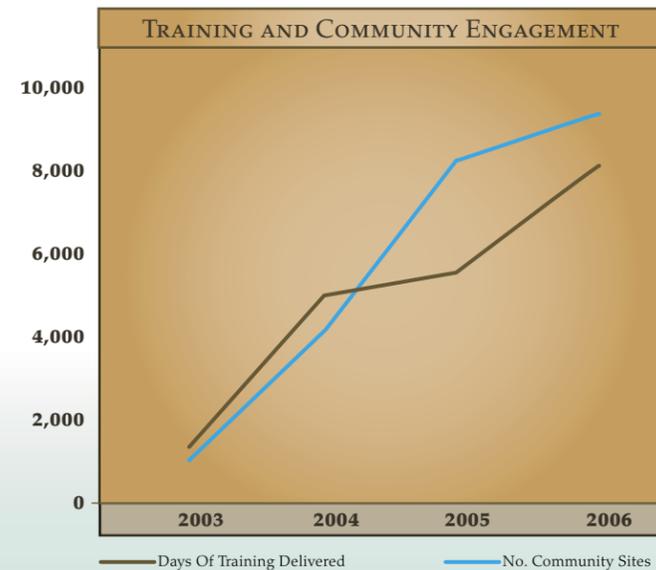
These radio programs help explain to you exactly what your rights are. That's the first step toward having a good life. If we remain ignorant of what our rights are, and if we're not educated as to what we should do to protect ourselves, then people who are more powerful will always take advantage of us. So the Equal Access programming is very good, especially the new program on land. It helps people know how to register their land, how to protect it from being grabbed by other more powerful people, and how to live in a more secure way.

—U.S. AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA, JOSEPH MUSSOMELI



YAN THIDA | OUTREACH COORDINATOR—CAMBODIA

Before joining Equal Access, I did HIV/AIDS counseling for youth, working with health based-NGOs to implement effective and efficient HIV/AIDS intervention programs. My experience developing monitoring and implementation tools, designing projects and providing technical support helps me address the health and social issues in our programs. I find the Equal Access methodology offers people opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills to better understand the key issues of human trafficking, HIV/AIDS prevention and rule of law. By following the examples from the radio show, people better understand how to navigate these situations in real life and are less vulnerable and better prepared to take advantage of new opportunities. After working with these people, I can see how much better the future of Cambodia will be.



→ Trained with the skills to stimulate community empowerment activities and supported by examples from our radio series of how other communities grapple with similar challenges, leaders and community members become agents of social change. When trained on the social dimensions of difficult issues and how to mobilize collective social involvement, leaders inspire everyone to work together more effectively in service of lasting changes that improve everyone's lives.◊

With continued growth we remain committed to increasing the number of people trained and the number of community outreach sites.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS

On behalf of all the communities we serve, Equal Access would like to thank all the institutions and individuals whose generous support makes our work possible.

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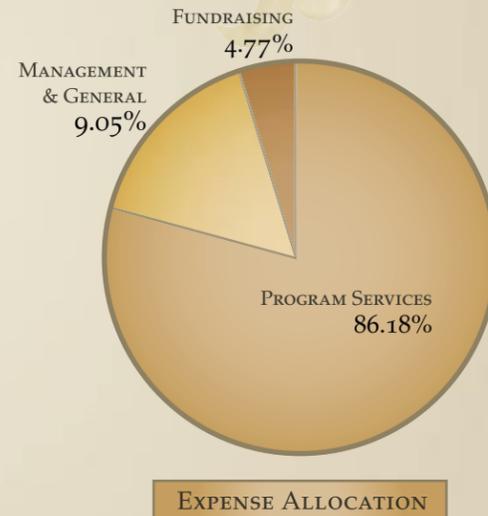
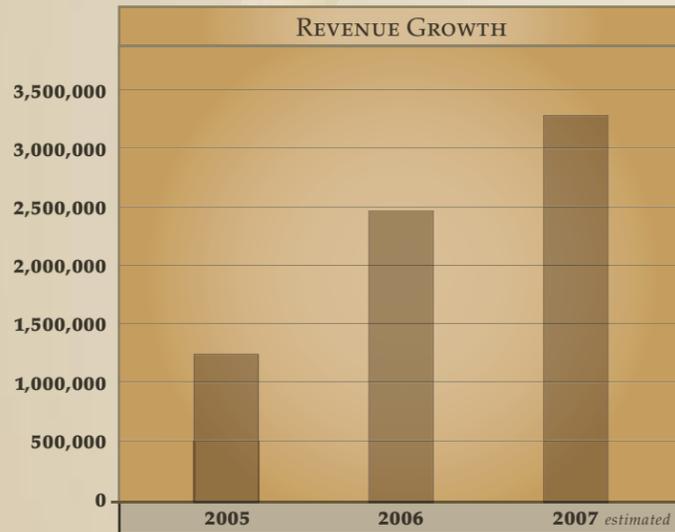
*MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EQUAL ACCESS INTERNATIONAL
CONDENSED FINANCIAL REPORT
INFORMATION FOR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2006

STATEMENT of ACTIVITIES

REVENUE	2,458,800
PROGRAM	1,988,013
GENERAL ADMIN	208,723
FUNDRAISING	110,061
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,306,797
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	152,003
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	4,561
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	156,564

REVENUE GROWTH



A note from our CFO . . . Karen Frost

Experiencing significant growth during the 2006 fiscal year, Equal Access International implemented its programs across five countries with the financial support of a diverse range of supporters and partners including UN Agencies, bi-lateral and multi-lateral aid agencies, foundations and individual donors. We increased our financial infrastructure and reporting mechanisms to ensure excellence in execution and implementation of large scale programs. The result is an organization with increased implementation capacity to create positive social change, positioned for growth to new countries. With a clear focus on fulfillment of our mission, we have maintained a consistent level of general, administration and fundraising costs over the past two years. The financial information presented here is drawn from the audited financial statements of Equal Access, which were prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

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*THROUGH EQUAL ACCESS PARTNERSHIP WITH IDEOSYNC MEDIA COMBINE

