

1. Budget breakdown.
2. Efficacy of radio program
3. Actual listenership of the radio in the target area and the listener's limited attention span for radio program in the age of TikTok
4. Study design bias- selection bias, Hawthorne effect (though validity of this bias is now being questioned).

Dear ANMF Grant review committee,

Thank you for the thoughtful review. NIOMH highly appreciated this opportunity to respond to the questions and concerns raised regarding the proposed project. Please find attached the responses. (File 1 in the email)

***1) Budget breakdown.**

The grant will mainly pay for planning, designing for Phase 1 and implementation of Phase 2 i.e., running of radio shows and concurrent interventions in active radio listener's group.
Total Grant Budget amount -16500 USD

Following are the projected cost topic items and expected to be paid by the grant (14815 USD)

- Production of 30 minutes radio program times 10 shows paid to the FM station
- Broadcasting and re-airing time cost at radio station for 10 shows (5 months)- 20 radio slots
- Focused group discussion meeting cost (times 2)
- Project awareness dissemination cost
- Costs for Training the counselors running the active radio listener's group
- Stipend for counselors
- Incentives for Active Radio listener's group participants (total participants 60) for 10 sessions each
- Program Operational costs
- Planning, monitoring, evaluation cost
- Part time Project coordinator cost
- Technical Advisory consultation cost
- Cost of radio program host, stipends for content writing

NIOMH covered expenses (1,694 USD)

Please find attached the detailed breakdown of the budget.

***2. Efficacy of radio program**

We reviewed several radio-based mental health programs conducted globally and in Nepal and highlight few representative interventions to discuss the effectiveness of the programs.

Despite advancement in the field of technology observed in Nepal, radio remains the primary form of mass media communication in several rural communities of Nepal, especially where functioning internet service is not available. Radio is a necessary item, since it is affordable and other modes of communication are not easily accessible to many, in the rural villages.

Following are the link to the articles that emphasize the role of radio media in social transformation.

- Community radios have been working for social transformation by informing and empowering communities. FM radios are the best tools to pass information to illiterate and rural communities, for all the people can listen to the radio for free' The Himalayan Times.

<https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/tune-radio-role-mass-medium-nepal>

- Radio based programs are listened via different medium. Radio reaches to all mobile devices including social media platforms. The new technologies, including the internet have carried the radio along with them.

<https://english.onlinekhabar.com/reviving-radio-popularity-nepal.html#>

Radio Programs in Nepal and globally

A) 'Banche Sansar Jitinchha', a suicide prevention focused radio program series, run by TPO (Transcultural Psychosocial Organization) Nepal, a leading mental health organization in Nepal

<http://www.tponepal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Radio-Program-as-Awareness-tools-in-Suicide-Prevention.pdf>

Impact of 'Banche Sansar Jitinchha' program described in Mental Health innovation Network website regarding the of note the following:

"The radio program has contributed a lot to increased mental health awareness in the community. It has specially been effective to generate positive messages about suicide [prevention]. Docudrama based on real stories and expert interview have helped maintain the quality of the program. We have found that this program is a big hit among school children, senior citizens and housewives of this district."

"People usually provide their feedback about the program by sending texts to the radio stations. After listening to the program, many people have reported that they feel less alone and feel mental health conditions are treatable. Some people have also reported that they were able to relate their own problems with the cases presented in the program, which has enabled them to seek health services."

- Mr. Rambabu Nepal, district focal person of TPO Nepal, Sindhupalchowk district

Mr. Dev Raj Subedi from Radio Melamchi estimates that out of a population of 600,000 people in Sindhupalchowk and the neighboring Kavrepalanchowk district, more than 50,000 people of both districts listen to this program. This widespread reach has been successful in spreading awareness about suicide among the people in the community.

B) Farm Radio International broadcasted in several countries in Africa has been able to influence transformation in several areas such as health and nutrition, environmental sustainability, and agriculture through a broad set of radio resources, innovation, and radio projects.

They highlight how radio has more direct impact in farming and rural communities.

<https://farmradio.org/why-radio/>

A noteworthy parallel can be seen in Nepal, where two-third of the total population continue to engage in farming.

Farm Radio International had broadcasted multiple series of mental health awareness programs

'Nkhawa Njee — Yonse Bo (Depression free, life is cool) in Malawi 'and 'positive Mood' in Tanzania are 2 mental health radio based program mentioned in the following articles.

<https://farmradio.org/the-many-faces-of-mental-health-awareness-part-1/>

<https://farmradio.org/many-faces-of-mental-health-awareness-part-2/>

'Mental Health on Air' documentary shares story of how radio can tackle stigma surrounding mental illness

<https://farmradio.org/press-release-mental-health-on-air-documentary-shares-story-of-how-radio-can-tackle-stigma-surrounding-mental-illness/>

Farm radio international has been widely funded including a large support from Grand Challenges Canada. Dr Stan Kutcher, Prof in Psychiatry and now a senator in Canada has led the integration of mental health curriculum resources into secondary schools, and in training primary care providers to diagnose and treat mental disorders for adolescents via use of radio in African states.

<https://www.grandchallenges.ca/2016/farm-radio/>

Rural Radio program Becomes Mental Health Outreach to Youth

<https://psychnews.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.pn.2016.5b9>

The impact of radio based mental health program and how this serves in 'pathways to care model' in mental health care is highlighted in the following article.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5610277/>

This article on creation of evidence-based youth mental health policy highlights the role of radio in integrating mental health program in the community.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31555156/>

C) Centre for Mental Health and Counseling-Nepal (CMC-Nepal), is a national Non-Governmental Organization that is working on enhancing and providing quality and affordable mental health and psychosocial counselling service. They ran a radio based series, ' Man ko Sansaar'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Kpj_fkF3-8

The impact of the program has not yet been published.

D) Effect of radio-based program in a high-income setting in United Kingdom (BBC Cornwall) is described in the following study

Local radio to promote mental health awareness: a public health initiative.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6646966/>

***3. Actual listenership of the radio in the target area and the listener's limited attention span for radio program in the age of TikTok**

We inquired Radio/FM stations based in our target area (Chitwan and nearby districts) who could potentially produce and broadcast our Mental Health literacy program. We aimed to review the listenership of Synergy FM and Kalika FM, 2 of the popular stations based in Chitwan. Currently, we have information available for Synergy FM.

Synergy FM broadcast range reaches out to more than 30 districts in Nepal. The active listeners are based in Chitwan and nearby 7 districts.

Organic Reach: Synergy FM has more than 400000 people reached via Facebook page and Synergy online webpage. This number is considered as organic reach, when the reach is via usual or regular following and the page is not boosted or paid. The total number of people reached by Synergy FM via direct audio only method is difficult to estimate. The FM station has a significant global reach via 'Hamropatro' and other online radio portals.

NIOMH Radio based MHL program, besides being primarily produced and broadcasted by radio, will also be posted in multiple social media platforms including youtube, facebook. The short sections will be made available in tiktok, twitter and Instagram.

Also attached (file 3) is the one-pager details shared by the Synergy team.

In the age of internet, radio-based information delivery is not limited to the traditional devices, and majority of the radio formatted programs are also delivered via wide range of media platforms. The NIOMH's radio mental health program is targeted towards listener group that includes rural and far to reach population but will also be available for the rest.

NIOMH has been delivering variety of mental health awareness information carefully considering several demographic factors in population group. 'NIOMH-Aware,' a digital media-based awareness program is being delivered via social media platforms such as tiktok, Instagram and facebook. 'NIOMH-Aware' program content is concentrated towards younger and urban population who have easy access to social media platform running mobile devices.

https://www.instagram.com/niomh_awareness/

***4. Study design bias- selection bias, Hawthorne effect**

We agree that the present study design does not evaluate the impact on all groups of population that MHL program can potentially reach, hence the results will not be generalizable. This is a big limitation of the study portion of the project.

The primary focus of the current project is to deliver the literacy content for the benefit of larger population. In essence, it is difficult and costly to study the outcomes of a large population media-based literacy program. The current design focusses on studying the select group (Active Radio Listener's Group) that is exposed to an interactive mental health literacy program. The advantage of this study design is that it allows us to evaluate the impact on the active intervention groups, that are critical in terms of mental health care needs (youth) and promotion of mental health awareness (FCHV). The undetermined passive listening general population reached by the live and recorded radio shows and available online content, estimated to be at least 200,000 people in several districts of Bagmati and Gandaki provinces, will be difficult to study.

The study is not designed to be controlled and hence the results cannot be entirely attributed to the intervention. Similarly, the study is not randomized; hence the generalizability will be limited. Considering the broader context in Nepal, that there is substantial lack of knowledge about mental health problems and treatment; we can speculate that the findings are likely to be the outcome of the proposed intervention.

To help with this limitation, one assessment method that can be added to the current study design is to develop a qualitative mental health awareness questionnaire and ask all listeners to download it from the NIOMH website and fill it. This can potentially generate responses representing broad demographics and variety of listener group. The shortcoming we need to be aware of, is that the questionnaires will be accessible by only those participants who have internet access and skills to read, answer and return the response electronically. While the data will be helpful for several quality measures, caution should be exercised in terms of generalizability of the findings.