

## MEDIA RELEASE

### *Nepali radio show for young people wins major international award*

*Kathmandu 16 September 2008: "Saathi Sanga Manka Koora" (SSMK), a radio edutainment programme produced by a team of young professionals from Equal Access Nepal has won the 2008 International Children's Day for Broadcasting (ICDB) award. The ICDB award is given to radio and television broadcasters that demonstrated the best overall dedication to youth participation in the media. This year's theme was "The World We Want."*

Targeted at teenagers and young adults, *Saathi Sanga Manka Koora* (meaning 'Chatting with My Best Friend') was initiated by UNICEF in 2001 in Nepal. UNICEF continues its support to SSMK even now. From those early days the listenership has grown enormously. Every week about 6.5 million young people from all over Nepal and beyond tune in to listen to the hour-long programme of songs, drama and youthful banter, with a contemporary and youth-friendly approach to serious issues such as HIV/AIDS and sexual health. The programme liberated a generation too shy to talk about many such topics and gave a forum for a real exchange of information and knowledge between young people on issues that really interested them.

Nepal's winning entry for the ICDB, was the programme that aired in early December 2007 which was themed "The world we want: How we can help young people to fulfill their needs." The main message that the 1-hour programme imparted through its 'chat + drama + songs + letters + information' format was that young people could play a big role in ensuring that children got the world they wanted and deserved.

Two children hosted the initial portions of the programme which also featured a special mini-drama produced by the visually impaired SSMK listener club members of the Amar Singh High School in Pokhara. The drama focussed on the problems faced by the girls in the absence of female wardens in their hostel, and featured Hollywood superstar Orlando Bloom, who was then on a trip to see UNICEF's programmes in Nepal, as a guest. Orlando's 'one-line' role was to give a tip to the children on how things could be solved if everyone worked together! The replies that the children later gave to Orlando's question about what kind of a world they envisioned for themselves, formed the bulk of the vox-pop of the ICDB special programme too.

This is not the first taste of international recognition for Equal Access and SSMK - in November 2007 SSMK was also honoured with the Global Junior Challenge Award by Italian President Giorgio Napolitano at the Presidential Palace in Rome. This year the ICDB award will take place at a special ceremony in New York that is being hosted by UNICEF's Goodwill Ambassador Marcus Samuelsson. A delegation from SSMK has been invited to attend to receive their award.

*The ICDB awards was established 16 years ago to encourage children's participation in the media and has grown over the years to be the world's largest child rights broadcasting campaign. Traditionally celebrated on the 2nd Sunday in December, UNICEF has moved the event to the 1st Sunday in March to allow for more participation. The date for the 2009 ICDB with the theme of "Unite for Children - Tune in to Kids," has been moved to 1 March 2009. ([http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/video\\_33610.html](http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/video_33610.html))*

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