Grassroots Comics—
an innovative participatory teaching-learning tool


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A Grassroots Comics Poster

TONU’S STORY

THERE WAS GIRL TONU. THE HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES ARE NOT ADVANCE.

MOM! I WANT TO PURSUE MY FURTHER STUDIES IN DELHI.

MOM: DELHI IS NOT SAFE FOR GIRLS. I READ IN THE NEWSPAPER.

DEAR, I LIKE IT.

AFTER CONVINCING HER MOM, TONU FINALLY CAME TO DELHI FOR HER STUDIES.

BEH! HERE’S YOUR TAXI. GET ON.

DURING ADMISSION IN DELHI UNIVERSITY

OH! ARE YOU FROM NE? YOU DON’T KNOW HAND!

HII. I AM PRIYA. I WILL HELP YOU.

OH! THAT’S VERY KIND OF YOU. THANK YOU TONU.

Hello! Mom, I am doing well.

AT: TONU’S COLLEGE...

AM I SAFE? PEOPLE ARE NICE TO ME. I KNOW YOU DON’T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME, OK?

Maku Toshelpha Seiyo
Grassroots Comics:
People's issues, language, expression, illustrations, Characters...
What are Grassroots Comics?

- Comics - stories told visually
- Grassroots Comics - comics made by common people about issues important to them and their community
- Are based on the firm belief that - 'Everybody has a story to tell and everybody can draw'.
- Are easy to create, replicate and distribute
- Encourage self expression and self publication
- Accepted across national and international boundaries
Formats of Grassroots Comics

- Wall Posters
- Comic Strips
- Accordian Mini Comics
- Booklets
- Anthologies...
Training in Grassroots Comics... developing Comic Journalists...at the University
Orientation... a context- Communalism
Understanding convergence of different media—puppetry, theatre, Grassroots Comics...
Reflecting...brainstorming on an issue...
Basics of drawing...expressions...
Sketching...practice...
Sharing ideas...and experiences...
Illustrating Grassroots Comics...
Ownership and achievement...
Preparing Grassroots Comics
Demonstrating achievements...
Analysis of story, design and layout...overall graphic appeal... seeking feedback
Discussing 'Communalism' with people on the street...
Sharing the skill of developing Comics with grassroots communities...
Discussing issues and developing stories for Comics
Promoting Literacy - Exhibiting and reading - ownership of content
Voting for the Most Significant Change story in Comics Posters - Sahyog
A campaign and advocacy tool...
Campaigning for change...
Mobilizing communities for action...
Sharing issues with friends...scope of social media in mainstreaming grassroots issues
...creating public opinions across boundaries
Scope as a media for developing Life Skills - a glimpse...
Grassroots comics have been used in classroom processes for:

- Enhancing student’s awareness and knowledge on selected curriculum topics—understanding issues and concerns of disadvantaged communities, health, sanitation, communalism...
- Engaging students in sharing their opinions and experiences on the above issues
- Training students to use Comics as a medium for participatory development communication and explore its potential for convergence with other media like puppetry, theatre, cantastoria, animation...
- Providing experiences to students to be involved in creative pursuits and enhance their Life Skills
- Enabling students to use Comics as a medium for Advocacy and Campaign
- Making students explore the scope of Comics as a method for:
  - Needs Assessment and Program Monitoring & Evaluation
  - Research method for qualitative analysis
Research on Grassroots Comics
at the Department of Development Communication and Extension, Lady Irwin College (University of Delhi)

- Comics For Edutainment: An Exploratory Study (2009)
- 'Ab Shsasan Humro Hoi’- a campaign promoting local Governance in Muzaffarpur (Bihar) (2011)
- Issues and concerns of youth in North East India: Reflections through Grassroots Comics (2012)
Other uses of Comics:

- Technique for Therapy- with youth (juvenile delinquents and drug addicts) at a drug de addiction centre
- Writing stories of Change- MSC Technique
- Creating Comics books & Talking Comics for neoliterates
- Comics Workbook for neoliterates
- Several other possibilities...
Grassroots Comics—
a media for participatory development Communication

- Created in Workshops-
  Promotes small group processes and Life Skills
- Visual communication tool
  Story telling culture-
  Visual story
- Everybody has a story to tell-
  ‘first voices’
- Printed media- individual & mass appeal
- Easy production replication
  Distribution
- Local development issues
  Local problems
  local solutions
- For ordinary people’s expression and reading
- Innovative
  Edutainment based
  Campaign Media
- No drawing skills required
  Requires low literacy skills
- Medium for self expression
  First voices
  Tell the real truth
- Local voices
  Local expression
  Local appeal
- Sustainable- Low cost
  Low technology
  Skill easy to share & transfer
- Behaviour change communication tool
  Participatory communication
Thank you

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