



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF
COMMUNITY RADIO
MOVEMENT

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Announcement:

Supporting Development of Community Radio in Bangladesh: AMARC Round Table in Dhaka

July 2, 2008, Kathmandu.

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) is organising a Round Table meeting on "Ensuring Sustainable Growth of Community Radio in Bangladesh - Removing Barriers, Increasing Effectiveness" in Dhaka, Bangladesh on July 9, 2008.

The Round Table meeting is being organised as part of AMARC's continuous support to the growth of the community radio sector in the South Asia region and especially in Bangladesh. AMARC has been engaging with the community radio sector of Bangladesh for the last several years and activists and institutional representatives from Bangladesh have actively participated in AMARC platforms including the AMARC global conferences, regional assembly and meetings. The upcoming Round Table meeting is being organised to address the key opportunities and challenges that have emerged following the recent introduction of community radio policy in Bangladesh.

The issues to be addressed in the Dhaka Round Table range from 'reviewing of community radio policy of Bangladesh' to 'the role of community radio in facilitating economic development and poverty alleviation'; from 'gender equity and women's rights in the context of community radio' to 'impact assessment of community radio'. It will also look at developing a general plan of action plan for supporting the community radio sector of Bangladesh in the short and medium term.

Community radio activists of Bangladesh along with representatives of the Ministry of Information of the Government of Bangladesh, journalists and representatives of NGOs and donor organisations that support development of community radio in Bangladesh will be participating in the Round Table meeting. AMARC will be represented by Steve Buckley, President of AMARC International, Ashish Sen, Vice president for AMARC Asia Pacific region, representative of the AMARC-Women International Network (WIN) and community radio activists from India and Nepal.

AMARC is organising the Round Table meeting in collaboration with Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio & Communication (BNNRC) and Mass-line Media Centre and the initiative is being supported by UNESCO-Bangladesh and KATALYST.

To participate or to receive further information about the Dhaka Round Table, please contact:

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Mr. Kamrul Hasan Monju, Executive Director, Mass-line Media Centre (MMC), Bangladesh, massline@bangla.net; phones: +880 (2) 9125077 and 8123446

For more information, please visit www.amarc.org or contact Marcelo Solervicens, Secretary General, AMARC International, email: secgen@si.amarc.org or Suman Basnet, Regional Coordinator, AMARC Asia Pacific, Kathmandu, Nepal; email: suman@wlink.com.np.

AMARC RADIO FORUM FOR G8 STARTS IN JAPAN

July 4 2008 Sapporo, Japan. AMARC Japan Working Group and CR journalists from all regions of AMARC, including Pulsar News Agency, have started the Radio Forum in Sapporo, Japan to cover alternative civil society activities as well as the official G8 summit, which is scheduled to be held from July 7-9, 2008 in Hokkaido.

The Radio Forum is based at the citizens media centre buildings in the city of Sapporo and surroundings of Lake Toya, where the 8 world "leaders" will meet and chat. The G8 members are Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, the United States of America, Canada (since 1976) and Russia (since 1998). Together, these countries represent about 65% of the world economy. The European Commission is also represented at all the meetings. The annual summits are the most visible elements of the G8 process.

The radio programmes will be broadcast through local community radio stations and live-streamed on the G8 Radio Forum website <http://www.g8-radioforum2008.org>. Furthermore, at the AMARC webpage, you may listen to pod cast or download multilingual audio files in English, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Korean, Thai, and Japanese to broadcast them to your communities.

Through service to members, networking and project implementation, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters AMARC, brings together a network of more than 4,000 community radios, Federations and community media stakeholders in more than 115 countries. The main global impact of AMARC since its creation in 1983 has been to accompany and support the establishment of a worldwide community radio sector that has democratized the media sector. AMARC advocates for the right to communicate at the international, national, local and neighbourhood levels, defends, and promotes the interests of the community radio movement through solidarity, networking and cooperation.

For further information visit <http://www.amarc.org>

By Sharon Bhagwan Rolls

Introduction – The Story Thus Far:

When trying to take stock and stay abreast of the development of community radio in the Pacific Island region, in my role as Vice President of the AMARC Asia Pacific Board it is clearly a challenge. With the diversity of the political and geographical realities in our region, it is not as easy as “googling the web” or “sending out an email”, even to the Pacific based regulatory authorities. While, we as Pacific people enjoy sharing stories, we are clearly hindered in many ways to make information available, I am still wondering why!!



Nonetheless, since I began development to establish our own community radio station in 2003, I have become acutely aware that there is a critical need to evaluate and understand the definition of community radio, based on the principles promoted by AMARC and to define and categorize the range of radio stations – whether it is campus radio, training stations, religious or faith based stations and of course, “small stations” which still broadcast mainstream programming with a commercial base, or Pacific content based stations created by the Pacific communities in cities such as Auckland and Sydney.

In October 2005 Pacific Forum Leaders through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat¹, the main political decision making body of the region, adopted and developed the implementation of the Pacific Plan², a regional road map designed to enhance regional cooperation in the key areas of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. The Pacific Plan also includes a Digital Strategy which recognizes the potential of ICT to contribute to the aspirations and goals of Pacific peoples, while also acknowledging the need to overcome major obstacles to ICT development, including: poor access in rural and remote areas; limited access to the global ICT backbone; shortages in human resources and high costs.

¹ The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is a regional inter-governmental agency which assists Pacific Island governments formulate and implement policies on a number of key development sectors for the Pacific Island region, in particular economics and trade, security and communications. Australia and New Zealand Governments are key members of PIFS. The 14 Pacific Island Member countries of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat are: Cook Islands, Federated State of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

² The Pacific Plan is a regional plan being coordinated by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The Pacific Plan emerged from recommendations from Pacific Leaders at the 2005 Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Auckland, New Zealand and is designed to strengthen regional cooperation and integration under core themes for the region established by the Leaders: economic growth (which includes the Digital Strategy), Sustainable Development, Good Governance and Security. There has been limited engagement with civil society, especially at community level, in the development of this plan. (See www.pacificplan.org).

The Forum Secretariat with the CROP ICT Working Group³ has developed a Digital Strategy Roadmap for the delivery and implementation of the Pacific Regional Digital Strategy. The Digital Strategy has highlighted the objectives and priorities for the region.

According to the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, all stakeholders – from national ICT advisory committees, regional organisations and the donor community need to play a role in ensuring that ICT policies and plans are well supported and are relevant to all sectors of the community, “When you get right down to it, this sector is, after all, about empowerment.”⁴

This recognition at a political level is critical, especially for women and civil society groups, who will need to constantly remind policy makers that these promises of empowerment through ICTs have been made. It is particularly important for women who are still struggling to take their rightful place as legitimate stakeholders to ensure that whatever technology and media forms are utilized, will meet the needs of not only the private sector, information-technology professionals, the national planning offices, but also the needs of women, the majority of whom are in rural communities, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

A Growing Interest

I have to say, there is a growing interest in the establishment of models akin to femLINKPACIFIC’s station, to reach out to rural and remote communities.

Over the past few years, with my involvement with AMARC, I have purposefully tried to undertake a stock-take, of just what is out there across the diverse Pacific region, this is all that I have found so far:

- In the Solomon Islands through a UNDP project, which accessed the UN’s Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF), there has been an establishment of eight community FM stations with HF digital email systems in the island of Isabel last year. It was a project designed to help improve governance by enabling and empowering people with access to email and then having community control of the FM radio waves to share, amplify, and listen to each other. The stations also use the suitcase radio model from Wantok Enterprises in Canada. All the stations use 100-watt transmitters and they have coverage of about 20km from an antenna perched on a 20-meter high mast.
- In Fiji, the Suva based Community Education Training Centre established a community radio station several years ago, which is used to train women in the use and operation of a radio studio through their community development programme – both in programming (including editing) and in broadcasting (operation of the studio).
- In Vanuatu CREST FM initially established with assistance from UNICEF broadcasts on an outlying island to the local community.

Transforming the Regulatory Framework:

³ The ICT Working group is comprised of ICT specialists of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) who include the Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Islands Development Program, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, South Pacific Tourism Organisation and University of the South Pacific

⁴ Speech by Mr. Greg Urwin, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Pacific Islands ICT Ministerial Meeting, 30 March 2006.

In the 2004, Pacific Media and Communication Facility Situational Analysis Needs Assessment report⁵ revealed that in most of the 14 Pacific Island countries the development of appropriate telecommunications regulation and policy remains in an embryonic stage with much hinging on the Pacific Islands Regional Digital Strategy and national endeavours by each Pacific island country to develop a national ICT Policy.

Our experience in femLINKPACIFIC is that expanding a sole women's community radio initiative has been a slow process primarily because, in the Pacific Island region, an outdated telecommunications framework exists and there is a need to update legislation by government on community media, including community broadcasting. Appropriate legislative provision including license fees and a restructuring of the existing



regulatory framework, is needed for new, diverse media producers to emerge in the Pacific, using ICTs now available.

The reality of the Pacific Island region's ICT needs has to be considered in any forum addressing ICT development and existing challenges. These range from the lack of telecommunication infrastructure, including access to telephones and fax services, lack of access to computers and the internet, and the need to establish or strengthen existing media and especially to build the capacity of community based women's media networks.

Pacific Governments and national women's machineries must also recognize that they must render better policy support to women's media initiatives, especially in the negotiation of an appropriate regulatory framework to enable ongoing advocacy on community media, which can provide greater opportunity for women to take the media into their own hands. There is the urgency for broader collaboration and partnership to address the range of outstanding issues.

Clearly, the starting point to establish a consistent basis for the further development of community is ensuring a harmonized regulatory framework addressing licensing, content and community based operations.

I have, in various forums, recommended the following steps to enable the necessary regulatory environment:

- Pacific Island Regulators are assisted to review and update their broadcast legislation to ensure a category for community broadcasting (radio and television)
- The new legislation will ensure that community radio broadcasters are only required to pay for the broadcast spectrum fee, and if necessary a minimal operating or administration fee
- Pacific Island Regulators allocate a set of frequencies for their community radio network
- Pacific Island Regulators assist in facilitating technical support through existing Telcos or National Broadcasters as part of a 'community service' provision

⁵ Sourced from AUS-Aid funded Pacific Media and Communications Facility situation analysis and needs assessment (SANA) which assesses *the capacity* of the media, government and civil society sectors to promote good governance through the media. The Pacific Island countries included in the survey are: the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

About femLINKPACIFIC's Community Radio Initiative:

The establishment of our community radio initiative takes into account that the deregulation of the radio industry in the mid-1980s and public sector reforms from 1990 onwards resulted in a transformation of the radio field. Due to reduced government funding, radio automation has led to reduced staff numbers rather than a more efficient or public service-driven programming.

The technical advances have produced more benefits for the commercial advertisers rather than better outreach or content for public information and communications. While 'jukebox' music formats are the main feature of commercial radio stations, the public service broadcast format has continuously failed to reflect and uphold gender equality commitments by the state. It was of critical concern that neither the Department of Women nor the two biggest national women's networks - the National Council of Women and the Soqosoqo Vakamarama- had been consulted in the development of the public service broadcast content or ongoing review of programming quotas.

Subsequently, without consistent and progressive media initiatives and little participatory radio production initiatives, women and their issues, remain relegated to the patriarchal context of recipes, entertainment news, and nothing too radical which may challenge the status quo reflecting the patriarchy of traditional decision-making structures which have continued to impede rather than assist women from communicating publicly on matters of concern to them.

In response to this reality, femLINKPACIFIC has established a small mobile radio station, femTALK 89.2FM. This 'radio in a suitcase' travels out to women and their communities, offering women a 'safe space' to articulate and exchange their viewpoints. Using a low-power transmitter, femLINKPACIFIC encourages women to speak to each other and with their communities. As a way to implement the station's slogan, 'Women speaking to women for peace' the mobile broadcasts feature pre-produced audio reports and interviews recorded as live in local language and featuring an English translation. femTALK 89.2FM is about community empowerment; it is about taking radio to women in their local communities; it is about enabling women to have a voice, share an opinion about a range of social, economic and political issues. It is an opportunity for the women to be heard by local leaders from those in local government to the leadership of district and provincial councils, who remain predominantly men.

By December 2007 after conducting more than 40 women's weekend broadcasts in Suva, 11 rural broadcasts in Fiji, producing 12 community videos, more than 36 monthly Enews bulletins in addition to 12 editions of our regional and national publication femTALK and numerous national and regional media and policy action alerts, femLINKPACIFIC has demonstrated the possibility of working at a range of levels to contribute to bringing about a change in the political and decision making sphere in Fiji and in the Pacific Island region.

From documentation within communities—to strengthening local networking and partnerships—and to serve as a channel of communication to policy makers as well as the mainstream media and other women and peace networks; we have been able to increase the visibility of Pacific women's experiences from national to international level—by being an available women's, peace-based media outlet or clearing house.

In Fiji, we are now working to establish a national community radio network, to build on our pilot initiatives and to expand our network of rural correspondents who are being equipped and resourced to remain a critical link between our Suva based community media centre and rural communities.

At a regional level, we are also working to strengthen our regional women's media network on Women, Peace and Human Security with our partners who include the Buka (Bougainville) based non-government organisation, Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency, Vois Blong Mere Solomon and the Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc in Tonga.

Our rural and regional network continues to use appropriate ICTs to receive and transmit information from Suva to New York to London to ensure relevant agencies and partners are aware of the developments on the ground, in our fragile states.

The current strategy, undertaken by femLINKPACIFIC to forge partnerships with municipal authorities (local government) to stage our rural broadcasts has been a positive partnership. There is clearly a growing acknowledgement of not only the pro-people and pro-poor aspect of our work, but that we are also providing alternative media coverage of development issues, one that is founded on a commitment to being part of a constitutional return to parliamentary democracy, by providing a channel for the voices which are not heard enough – that is rural women and their communities, including those in formal and informal leadership.

Partnerships to assist Pacific Communities:

Clearly, there is a role for AMARC to contribute to the further development of community radio, commencing with assistance to provide Pacific Island Governments with appropriate legislative framework templates as well as assisting Pacific communities in the development of policies and programme, and technical assistance. This is the partnership needed to help Pacific communities connect with their decision makers and to the rest of the world.

Ms. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls is the Coordinator of femLINKpacific, Media Initiative for Women, Fiji; she can be reached at sharon@femlinkpacific.org.fj.

The full article on “Community Radio in the Pacific – What’s the Story?” by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls is available on request. Please write to: suman@wlink.com.np.

**KOREA'S FIRST ELDERLY PEOPLE'S BROADCASTING SYSTEM
'INTER-BLUE', BEGINS**

**By Joo Young Kim,
Editorial Board Member of ACT!**

Many elderly people have trouble starting new projects. The lack of social support and negative reaction experienced when they initiate something may be part of the reason. However, regardless of these difficulties, there are some elderly people taking matters into their own hands. They are the members of Inter-Blue, who are creating a broadcasting system to make their voices heard.

'Kwanak Inter-Blue (100.3MHz)' is a broadcasting program managed by the elderly, for the elderly and of the elderly. The colours most associated with elderly are usually grey or white, but Inter-Blue represents youth. Elderly people can experience a youthful vitality of creation through broadcasting themselves.

Inter-Blue started as a media education project for old people with the premise of developing an example of media education to tackle media inequality. It also sought to reinvigorate the management of the independent broadcasting system, based on various class and regional identities. For almost a year, activists from Kwanak community radio met with elderly people in a computer room of the Kwanak Senior Citizens Welfare Centre for educational workshops. The activists and elderly citizens encountered difficulties along the way, partly because this was the first radio media education project for elderly in Korea. In addition, learning new technology can be difficult for some elderly people. However, they overcame these challenges and finished the workshop successfully. Based on this education, they had their first live broadcast for two hours on March 12th. During the broadcast the elderly conducted, every part of the broadcasting processes themselves — engineering, scripting, announcing, etc. They had their own unique style of broadcasting and received a good response from listeners.

Broadcasting is a very difficult endeavour, but it allows one to share their story freely with other people. The benefits are well worth the difficulties and having overcome many difficulties in broadcasting, the producers of Inter-Blue realise its value very well. After a brief opening ceremony, they have begun their real work. We hope that they will be able to share their ideas with many generations through their broadcasting and create a meaningful media experience. In addition, we hope that they find whatever they need to enjoy their lives.

Source: MEDIATE's Newsletter [inter-ACT!] #15 - May. 16th, 2008; Translated from Korean by Jeffrey Lazar; [inter-ACT!] is a monthly English newsletter by MEDIATE, a media centre based in Seoul, South KOREA. It aims to connect the media and communication movements in South Korea with those in other places; <http://www.mediact.org>.

WOMEN'S RADIO STATION IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR IN HERAT

By Morgan Williams
Internews-Afghanistan

How does a small women's station survive in a large Afghan city? "It's not as hard as it seems," says Sima Ahmadi, the Acting Manager of Radio Sahar, in Herat, Afghanistan's western hub. "We were the first independent radio station to set up in Herat, and earned a loyal audience early on. We are a women-run station but we air programs that appeal to different audiences- women, youth and so on. We don't have marketing department, quite often the advertisers come to us."

Radio Sahar just celebrated International Women's Day by airing daily messages about women's rights and special coverage of Women's Day events across the city. The station was established in 2003 with assistance from IMPACS and Internews, and now broadcasts thirteen hours a day.

"There is a Persian saying: After every dark night comes a bright morning. After ten years of pain for women under the Taliban, we hope there are better times."

Estorai Karimi, Radio Sahar staff member



Estorai Karimi is a Producer at Radio Sahar, a women-run station in Herat

Radio Sahar

broadcasts in a competitive environment. Herat boasts at least 11 other radio stations, including national broadcasters and local stations. Television stations also continue to mushroom in Herat, with around eight stations currently broadcasting locally. Iranian entertainment and religious programs beam in from across the border.

Despite the competition, research shows that Radio Sahar is the fifth most popular station in the city, outranking larger national broadcasters.

Radio Sahar's modest second story premises in downtown Herat is immaculately organized, with programming schedules, staff rosters, pigeonholes and neat files. "We've been to media outlets run by men," Estorai Karimi jokes, "They are a lot messier and noisier."

Of the station's sixteen staff, only four are men. However, the male staffs deal with many of the technical issues emerging at the station. A survey of women broadcasters carried out by Nai, Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan at the end of 2007 showed that while women's voices are increasingly on-air, and women

journalists are increasingly engaged in field reporting, women's technical capacity at radio stations remains minimal. In response, Nai plans to carry out technical training for women broadcasters like Radio Sahar.

Source: Internews Afghanistan Newsletter - March 2008; <http://www.internews.org/>

NEW BOOK "BROADCASTING, VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY" AVAILABLE

The World Bank marked World Press Freedom Day by launching a study outlining conditions under which radio, television and online broadcasting can fulfil a vital role in development by making governments accountable, and giving voice to the world's poor.

*"Huge numbers of people, including those who can't read, have access to broadcast media," said Kreszentia Duer, of the World Bank Institute (WBI), who presented the study, **Broadcasting, Voice and Accountability**, at a conference on freedom of expression hosted by UNESCO. "In countries with strong oral traditions, community broadcasting can enable people to share information and raise issues with a large audience, and hold government officials to account. This makes broadcasting a powerful tool for enhancing governance and promoting development."*

The 400-page study, subtitled **A Public Interest Approach to Policy, Law and Regulation**, is the result of five years of research by six media experts, including Ms. Duer, Steve Buckley, president of the World Association of Community Broadcasters; Toby Mendel, ARTICLE 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression; Seán Ó Siochrú, founder of the Campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society; Monroe E. Price, of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania; and Marc Raboy, of Canada's McGill University.

This book provides guidelines, tools, and real world examples to help assess and reform the enabling environment for media development that serves public interest goals. It builds on a growing awareness of the role of media and voice in the promotion of transparent and accountable governance, in the empowerment of people to better exercise their rights and hold leaders to account; and in support of equitable development including improved livelihoods, health, and access to education. The book provides development practitioners with an overview of the key policy and regulatory issues involved in supporting freedom of information and expression and enabling independent public service media. Country examples illustrate how these norms have been institutionalized in various contexts.

For more information, please visit:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/WBI/0,,contentMDK:21747844~pagePK:209023~piPK:207535~theSitePK:213799,00.html>

NEWS IN BRIEF

NFCB Salutes the 25th Anniversary of AMARC

The National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB) opened its annual conference with an acknowledgment of AMARC's 25th anniversary. Steve Buckley, AMARC's president, addressed the conference at the opening session, telling participants about the philosophy and scope of work of AMARC work over its lifetime. NFCB president and CEO Carol Pierson presented him with a commemorative plaque for AMARC.

AMARC 25th Anniversary Activities

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters activities in 2008 will be marked by the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of AMARC.

AMARC members and Community Radio Stakeholders are organizing activities to celebrate, reflect on lessons learned and on how to strengthen the social impact of Community Radio to combat poverty, exclusion and voicelessness and to promote social justice and sustainable, democratic and participatory human development. The International Conference in Bogotá was the first of a series of the activities highlighting the 25th anniversary of AMARC, to be held in all AMARC regions of its global network during 2008.

To know more about AMARC 25th Anniversary please go to <http://www.amarc.org>

The Policy Committee of AMARC and the Challenge of Building Enabling Environments for Community Radios

The Policy Committee of AMARC held a face-to-face meeting on March 1st in Bogotá, Colombia. The Policy Committee was formed by the International Board of Directors to make recommendations for policy definitions on reinforcing enabling legislation and policies for community radio and on defending the right to communicate to the AMARC International Board. For more information, please go to: http://www.amarc.org/index.php?p=AMARCLink_Vol_12_No_2-en

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