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Women International Network (WIN) Special



AMARC9: AMPLIFYING WOMEN'S VOICES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

By Bianca Miglioretto

November 12, 2006 - the second day of the AMARC 9 conference in Amman, Jordan was dedicated to “Amplifying Women's Voices for Gender Equality.” Maria Victoria Cabrera Balleza, the international vice-president for the Women's International Network (WIN) of AMARC opened the day by asking the crucial questions: “Is the negative portrayal and the under-representation of women in decision making not reproduced in Community Radio? Can we honestly say that we are exerting every effort and making use of all available resources to enable women to have access to and participate in Community Radio?” The latter question was already answered by the fact that only about 20 percent of the participants in this important community radio event were women. The first question was answered among others by Bianca Miglioretto from Isis International-Manila who presented a survey that Isis conducted among women community radio broadcasters in the Asia Pacific: “Women occupy only 30 percent of the leadership positions in community radio in this region. Accordingly, the training priorities women highlighted are management and decision making skills, besides technical and production skills.”

Other important issues discussed during the AMARC 9 conference were Media Freedom and Social Justice, Communication Rights and Advocacy, Community Media facing Conflict and Peace Building, Removing the Barriers to Women's Communication, Bridging the Urban/Rural Communication Divide, Community Media and Poverty Reduction, Building our Movement, News Networking and Program Exchange.



Community radio practitioners and stakeholders from all over the world explored ways to remove barriers and increase the efficiency of community radio. They completed the first phase of the participatory action research process that helped update the challenges to community radio. The participants denounced the absence of proper legislative environments and the need to continue to lobby for community radio recognition at all levels.

Between official plenary sessions and workshops, a lot of regional and smaller networking meetings took place to plan future collaboration and discuss the Plan of Action of AMARC. In one such gathering of the AMARC-WIN for the Asia-Pacific, women agreed that a production, training and sharing conference on “Women in Community Radio for Civil Society Building in Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Situations” would be very important for women in the region to learn from each other’s experiences and share those with the respective radio audiences. The conference also explored media freedom in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region resulting in the establishment of a 10-member working group to support the development of community radio in the MENA region.

On the last day participants visited the historic place of Petra, where Save the Independent

Radio Movement of Nepal and Radio Sagarmatha, the pioneering Kathmandu-based community radio were awarded the AMARC International Solidarity Prize 2006 in recognition of their outstanding work in defense of human rights and democracy in Nepal. (Source: WE! by Isis International; Photo credit: Nadia Bellardi)

WOMEN MAKING AIRWAVES FOR PEACE

- Training program on Community Radio and Peace Building in the Philippines

By Bianca Miglioretto

Isis International-Manila and the Mindanao Women Writers (Min-WoW) - a local women's organization that is based in Mindanao in the South of the Philippines, conducted a training program on Community Radio and Peace Building in the Cagayan de Oro City from 25 to 29 October 2006.

Fifteen women representing community based NGOs, media organizations, LGUs, universities and grassroots organizations attended the training. The program consisted of radio production skills, engendered peace journalism, trauma-sensitive and respectful reporting about survivors, and self-care strategies for women journalists to guarantee their rights and well being.



Fierce and/or remnants of violent conflicts between the resistance and the Philippine military and amongst warring armed factions (i.e. private/clan armies, etc.) remain a permanent challenge to sustainable development in Mindanao. Women and children are particularly faced with a never ending spiral of violence. Min-WoW has long expressed its voice against the usual coverage of the conflicts in Northwestern and Central Mindanao by mainstream media, which is limited to war-reportage that mostly consists of the numbers of

fatalities and clashes encounters count, instead of reportage from a peace perspective where peace talks and peace initiatives are given as much importance. At the same time, women's voice is often silenced and their status is reduced to that of victims only by the mainstream and most of the alternative media sector. They fail to recognize women as potential or active participants and contributors to conflict resolution. In addition to this, survivors of violent conflict often experience the contact with the media as re-traumatizing and reportages disrespectful. Journalists are often found to be ill equipped in terms skills for dealing with the traumatized survivors. Community based journalists are exposed to a lot of suffering and violence which also affects them and calls for the need of self-care strategies.

All the above issues were addressed in the training program. At the end of the program, participants put the skills and knowledge acquired from the training in to practice by producing radio plugs on cultural diversity and on culture of peace. The three radio plugs that originated from the first workshop were broadcasted by the different radio stations / radio programs that the participants represented.

A very important aspect of the training program was the interaction that took place among participants -- sharing their experiences with the media, and reflecting upon their own media

work from a perspective of engendered peace journalism. Another important aspect was the motivation and creativity with which the participants produced the radio plugs. This was the first workshop that Isis and Min-WoW had organized jointly and it turned out to be a very positive learning process for both. As one participant put it, "Min-WoW and Isis seem like a perfect couple -- Min-WoW brings in local knowledge and peace journalism and Isis contributes communications skills. Together they bring a strong gender perspective, which is so important for this work."

Two more training programs will be conducted by Isis and Min-WoW in Mindanao in February and April 2007. The training modules will be uploaded in the Isis website by June 2007. Isis International Manila is happy to share this kind of training with other organizations in Asia Pacific. For more information visit the Isis website www.isiswomen.org or contact bianca@isiswomen.org.

(Photo credit: ISIS Manila)

Bianca Miglioretto is the Radio and Alternative Media Officer of Isis International-Manila and Vice President of AMAR-WIN for Asia Pacific. She can be reached at bianca@isiswomen.org

Fiji Islands:

SUITCASE RADIO BRINGS WOMEN'S VOICES OUT OF THE MARGINS

In the island nation of Fiji, Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls is known as a "suitcase radio" pioneer. As founder of the non-governmental organization femLINKpacific, she has enabled women's voices and perspectives to be heard by political leaders using a simple mobile radio kit, reports OpenDemocracy.

Initiated in 2004, the "suitcase radio" project focuses on community empowerment on the basis that unless women in rural communities are given a voice, their views will never be taken seriously by those in power.

A mobile radio station, broadcast locally using a low-power transmitter, offers a space for women to articulate and exchange their viewpoints on issues such as national reconciliation, a topic that Fiji has been grappling with in the wake of the 2000 coup that bitterly divided the country. "If you are a sixty year old woman, or a single mother in a Fijian village being asked for the first time, what do you think? - this is an important process," says Bhagwan-Rolls.

Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls is also in the board of AMARC Asia Pacific. She can be reached at femlinkpac@connect.com.fj. Read the full story:http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-resolution_1325/fiji_3615.jsp

What is AMARC-WIN

The Women's International Network is a large assembly of women's communicators working to ensure women's Right to communicate through and within the community radio movement.

What are WIN's main principles?

- WIN works for women's Right to communicate as a basic human right expressed through community radio.
- WIN supports women's empowerment, gender equity, and a general improvement in the condition and position of women worldwide.
- WIN promotes women's access to all levels of community radio, including decision making.
- WIN supports women's efforts to express themselves within and beyond their communities, by providing training programs and production exchanges at the international and local level.
- WIN aims to change negative images of both women and men in the media and to challenge stereotypes being reproduced by media all around the world.
- WIN subscribe to the principles of the Beijing Platform for Action.

How does WIN work?

WIN chooses a Vice President for Women to sit on AMARC's International Board, and WIN members are prominent in decision-making throughout AMARC.

For the latest activities of AMARC WIN, please visit AMARC WIN Website:

<http://win.amarc.org/> or contact Ms. Bianca Miglioretto, WIN Vice President for Asia Pacific, email: bianca@isiswomen.org

BANGLADESH:

Community Radio Movement in Bangladesh: Problems & Potentials

The proliferation and awareness regarding Community Radio (CR) is on the rise all over this world, especially in the developing regions. Even in this age of high end information and communication technologies, the concept of total community participation based cost-effective and indigenous CR networks has proved its sustainable worth.

In Bangladesh, the CR movement is at a very promising yet critical stage. Different NGOs (BNNRC, YPSA, MMC etc), civil society groups, journalists, intellectuals and other concerned entities of this country are putting continuous and ardent effort in order to come up with a CR friendly regulatory environment through appropriate government regulations. Different international development agencies (i.e. UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF etc.) have also showed their interests in helping the GoB and all concerned parties in this regard. Just last year, "National Consultation on Community Radio" was organized with the goal of bringing all the like minded people of CR movement together and also for coming up with a common working plan.

In another development, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has recently permitted a couple of urban FM stations to operate within the Dhaka metropolitan area and within a few days, they became very popular for their interactivity and program contents. But as the GoB is yet to finalize on the draft of the National Broadcasting Act, this kind of liberalization move can have a mixed impact in the overall promising radio broadcasting sector. In one hand, the act of giving away FM licenses without proper policies (both regulatory and spectrum management) in place can set a precedence of non-transparent radio licensing system, which can certainly be susceptible to corruption, nepotism and whimsical political ploy. On the other hand, opening up the airwave for commercial FM can be treated as a first step towards further liberalization. One idea is to apply for urban FM stations in other big cities around Bangladesh and try to develop program contents related to the urban community based problems within those areas. Especially in the regional cities, this type of program production policy can try to take advantage of the best of both the sectors, the commercial appeal of the entertainment industry and also the popular demand to cover localized social problems, one of the corner stone of actual community radio broadcasting.

There are other dimensions from socio-technological point of view that need to be looked into in Bangladesh. Till now, no pilot or field study in a substantial scale has been commenced here as far as the case of true participatory based CR service is concerned. A clear structure of human resource development for CR station management and operations is yet to be proposed and implemented. The synergy between CR & ICT or CR & cellular phones is another promising aspect for further research. Moreover, the crucial factor of ensuring the sustainability of a Bangladeshi CR solution needs to be look into. At the policy level more liberalization is also required as the GoB didn't include the radio broadcasting equipments for CR in the group of "very low to zero tax" imported ICT hardware, thus making it very hard to keep the price of the potential CR setups at a lower level.

The great demand for proper and localized information dissemination especially at the rural level does project a very bright prospect for CR based network in Bangladesh. But in order to fulfill those promises, the above mentioned and many more issues are required to be dealt with. Only then this country will be able to benefit from the full potential of Community Radio.

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INDIA:

Community Media Centre Initiative in Uttaranchal, India
Empowering rural villagers to improve their lives via community radio

What began as a small initiative to create audio recordings of the local histories of the hills of the northern Indian State of Uttaranchal, is today a community movement that caters to information needs of several villages. Community members are producers of knowledge and are managing fully functional community media

production centers. Over the past two years several capacity building workshops were held under the UNESCO supported Equal Access-Ideosync Media Combine initiative to help the creation of community networks where information was locally produced and locally managed. Today two CMCs are functioning in Bhanaj (District Rudraprayag) and in Chamba (District Tehri Garhwal) and three more are in the waiting.

"I think I will have to distribute sweets at the satellite broadcast launch... we have been waiting to show the community that the recordings we were doing will be broadcast and this is our deliverance. And now we cannot eat, drink or sleep without Community Radio. It has become so much a part of our lives."

-Young woman radio producer at the program launch in Uttarakhand

In April 2005, fifteen young community members from Bhanaj and Chamba and neighboring villages, began preparing for the day when India would open its' air waves for community radio. With unshakable faith that this day would come, the youth eagerly participated in trainings on radio production skills under a UNESCO funded capacity building initiative.



After participating in a series of workshops to learn script-writing, drama design, interviewing skills, editing, and techniques on producing field sound montage, women, men and youth from several villages are collectively designing and producing radio programs that effectively address issues prioritized by their communities at the grassroots level, such as health concerns, youth issues, educational opportunities, women's empowerment, agriculture and animal husbandry.

These innovative young producers are broadcasting their programming on Equal Access' Asia Development Satellite Radio Service directly to 38 satellite receivers distributed in their surrounding villages. After each broadcast, community-based leaders trained by the CMC Initiative facilitate listening and discussion groups around the vital issues raised by the radio programming. The establishment of a Community Media Centers in Chamba and in Bhanaj, replete with a rudimentary sound studio, recording rooms and mini-disc recorders is a direct result of this capacity building initiative. These community studios are now considered to be one of the most cost effective community recording spaces built in Uttarakhand and many NGOs in the region have requested technical support to set up similar community facilities in other areas.

Previously, rural Uttarakhand communities had very limited access to any radio - let alone radio that addressed their specific information needs - but now they enjoy a range of programs that address their most important priorities. With the establishment of regular and reliable communication among the remote villages, residents are empowered to develop ways to improve their lives through collective knowledge and discourse. CMC members have also set up an interactive feedback loop process ensuring that grassroots community needs for information and

education are given the highest priority. In the very near future the programs will also be broadcast on the two local cable television networks, increasing the outreach of the programs to homes with the cable connection.

The Community Media Centers are poised to expand their strong community-based model to the FM air waves and hope to hold their own license in the near future as a result of the timely news of the Government of India's formal approval of guidelines on November 16, 2006 permitting community radio stations in India.

Equal Access' India program is implemented in partnership with Ideosync Media Combine, an Indian not-for-profit development communications group. Equal Access has worked with the principals of Ideosync since 2002 on a range of development communications activities, including community radio in India and beyond.

For more information on Equal Access' programs in India executed in partnership with Ideosync Media Combine, please contact: Ms. Venu Arora, South Asia Regional Coordinator at varora@equalaccess.org; varora@ideosyncmedia.org

COMMUNITY RADIO RESOURCES

A. Join cr-india -- A list on community radio in India

cr-india is a India Community Radio issues discussion list. Coverage of topics include community as well as public service contexts. The list also is used to update people on emerging trends in the Radio sector in India.

To see the collection of prior postings to the list, visit the [cr-india Archives](#).

To post a message to all the list members, send email to cr-india@sarai.net.

Subscribe to cr-india by connecting to the following link:
<https://mail.sarai.net/mailman/listinfo/cr-india>.

B. New AMIC books dealing with community radio

The Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) has released a new book entitled **Public Service Broadcasting in the Age of Globalization**. The book includes a number of chapters that detail how community radio, in the light of reduced government support for public service broadcasters, has been moving in to fill the public service role. [Click here](#) for details and ordering information, or visit AMIC's website at www.amic.org.sg. Another new AMIC title in production is **Media Pluralism in Asia: The role and impact of alternative media**. This book, to be released in the first quarter of 2007, will explore alternative media in eight Asian countries, including coverage of the impact and role of community radio.

C. Linux Radio Suite Powers Independent Broadcasters

13 December, 2006. Community radio stations in Sierra Leone and in other emerging democracies may well soon be powered by Campcaster 1.1, free and open source software that turns a PC running the free Linux operating system into an essential tool for radio broadcasting.

Campcaster 1.1, code-named "Freetown", was released last week by developers Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF).

MDLF's Douglas Arellanes says Campcaster 1.1 was built with conditions in difficult environments such as Sierra Leone in mind. It provides very stable play out and, because it runs on Linux, there are fewer problems with viruses, spy-ware and malware.

"Campcaster provides features that used to be only available in extremely expensive commercial radio systems," says Sava Tatić, Managing Director of the Media Development Loan Fund's Center for Advanced Media, Prague (CAMP), which coordinates the Campware Initiative. "We believe there is a strong north-south aspect to using and extending Campcaster," Tatić says. "Every time a station in North America or Europe adapts and extends Campcaster, stations in places like Sierra Leone benefit."

The tools are all free and available for download at the Campware website at www.campware.org. Developers can visit the developers' page at <http://code.campware.org/projects/campcaster>.

For the full article, please visit: <http://www.tectonic.co.za/view.php?id=1314>

D. AMISnet technical cooperation service for community radios:

AMISnet, since 2003 has launched a technical cooperation service for community radios around the world.

Thanks to agreements with two Italian firms (DB Elettronica from Padova and Axel Technology from Bologna), we can provide a full range of *Hi Fi* (transmitters, excitors, antenna systems, effects) and *Low Fi* material (mixing desks, telephone hybrids, etc.) at "community" prices, with discounts up to the 20% of the official catalogue prices. Thanks to the experience made in these years helping several community radios worldwide (in Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone), media Centers (in Jordan and OTP), and international organizations (Institut Panos Afrique de l'Ouest, AMARC, "Association Vive le Paysan"), we have developed the capacity of advising radio stations and providing the best solutions for configuring, installing and renewing mobile (fully customizable on demand) and fixed radio studios.

Please contact Enrico Saccone (AMISnet technician) enrico.s@amisnet.org, if you need help or advice in any of the above mentioned.

E. Join Creative-Radio e-mail list:

The Creative-Radio e-mail list <http://www.yahogroups.com/list/creative-radio> is an independent forum for people active in or interested in the use of radio in development, in particular promoting public health, improved education, protection of the environment, improved livelihoods, good governance and conflict mitigation. Since it started in 1996, Creative-Radio has been in the forefront of radio's resurgence as a tool for social change and peace-building, and it helps promote best practice in these areas.

Creative Radio's public, keyword searchable, archives of over 9,000 postings are open to anyone via <http://www.yahogroups.com/list/creative-radio>. Over 7,000 researchers have used these archives since September 2001. Currently, this text only email list has over 700 subscribers around the world.

To subscribe via e-mail, just send a blank message to:
creative-radio-subscribe@yahogroups.com

Creative-Radio does also have a "daily digest mode" which packages all postings for a day into one daily full text message. Detail instructions are included in the footer of every posting.

The list moderator is George Lessard media@web.net <http://mediamentor.ca>, a Canadian media activist involved in community access radio and television since the early 1970's.

For the latest from the community radio sector of Asia Pacific, please join the AMARC email list by following the link <http://lists.amarc.org/mailman/listinfo/asiapacific-general> OR just email to amarcap@wlink.com.np to have you subscribed to the list

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