

# Communication for All

**World Association for Christian Communication**



## WACC

# Strategic Plan 2012 - 2016

*Approved by the Board of Directors, Toronto, Canada 9 - 14 October 2011*

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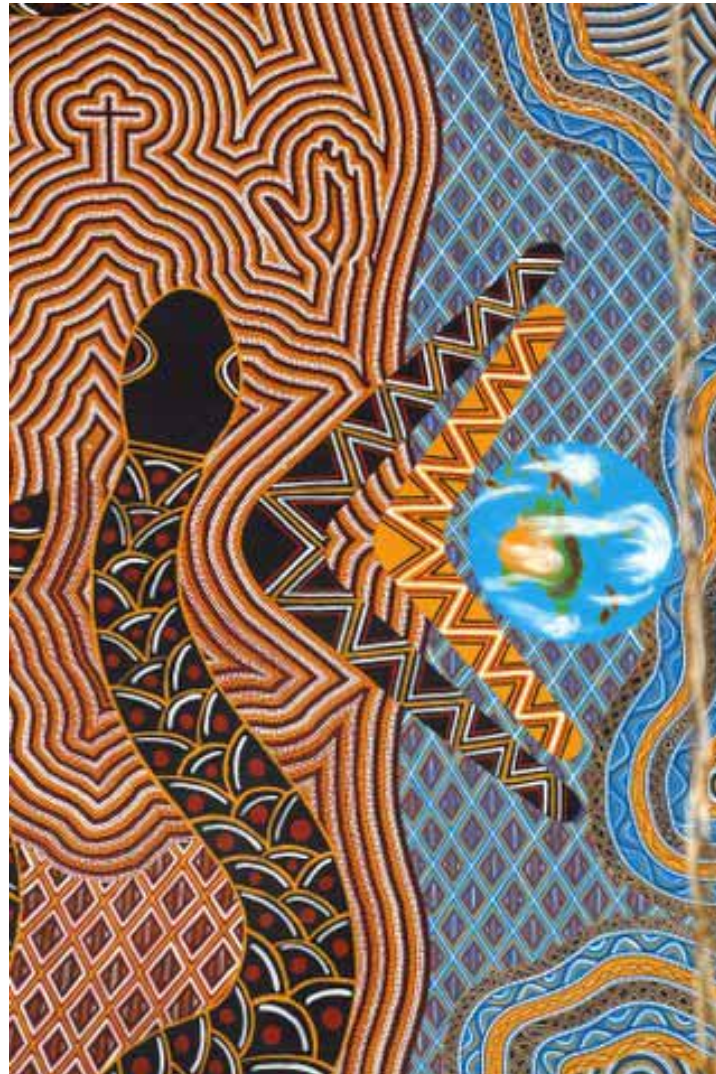
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# Strategic Plan 2012 - 2016

This strategic plan presents our vision and direction for WACC over the next five years, but it has the potential to catalyze changes well beyond the 2012 - 2016 period. The year 2013 will mark 50 years since the World Association for Christian Broadcasting - which became WACC - was created to “to provide a working fellowship of churches, agencies, organizations and persons concerned with the use of radio and television to proclaim the Christian Gospel in its relevance to the whole of life.” Born in 1963 at least partly as a response to the possibilities presented by television and video, a half century later WACC finds itself in yet another new world of communication possibilities and challenges.

By virtue of its communications mandate, WACC inhabits a world that has experienced



enormous and surprising change in the past decade. The strategic planning exercise that we have undertaken in 2011 has been an opportunity to take stock of our strengths

*Painting given to WACC by Australian indigenous artist Jeffrey Patterson. It shows WACC's double c's in the form of two boomerangs. The artist explained its meaning: "We are people from many different countries, but under the watchful eye of the Great Spirit we forget our differences and embrace as one, recognising the beauty each culture and individual has to offer."*

and weaknesses, name and reflect upon current world dynamics and trends that relate to social justice and communication, and to identify the positive social changes that we hope to contribute to in the coming years.

WACC itself has already experienced significant change in the past ten years, including a move from the UK which was home for the first 42 years. Programme priorities were rearranged and shifted



*Participants at the WACC partner Round Table held in Helsinki, Finland, 27-28 April 2011*

significantly in 2006. Our eight month strategic planning process has indicated that more changes are in order. While the 2007 - 2011 strategic plan looked at a focussing of program areas, it did not examine the fundamental identity, mission and structure of WACC. In that sense, this strategic plan delves into new territory that was not formally visited for some time by the board, membership, staff and other stakeholders of WACC. The findings, conclusions, and proposed changes regarding WACC's basic *raison d'être* are presented in the first part of this plan. This

includes important clarifications and decisions regarding our mandate, vision and constituency.

The second section of the plan focuses on what WACC plans to accomplish in the next five years and how to do it. Where can WACC make a difference based on it's historical strengths and the social justice challenges in communication? Strategic planning is about making choices. Many non-profits suffer from over-extension and over-reach, creating goals and program structures that allow them to claim a wide scope of work but that also prevent them from focussing on measurable results. One of the greatest challenges for WACC is to match financial and human resources with program goals. With our global mandate, eight regional associations, multiple funders and partners, WACC is highly susceptible to the temptation to be all things to all stakeholders. In this regard, it is helpful to remember lines from a prayer of the late Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero:

*It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.*

WACC has a mandate to promote communication for social change. Hopefully, this strategic plan will be a guiding tool to help WACC do something for justice, and to do it very well.

The impending end of the 2006 – 2011 strategic plan and the appointment of a new WACC General Secretary set the stage for the beginning of a new planning process in early 2011. Over the course of the next eight months, we engaged in a four phase process to arrive at a strategic plan.

### **Establishing Strategic Planning Parameters -**

**Phase I** of the process involved the identification of key questions and issues which WACC wanted to explore and establish a direction (See Appendix A for the main consultation document used throughout the process). During this phase, WACC also identified all its stakeholders and how these various groups would be consulted (See Appendix B for the WACC *Stakeholder Consultation Plan*).

### **Information Gathering and Environmental Scan**

**- Phase II** of the process involved carrying out the various consultations with WACC stakeholders. The high level of interest expressed through participation in the process demonstrates that WACC's members, partners, funders, board members, Regional Associations, and other stakeholders are committed to building a strong organization for the future. In total, approximately 20 consultations (meetings, roundtables, surveys) were held, including a number of virtual meetings via the Internet, involving nearly 500 people.



*Participants at the WACC-Asia consultation meeting held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 16-17 May 2011*

A further aspect of Phase II involved an environmental scan (ES). This scan examines the present environment in which WACC is operating- including the trends that have led to the present situation- and anticipates future trends that are likely to have an impact on WACC in the next five years and beyond. The ES examines internal factors that are at least to some extent controllable by WACC. In essence, the scan paints the strengths and weaknesses of WACC. The ES also covers external factors, in particular those that are now or are likely in the future to have an

impact on WACC's success in achieving its mission (See Appendix C for a copy of the *WACC Environmental Scan*).

**Data Analysis and Interpretation - Phase III** of the process involved synthesizing and analyzing the data and information gathered in the consultations with stakeholders (See Appendix D for a report of the results of the *WACC Member Strategic Planning Survey*). A report and summary of stakeholder input can

be found in Appendix E, the *WACC Strategic Planning Stakeholders Report*.

**Creating the WACC 2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan - Phase IV** of the process entailed the actual crafting of the WACC Strategic Plan based on the *Stakeholders' Report* and guided by further conversations with WACC Board Officers, the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, and the General Secretary.



*Claudilene Maria da Silva of Observatório Negro, a WACC project Partner in Brazil, attending the WACC-Latin America Project Partners consultation meeting held in San Antonio de Escazú, Costa Rica, 15-21 August 2011.*

# Part A: Who is WACC and what is our purpose? Identity and Mandate

Just as personal identity and vocation constantly evolve, so does organizational identity and mission. WACC is a learning, growing organization and as we gain experience and change, our identity also changes. Furthermore, the world is dynamic and changing and our mission and mandate must be articulated in ways that respond to the present and future challenges. Accordingly, the process of asking questions about WACC's basic identity was not precipitated by an identity crisis but rather as a normal reflection on how WACC identifies itself in today's world.

## I. Identity

The strategic planning process was used to examine fundamental questions related to our identity, mission and mandate, vision, and values. This included some collective self-reflection around the following questions:

- ❖ What does the “Christian” in World Association for Christian Communication mean?
- ❖ What do “communication rights” mean?
- ❖ Does WACC have a clear long term vision of the world it is working towards?
- ❖ Are the values that guide WACC's work and how it is carried out clearly articulated and relevant?

**Out of these deliberations, the following conclusions and/or directions emerged:**

### **1. WACC will ground its work firmly within an ethical values framework, rooted in an understanding of justice and liberation, as expressed in the WACC Christian Principles of Communication.**

One of the unique elements of WACC is precisely its character as an ecumenical organization rooted in a strong ethical framework and grounded in Christian principles. Every civil society organization has a core of beliefs around which members, supporters, and adherents rally. For WACC, our identity as a Christian organization coupled with our social justice mandate is a key uniting and motivational factor for the board and membership.

#### Communication: Grounded in our faith

The word communication is related to the Latin action noun, *communicare* “to share, divide out; communicate, impart, inform; join, unite, participate in,” lit. “to make common”. Communication implies communion, a word used frequently in the Christian faith and which is rooted in the Biblical accounts of Pentecost as described in the book of Acts: “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need” (Acts 2: 44 – 45).

This concept of *koinonia* or *communio* captures the interconnectedness of the spiritual, social and financial dimensions of life which are so often seen as separate. WACC wishes to embody this holistic concept of communication, which challenges power structures that divide and exclude.

To be sure, there are important nuances and even regional differences in how this Christian identity is interpreted and lived out. Some elements of our membership prefer to emphasize WACC as an organization of communicators rooted in Christian principles, rather than as an organization of Christian communicators. We recognize that in some parts of the world, “Christian” still has an unfortunate legacy of colonialism, unilateralism and exclusion.

United by the *Christian Principles of Communication*, WACC also recognizes and embraces the diversity of local and regional expressions of our common Christian faith.

We proudly identify WACC and its work within the progressive and inclusionary tradition of Christianity. In this tradition, WACC works for the human rights of all peoples without regard to religious identity. In a world where religion is sometimes the cause of conflict, WACC will utilize its



*Inauguration ceremony of the Forum of Indian Christian communicators in Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, 7 August 2010. “WACC recognizes and embraces the diversity of local and regional expressions of our common Christian faith.”*

identity as a Christian organization to play a constructive role in inter-faith relations related to communication rights, peace and social justice.



## What our members are saying



❖ “I think it is vitally important to retain a meaningful connection to the Christian gospel, so that WACC isn’t just a social justice advocacy group, but rather one that is rooted and grounded in the Christian faith. Social justice voices aren’t lacking. Ones that keep a strong link to Christianity are.”



❖ “We are a Christian association witnessing in a multi-religious and secular world. We serve everyone without discrimination.”

- WACC members, Strategic Planning Membership Survey, March 2011



❖ “We are Christian. We are based on Christian principles. Anyone can join us but must be open to these Christian principles - including taking the side of the poor. But our work shouldn’t be restricted to Christians and churches - that is our definition of ‘inclusive’.”

- Conclusion of the Asia Regional Association Strategic Planning Session, May 2011



## WACC values

- ❖ Communication is a spiritual exercise
- ❖ Communication affirms justice and challenges injustice
- ❖ Communication builds and shapes community
- ❖ Communication enhances participation
- ❖ Communication promotes freedom and demands accountability
- ❖ Communication celebrates cultural diversity
- ❖ Communication builds connectedness



## Who is WACC?

### **2. WACC will strengthen its ties with international ecumenical networks and agencies and actively seek common collaboration related to WACC's strategic priorities.**

Having confirmed our identity as an ecumenical organization, we wish to strengthen our relations and collaboration with other members of the global ecumenical family. We recognize that some of the historic ecumenical institutions are in decline but that new ones continue to emerge, often in the global South. We will make clear to these ecumenical organizations what the expertise of WACC is, and offer it as WACC's contribution to the collective struggle for justice where there is clear common purpose and merging of strategic outcomes.



*Participants at the WACC-Asia consultation meeting held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 16-21 May 2011.*

### **3. WACC will strengthen its public profile with a clear strategy for increased visibility based on expertise recognition and the profiling of WACC accomplishments.**

Increased public profile is important for fundraising, forming strategic alliances, and influencing decision-makers. We want to position WACC as a “go to” organization for the media, public institutions, policy-makers, and any organization seeking expertise and guidance on communication rights. One of WACC's most important initiatives, the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), is currently somewhat distanced from the WACC brand. We will more clearly identify the GMMP with WACC, rather than as a stand-alone project.

These directions will help to strengthen and clarify our identity as WACC. But they also have clear implications for how WACC will carry out its work, as is further detailed in Section III.



*Participants at the WACC-Africa consultation meeting held in Kigali, Rwanda, 14-15 March 2011.*

## II. Mandate

The strategic planning consultation process was also an opportunity to review the fundamental mandate of WACC through the following questions:

- ❖ Does the WACC mission statement clearly describe the overall purpose of WACC: what we do, who we do it for, and how and why we do it?
- ❖ For whom does WACC exist?
- ❖ Who will primarily benefit from the work of WACC?
- ❖ Is a “communication rights and social justice” framework one that finds broad resonance and acceptance among WACC members and partners?

WACC exists for those people in the world who are systematically denied the right to communication. These are the people and communities that WACC wants to work for and with. WACC’s success is measured primarily in terms of its ability to promote and strengthen communication rights for the poor and dispossessed, wherever they may be found in the world.

WACC is structured as an association of members and the mandate of promoting communication rights is furthered when members are also strengthened to do their work. Over the next five years, WACC will focus some of its resources on building the



*“WACC exists for those people in the world who are systematically denied the right to communication”.*

*Photo: Women taking part in an adult literacy programme at a remote village in West Bengal, India. Commendation photo -WACC photo competition 2010 - on the theme Communication and Poverty. (By Sudipto Das).*

capacity of the network of its members. Nevertheless, members are not the primary beneficiaries of WACC. WACC is not an organization *for* Christian communicators, but rather *of* Christian communicators (or as some members prefer, communicators who affirm Christian principles). Therefore, it cannot exist for itself but rather to seek justice for poor and marginalized people in the world.

## A. WACC's Mission and Vision Statements

### WACC's current mission statement:

“WACC promotes communication for social change. It believes that communication is a basic human right that defines people's common humanity, strengthens cultures, enables participation, creates community and challenges tyranny and oppression.

WACC's key concerns are media diversity, equal and affordable access to communication and knowledge, media and gender justice, and the relationship between communication and power. It tackles these through advocacy, education, training, and the creation and sharing of knowledge. WACC's worldwide membership works with faith-based and secular partners at grassroots, regional and global levels, giving preference to the needs of the poor, marginalised and dispossessed. Being WACC means ‘taking sides’.”

### 1. The WACC mission statement will be changed:

❖ to make more explicit for *whom* WACC exists; that is, for and around whom WACC programmes will be shaped and targeted.

❖ to communicate more clearly the “communication rights” mandate (instead of the belief system as currently stated) of WACC. This includes being more specific about those aspects of communication rights that WACC will address, and connecting communication rights to other human rights and giving people a voice in their communities and political systems. The changes, to be approved by the WACC board of directors, will be made based on the input from the strategic planning consultations where stakeholders expressed their hope for a revitalized, effective and relevant organization.

### 2. In conjunction with the process of revising the WACC *Christian Principles of Communication*, WACC will formulate a vision statement.

WACC does not currently have a succinct vision statement. A vision statement describes an ideal future related to our mission statement, reflects our organization's values, and answers the question, “what impact do we want to have in the world?” A vision statement will further assist in clarifying WACC's identity and purpose. As the process for revising the WACC *Christian Principles of Communication* relates closely to vision, the formulation of a vision statement can accompany this process.

## B. Our Communication Rights Mandate

While “communication rights” are increasingly recognized by human rights bodies and institutions, it is not a framework that is well understood at a broader public level. WACC makes frequent reference to communication rights as central to its mission and mandate and yet the strategic planning consultation process has made clear that even among WACC stakeholder groups, there is uncertainty about what communication rights are.

For reasons ranging from building common cause among members to building public support for WACC, we need to articulate our communication rights mandate more effectively, clearly, and consistently, in language that is accessible to both our own stakeholders and the general public. We need to tangibly demonstrate how promoting communication rights makes a positive difference in the lives of the poor and dispossessed by promoting justice. We need to focus our work on those aspects of communication rights where we have strength and clarity of purpose, knowing that we cannot do everything.



*Helsinki Partners Round Table, 27-28 April 2011*

### What are Communication Rights?

**“Communication rights are those rights that enable all people everywhere to express themselves individually and collectively by all means of communication in order to improve their lives.** Communication rights are vital to full participation in society and are, therefore, universal human rights belonging to every man, woman, and child.

Communication rights encompass freedom of expression, freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and

knowledge. But they add to these freedoms, both for individuals and communities, the concepts of accessibility, participation, and cultural diversity. Communication rights include democratization of the media, protection of traditional means of communication, linguistic rights, and the right to enjoy the fruits of human creativity. These are questions of inclusion and exclusion, mutual respect, and human dignity.”



*WACC President Dennis Smith (right) addressing the WACC-Asia Triennial Assembly and Seminar held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 16-21 May 2011 where members discussed the Strategic Plan. Left: WACC General Secretary, Rev. Karin Achtelstetter and WACC-Asia President, Rev. Sam Meshack.*

**1. WACC will develop clear language to express its communication rights mandate that will be used to brand WACC through its communication instruments such as the WACC mission and vision statements, website, publications, brochures, and funding proposals.**

**2. Recognizing and building communication rights will be central to all of WACC's work and its expression of its mandate.**

❖ “Communication has many different meanings. But if communication is everything, then it is nothing.”

- Participant, Helsinki Partners Round Table, April 2011

❖ “There is a need to define terms. While I am a member of WACC, there is obviously some “WACC lingo” that I don’t recognize. I may have some understanding of what [communication rights] means, but I don’t know if WACC shares the same understanding.”

- WACC member, Strategic Planning Membership Survey, March 2011

## Part B: What we want to accomplish from 2012 – 2016: WACC Strategic Directions

### I. Our global context

Our work is rooted in and responsive to what is happening in the world around us. What follows are four global trends relevant to our mandate that are important to consider as we decide where to allocate our resources in the coming years, and what we want to accomplish with these resources. A more detailed analysis and description of these trends can be found in the appendix, *Environmental Scan*.

#### 1. Increased attention and support for communication rights

While still not broadly understood at a general public level, there is increasing support for communication rights among international institutions such as the UN and regional human rights bodies. The proliferation of new forms of communication has also resulted in attempts by governments to restrict these rights, further heightening awareness of the need to enshrine them in rights-based frameworks. For example, spurred by government shutdowns of the Internet during social unrest, four international agencies recently issued a joint declaration establishing guidelines to protect freedom of expression on the Internet.<sup>1</sup>

As communication forms and devices continue to expand, rights related issues are likely to receive increased attention. This could

be an advantage for WACC as our communication rights mandate becomes more relevant and popular. However, this will also depend on our ability to express our mandate clearly, expose the ethical and moral dimensions of communications issues, and operationalize the work in a focussed and tangible way that demonstrates concrete improvements in rights for the people and communities it works with.



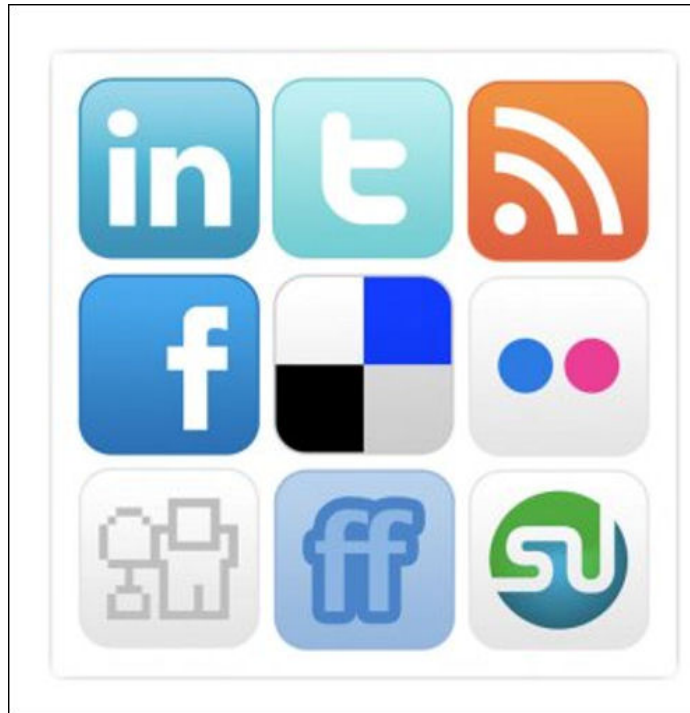
*Participant at the WACC-Middle East consultation seminar/assembly held in Beirut, Lebanon, 9-11 June 2011*

<sup>1</sup> The full text of the Declaration is available at [www.cidh.oas.org/relatoria/showarticle.asp?artID=848&lID](http://www.cidh.oas.org/relatoria/showarticle.asp?artID=848&lID)

## 2. The rise and influence of electronic and social media

The increasing influence of the internet, the emergence of mobile phones and other integrated communication devices, and social media as a means to facilitate communication have changed the communications landscape radically in the past decade. But while opening up new possibilities for communication, the new media have not escaped past trends of concentration, consolidation and control by major media conglomerates. The past decade has seen unprecedented media mergers and the trend towards concentration by a small number of corporations has increased rapidly. The supply and transmission of information has become a lucrative financial business. As a major new growth area for profit seeking corporations, new media content is shaped to respond to consumer desires (“info-tainment”) rather than serve the public interest in areas such as education, community, and development.

While the explosion of information devices has created surprising opportunities for grassroots mobilization, the lack of transparency and public accountability by the new media empires raises alarming concerns ranging from the subversion of democracy to the intrusion and control of peoples’ private lives.



*“The emergence of social media has changed the communications landscape”*

Furthermore, access and affordability issues mean that the digital divide still exists between the global North and South. New media has multiplied the amount of information available but more information and more voices do not necessarily equate to more inclusion. For example, access to the internet in the global South is only a fraction of that in the global North.

In summary, new media presents tremendous opportunities for both achieving communication rights and for further denial of these rights. As with many other new technologies of the past century, there are enormous social benefits to be

gained from the democratic deployment of new media and new sinister possibilities for control, division, and injustice. This makes the work of organizations like WACC tremendously important as we seek to elevate and amplify the good, and name and confront the evil.



### 3. Analyzing media literacy

Media literacy has emerged again but in a new way. With the proliferation of media and information sources, people are challenged to discern between legitimate and questionable sources of information. What is truth and what is propaganda? In the new world of electronic communication, where those people with ready access to digital media are bombarded with thousands of messages every day, it is far more difficult to discern the source of any particular message and why that source has created it.

#### Media messages

What becomes crucial in this environment is the ability to quickly analyze media messages as they are being received, which in turn determines the degree of influence the media message then wields. In short, what is needed now is a new kind of media literacy, one that can make sense of the world of instant information, global interconnectivity, and messages that come on a variety of media platforms. There is an abundance of information,



*“With the proliferation of media and information sources, people are challenged to discern between legitimate and questionable sources of information.” Commendation photo - WACC photo competition 2010 (Photo by Chetan Soni)*

but the challenge is the ability to filter it to cultivate knowledge and wisdom.

Furthermore, the new forms of electronic media have created a voracious public appetite for bite sized information packets. Research indicates that people have been conditioned towards shallow, horizontal, rapid-fire information review—in other words, the kind of information intake that is well-suited to surfing the web. What is sacrificed is the ability to probe in depth and engage in critical reflection. Given the complex problems facing societies today such as energy limits, climate change, conflict, ecosystem degradation and poverty it is not difficult to draw the

conclusion that the new world of communication is not always conducive to problem-solving.

WACC has a history of promoting media literacy, especially among the poor and dispossessed. We now have a new opportunity and challenge: to apply our past experience in this area to the world of new media.

### 4. Churches, Christians and Ecumenical institutions

As a Christian organization still quite dependent on church-related funding, how will trends in Christian/church growth affect WACC? On a sweeping scale, Christianity is growing but this growth may not benefit WACC. Adherents to Christianity continue to decline in Europe and North America, where nearly all of our church-related funding originates. In particular the mainline liberal Protestant churches, upon whom WACC has depended for support for decades are experiencing the fastest rates of decline. As a result, WACC funding from churches and church-related organizations will very likely continue to decline over the next decade. Furthermore, ecumenism and ecumenical institutions are struggling to maintain capacity and many key ecumenical organizations have cut back on staff and programmes dramatically, or even folded altogether. Regional ecumenical organizations are in decline and the trend shows no sign of reversal in the years ahead.

How should WACC respond to these trends? No doubt, we must continue to accompany the historic ecumenical fora, including those that gave birth to WACC in the post-World War II era. At the same time, we must acknowledge the new understanding of ecumenism that includes churches and denominations which have not historically been a part of mainstream ecumenical institutions. For example, the Global Christian Forum brings together Christians and churches from very different traditions, who do not have a history of dialogue and common action (see [www.globalchristianforum.org](http://www.globalchristianforum.org)). WACC's expertise in communication could help to build new partnerships and alliances with churches that have not historically been involved with WACC. Many of these are located in the global South and we must continue to look and move outward to both contribute to and seek support from the new ecumenism.

## II. Strategic Directions

### 1. Strengthened voices engaged in the public sphere and participation of poor, marginalized, excluded and dispossessed people and communities in communication.

This strategic priority responds directly to WACC’s primary mandate: WACC exists for those people in the world who are systematically denied the right to communication. Mainstream media continues to project the views and reality of a limited segment of society, mainly those who wield political and economic power. WACC has developed specific expertise in participatory media monitoring as a tool to expose media bias and advocate for changes in how specific social groups are included and portrayed in the media.

#### Global Media Monitoring Project

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), a nearly 20 year long project, is a model for what can be achieved through a network of researchers, monitors and advocates. The GMMP will be continued as a vehicle in the struggle for women’s rights and equality, with increased emphasis on leveraging the research findings into policy changes.

WACC will more purposefully market its participatory media monitoring tool as a contribution to partnerships, seeking opportunities for strategic collaboration. We see communication rights as key to advancing other types of human rights and therefore see ourselves as a logical partner to more broadly mandated development and peace organizations.

WACC will more clearly articulate its role in broader justice and development efforts. Our unique advantage is the scarcity of organizations, particularly those working from a Christian values framework, who can offer communications expertise to broader struggles for justice. We will position ourselves as the go-to organization, especially among faith-based and ecumenical organizations, for expertise on communication rights.



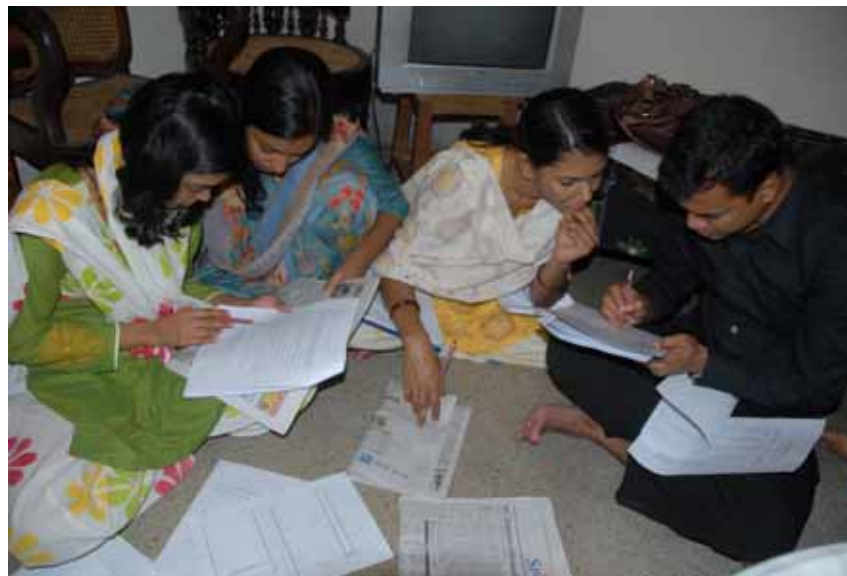
*“GMMP is a model for what can be achieved through a network of researchers, monitors and advocates.”  
(GMMP monitors in Dominican Republic)*

### What our Partners and members are saying

- ❖ “WACC should focus on its expertise areas: Media monitoring, including the GMMP.”  
*- Europe/North America Strategic Planning on-line meeting, May 2011*
- ❖ “WACC has one incredible strength that is not found in any other similar organization: a strong network of researchers, authors and writers...it has considerable experience in the GMMP.”  
*- Blog post, WACC Strategic Planning Consultation.*

### Specific goals to advance this priority:

- a) WACC will take a rights-based approach to communication to increase the participation and access of marginalized people and communities to decision-making that impacts their lives.
- b) In advancing the communication rights of marginalized groups, WACC will underline the need for gender justice in media and communication.
- c) WACC will utilize participatory media monitoring to promote the communication rights of marginalized groups.



*“The GMMP will be continued as a vehicle in the struggle for women’s rights and equality.”  
(GMMP monitors in Bangladesh)*

**2. Change policies and influence decision-makers on issues related to communication rights by increasing capacity of WACC members and partners.**

WACC’s goal is to create progressive social change towards equitable, diverse, and democratic societies. Ultimately, this involves changing the policies and behaviour of those who have political decision-making power in directions that empower the poor and dispossessed, increase transparency and accountability, and promote human rights for all members of society.

**Decision-makers**

Reaching and influencing decision-makers is essential in a rights-based approach. WACC will focus some of its resources on building the capacity of its network to engage in effective advocacy related to communication rights. We have heard a strong call from our funding partners, project partners, members, and other strategic allies that WACC must be an effective player in advocacy efforts. Advocacy is a skill this must be cultivated and practiced among those who want to create change. Building on past successes in advocacy campaigns,



*Indigenous women making radio programmes (KUKOJ)  
“WACC will focus some of its resources on building the capacity of its network”.*

we will build a more strategic and sustained approach to advocacy.

WACC’s strategic advantage in advocacy is the network of members, partners and allies who are willing to participate in coordinated efforts. The success of WACC advocacy will not depend on the advocacy efforts of the Secretariat but rather on the ability of the Secretariat to build the capacity of and mobilize its network. Our network will be provided with training, tools and support to undertake advocacy activities.

**Profile**

Finally, increased advocacy activity and results cannot happen without a higher public profile for WACC. WACC needs more visibility, to become better known among rights agencies, international decision-making bodies, and even among the international ecumenical family. Visibility can come with increased impact but not automatically. WACC needs a strategic communications plan to communicate its strengths and successes.

- ❖ “WACC’s support should be directed at those who can intervene in public politics to bring about change.”

- *Caribbean-Latin America on-line Strategic Planning Meeting, May 2011*

- ❖ “The relationship between communication and power will continue to be shaped by the ongoing transformation of the media and communication ecosystem. Influencing that transformation so that new communication tools and systems reflect Christian values, not corporate or authoritarian values, needs to be an explicit priority.”

- *WACC member, Strategic Planning Membership Survey, March 2011*

- ❖ “WACC should measure its success partly by the extent to which it has impact on national legislative processes, where the people denied social justice are living.”

- *WACC member, Strategic Planning Membership Survey, March 2011*



*Members at WACC- Latin America seminar and assembly held in San José, Costa Rica, 15-21 August 2011*

### Specific goals to advance this priority:

a) WACC will increase its own internal skills and knowledge with regards to effective advocacy so that it can both direct advocacy strategies when necessary (e.g., GMMP) and work with members and partners to assist in the development of their own advocacy.

b) WACC will co-develop an advocacy campaign around which members and partners can coalesce and utilize their advocacy skills.

Strategies to reach this strategic goal could include elements such as:

- ❖ developing tools to help people understand their communication rights
- ❖ directing more project funding to partners for advocacy capacity building and implementation
- ❖ increasing WACC involvement with strategic partners, coalitions, and at international fora for advocacy initiatives
- ❖ responding to the huge shift towards social media and other digital technologies.



*GMMP monitors - Ethiopia*

**“WACC will work with members and partners to assist in the development of their own advocacy.”**



*GMMP monitors - United Arab Emirates (UAE)*

### **3. A nourished, vibrant, responsible and accountable WACC member and partner network, with new capacity to advocate for communication rights in their own communities, institutions, churches and other spheres of influence.**



*Participants at a sign language training course supported by WACC in partnership with ESCATED (Guatemala). “Capacity building will increase our members’ ability to promote communication as a priority in their own networks and work.”*

WACC will strengthen communication and networking possibilities between its members and partners in response to the membership’s clear call for a stronger, more actively engaged

member and partner network. The WACC family has many parts: corporate and individual members, affiliate members, the WACC Secretariat in Toronto and London, eight regional associations, regional executive committees, the WACC global board, funding partners, field partners, and other collaborative allies.

While all these parts represent a rich diversity of cultures, experiences, initiatives, skills and perspectives, there must be organic relationships that promote connection and unity. In the coming years, we will develop programs and mechanisms to create a greater sense of united purpose and more possibilities for collaboration among the WACC family. The strategic planning exercise of 2011 was itself an indication of the willingness and eagerness of WACC stakeholders to engage with WACC: through some 20 assemblies, meetings, focus groups, on-line meetings, and other consultations, approximately 500 people shared their ideas for WACC’s future. Clearly there is a strong desire to participate in the work of WACC.

As part of this network strengthening priority, we will also be more intentional about increasing the possibilities for our members to learn from one another, sharing challenges, best practices, innovations and resources. This capacity building will increase our members’ ability to promote communication as a priority in their own networks and work.



- ❖ “WACC needs to significantly broaden the scope of its internal communication with blogs, social media, and other ways for members to contribute and connect with each other.”
- ❖ “The role which we fulfill as personal or institutional members for the achievement of WACC’s mandate should be strengthened. It must be an active, enterprising and coordinated role in each region.”
- ❖ “I want to collaborate!”
- ❖ “The problem isn’t autonomy versus [being] under the direction of WACC. The challenge is to work together on an equal footing.”

- *Comments from WACC members, Strategic Planning Membership Survey, March 2011*

WACC will seek renewed and deeper relationships with its funding and field partners. Our funding partners have indicated they want relationships with WACC to move beyond administrative arrangements to strategic and programmatic collaboration. Field partners have also indicated the desire for partnerships that involve more common cause and collaboration, particularly in policy and advocacy efforts. Together with our current partners, we will develop clearer understandings of what it means to be in partnership and be more intentional about mutual responsibilities and benefits of working together.



*Participants at the WACC partner Round Table in Helsinki, Finland, 27-28 April 2011*

- ❖ We would like a long term partnership that builds respect and trust and allows partners to be more transparent in their relationship.”  
- *WACC field partner in the Middle East, October 2010*
- ❖ “WACC needs to think about other kinds of partnerships that are peer partnerships. We need to come together as organizations that have similar interests and similar objectives...we need to think beyond funding.”  
- *WACC staff, Staff Strategic Planning Consultation, June 2011*
- ❖ “If we do not succeed in becoming part of one another’s stories and life, we will end up losing each other completely.”  
- *WACC funding partner, Helsinki Round Table, April 2011*

### Specific goals to advance this priority:

a) WACC will encourage regional associations to develop their own plans of action in relation to WACC's Strategic Plan. In support of Regional Associations, WACC will:

- ❖ Seek appropriate resources for such regional initiatives
- ❖ Strengthen the identification of WACC Regional Associations with WACC as a whole
- ❖ Strengthen its function as a global hub for sharing information, best practices, tools, and resources between WACC regions

b) WACC will deepen partnerships with funders and civil society organizations, particularly international, ecumenical agencies.

c) WACC will strengthen its network of members and partners, providing opportunities for growth and collaboration, deeper understanding of communication rights, and facilitating common agendas for promoting communication as a process integral to human development and justice.

d) WACC will promote reflection on Christian values and ethics in the theory and practice of communication.



*Nozha Elias, participant at the WACC-Middle East consultation seminar/assembly held in Beirut, Lebanon, 9-11 June 2011.*

### 4. Strengthened leadership and governance of WACC

Strong and effective boards are a critical component in providing leadership to organizations like WACC. We want our board to provide long term vision to WACC, provide direction to the staff regarding how to effectively allocate resources towards the board's priorities for the organization, and monitor and evaluate the progress of the organization towards its strategic goals and overall mission.

In the period of 2012 - 2016, the WACC global board will deepen its understanding of its roles and responsibilities in providing strategic leadership to WACC. There will be more engagement between meetings as board members utilize their skills to ensure all aspects of effective governance are adequately provided to WACC.

The board will assume full responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the 2012 - 2016 strategic plan and will be equipped with the training and capacity to fulfill this and other important governance roles. Indicators will be developed for the strategic priorities of this plan to assist the board in measuring progress towards their achievement.

#### Specific goals to advance this priority:

a) **WACC will deepen the engagement and governance expertise of its global and regional boards.**

This can be done through:

- ❖ ongoing board and leadership development training
- ❖ exploration of new models of board functioning and process

b) **WACC will strengthen the financial oversight and management systems at WACC for increased accountability and effective management of WACC finances.**

This can be done through:

- ❖ a review and updating of all WACC financial systems
- ❖ a review and updating of all WACC financial policies and procedures, from board to management

### WACC methodology issues

WACC has a history of employing a diversity of methods to achieve its mission. These include research and studies, education and training, partnership and projects, networking, and advocacy. The strategic priorities already give some indication of which methodologies are most appropriate to the goals. Further to this however, the following directions give more specificity to the question of methodologies in the coming strategic plan.

#### Emerging directions

- ❖ WACC will increase its advocacy efforts by:
  - establishing clear advocacy frameworks, campaigns and objectives for its global office programmes
  - facilitating broad participation of its members, partners, and alliances in advocacy work
  - increasing WACC's presence in international fora that can contribute to the achievement of WACC's strategic priorities and advocacy objectives
  - facilitating and supporting Regional Associations' advocacy work
  - being more deliberate about funding project partners whose work is aligned with the global office advocacy objectives and/or those of the Regional Association where the projects are taking place
  - strengthening the advocacy capacity of the WACC Global staff

- ❖ WACC will only engage in research where it clearly supports the objectives of the WACC Global programmes or those of one or more Regional Associations
- ❖ WACC will strengthen its networking capacity through: he development of information and resource sharing mechanisms for partners, members, and Regional Associations
- ❖ WACC will work towards establishing longer-term operational partnerships.
- ❖ WACC will work in strategic partnership with other faith-based organizations (especially but not limited to ecumenical organizations such as ACT, EAA, WCC, WCC United Nations office, APRODEV, etc.) who have common human rights goals and to whom WACC can offer its communication rights expertise and tools.
- ❖ WACC will develop or strengthen strategic alliances with international, regional and national organisations sharing overlapping or common goals including, for example, multilateral entities such as UNESCO and UN Women, professional organisations such as the International Federation of Journalists, and civil society organisations specialised in communication such as the Global Forum for Media Development, the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, the Alliance for Progressive Communication, and Globethics, among others.
- ❖ Explore media monitoring in relation to other issues. Media monitoring has been employed very successfully to the issue of media and gender as exemplified in the GMMP. We now have a proven methodology that can be applied to other priority justice concerns.

### III. WACC's Structure

The strategic planning process has also been an opportunity to raise questions about the structure of WACC, including and especially its membership structure and regional associations. While some challenges have been identified that are inherent in the current structure, a more thorough examination and review is required before recommendations can be made to change the structure.

#### Recommended directions

**1. That the WACC Global board undertake a review of the membership and Regional Associations structure after the 2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan has been approved, in order to determine the most effective WACC structure for the future.**

In this review, the board should consider the following issues and ideas that have come to light during the 2010 Programme Evaluation and 2011 Strategic Planning process:

#### From the 2010 Programme Evaluation:

a) Regional associations share in the governance of WACC through electing members of the board of directors. However there is a lack of clarity regarding their role in WACC Global project implementation: on the one hand regional associations expect to be an important link in programmes taking place in their regions and on the other they seek to retain a measure of autonomy, not being structurally accountable within WACC for their own programme related activities.

b) This dual role of regional associations as sharing in the governance of WACC while also serving in a project implementation role may blur the lines between these two spheres

of activities. In most non-profits, governance and programme implementation roles are kept separate to create clear lines of accountability.

c) There is a need for greater clarity in the roles of WACC's eight regional associations vis a vis the global office. Given their prominence in the structure of WACC, there could be a written document which delineates their roles, rights and responsibilities.

#### From the 2011 Strategic Planning Consultations:

d) There is strong support for the continuation of WACC as an association of members, which provides the organization with a strong foundation for social change and mobilization. However, there is also a significant appetite among members for more engagement in the work of WACC.

e) There is a great deal of unevenness in vitality and engagement between the eight regional associations. Some of the regions are largely inactive between annual assemblies.

f) Despite the decline of some regions, there is still strong overall support for the structure of regional associations as avenues for participation in WACC and as a network structure

g) There is a strong desire for greater levels of inter-regional connectivity, exchange and engagement. Some of the regions feel isolated from the wider WACC family.

h) WACC should consider expanding the structure of the membership to facilitate the connection of members by region and by other commonalities, such as professional interest, as well as a new category of funding members.

## WACC’s Membership

We believe that our membership is a key component of our identity and gives credibility and strength to WACC. Membership in WACC comes with both privileges and responsibilities. As our membership application states, “membership in WACC provides opportunities to network with those having similar interests, to support WACC’s work, and to receive up-to-date information on communication rights and media reform.”

In the early part of WACC’s history, organizational membership was often associated with having preferential access to project funds. We recognize there is some diversity of opinion among members regarding the question of whether WACC should give any preference to its members when carrying out project work in the regions. It is understandable that in some parts of the world, where Christianity is under threat and Christians are in need of support, WACC members expect a Christian organization to “look after its own” in the words of one



*WACC-Africa members at their General Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda, March 2011*

Regional Association. However, all members agree that WACC’s work and support should not be limited to its members. WACC will continue to work with any organization that affirms its vision of communications rights and justice for the poor, regardless of membership status, religion or other identity. This is our expression of inclusivity and our vision for the Christian concept of “diakonia”, of living and serving in the world.

To bring more clarity and common understanding of the place of members in WACC:

- 2. WACC will establish clearer parameters and definitions regarding organizational priorities related to its members, and those related to the communications poor, dispossessed, excluded and marginalized.**
- 3. WACC will define more clearly the benefits, expectations and role of members of WACC.**

## Conclusion

WACC is one actor in a diverse and exciting movement for global transformation. Our strategic plan is an attempt to identify what our work in this transformation can be, and to plan our work in such a way that we will make our contribution very well. We believe our mandate is unique and that our contribution in the field of communication is more relevant than ever before.

We move forward confidently into the next phase of WACC, knowing that we have over forty years of accumulated experience and relationships upon which to build our future. We have a wealth of people in WACC - our global Secretariat in Toronto and London, our board representing every major region in the world, our membership eager to work together, and a diversity of partners and volunteers who are ready to commit their time and resources to our organizational mission.

This plan provides a common platform for all of these people to work together. Our hope and commitment is for WACC to achieve the priorities of this strategic plan, and to do them very well.



*WACC President Dennis Smith and General Secretary, Rev. Karin Achtelstetter at the WACC-Asia consultation seminar in Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

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