Communication

makes a world of difference

WACC *in* 2007

About   **WACC**

The World Association for Christian Communication (*WACC*) is a professional, international, ecumenical organization that promotes communication rights for social change. It works with people of all faiths and none who share its vision and values. Its worldwide membership includes communicators working at local, regional and global levels.

WACC works for peace – giving preference to the needs of the poor, marginalized and dispossessed. It believes that communication is a basic human right that defines people's common humanity, strengthens cultures, enables participation and creates community.

WACC initiates co-operation among Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic communicators and believes that genuine communication is the basis for understanding among people of other faiths and ideologies.

WACC offers professional guidance on communication issues and policies, interprets developments in global communications, and explores the consequences of such developments for churches and communities everywhere.

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A Leap of Faith Message from the General Secretary

Our scriptures and literature are full of stories built on the concept of a journey. Often the journey is one fraught with danger or in search of a much anticipated reward. A common thread through many such stories is that the journey is as important as the destination. For the destination, although full of much promise, is somewhere over the horizon, somewhere just beyond what we can see with certainty, somewhere we have never been before, yet somewhere we feel called to seek.

WACC has embarked on just such a journey. Many 'signs' told us it was time to change, and change we have. The Board relocated the offices to a new land. The Board also reshaped and streamlined WACC's governance structure. Yet the most uncertain change for WACC was the decision to radically re-think our vision and management of programme activities and projects. The journey, launched in late 2006, has only just begun. We are happy to report some initial success in revamping our administrative overheads, our use of technology, and our efforts to modernize our systems of governance.

The Board's vision was that WACC would make a decade-long journey at the end of which WACC will not only be fully re-commissioned, but adequately funded, and strategically prepared to address its next decades of ministry and service in the pursuit of communication development and communication rights. Building on WACC's rich past, the Board set a vision that would enable WACC to continue to make a difference.

Making a difference is the guiding principal of our current journey. We continue to develop new concepts and proposals for effective and responsive communication programmes—initiated by and with local and regional input, developed in response to specific themes and managed by an engaged and proactive WACC secretariat.

Our WACC story is one among legions of journey stories. We have set out with confidence and it is an exciting and invigorating time to partner with WACC. We invite you to be part of the journey.

Randy Naylor, General Secretary

WACC addresses a broad range of communication issues worldwide, including North America and Europe. In 2007 WACC was privileged to work with partners on **64** projects in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific. **21** of these related to 'Building and recognizing communication rights'. Under WACC's other programme priorities, **13** related to 'HIV and AIDS, communication and stigmatisation', **7** to 'Media and gender justice', **7** to 'Communication and poverty', **7** to 'Communication for ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue', **6** to 'Communication for peace', **2** to 'Ethics of new communication technologies' and **1** to 'Fundamentalisms and the media'. The following are highlights from the nine different programme areas.

Media and Gender Justice

CAMBODIA: Stirring up debate about media portrayal of women

Concerns about negative stereotyping and degrading depictions of women in print media spurred a project to monitor eight popular magazines, create media monitoring groups, an internship programme, forum discussions for media and civil society groups, and lobby dinners for media practitioners. While media owners still argue that a shift towards gender-responsive reportage is constrained by financial exigencies, the Women's Media Centre (WMC) has called into question what has hitherto been accepted as 'normal', biased gender representations in media.

INDIA: Explaining gender dimensions of media work

'The portrayal of women in the mass media has tremendous impact and influence on society. The silence regarding certain issues, the emphasis on others leads to a cycle of perception that is self-reinforcing and takes on a life of its own, no matter how much at variance with reality it was initially. It literally becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy'. This quotation comes from the compact 'Media and Gender Justice' reader compiled by the Student Christian Movement of India in the context of the WACC-supported project 'Christian youth initiative to re-read the media'. The reader neatly demystifies the gender dimensions of media in an easy-to-read yet comprehensive format.

Recognizing Communication Rights

BRAZIL: Dispelling prejudices and myths surrounding disability

'Minuto da Inclusão' (Minute of Inclusion), a radio programme made by people with disabilities in São Paulo, was launched in May 2007. It was initially broadcast on four regional radio stations, but eight months later the one-minute programme was being picked up on 12 more community and private radios stations in several regions of Brazil as well as on two Internet stations. And a recent partnership with the Empresa Oboré de Comunicação Social means that the programmes will now be distributed by 300 small radio stations in Brazil's hinterlands.

Produced by a small team with the support of three interns from the Methodist University of São Paulo, Minuto da Inclusão is a social movement covering the challenges and difficulties of people with disabilities in Brazil.

BOLIVIA: Indigenous people claim radio

In the cities of Tiwanacu and Santiago de Capalla as well as in El Alto a radio training programme has helped empower Aymara women. With this one year project Radio Aitipiri AM, managed and aimed exclusively at indigenous communities, has enabled Aymara women to learn and master radio skills allowing them to help make visible the contribution of indigenous women to the larger society. Two years ago Bolivia elected an indigenous leader for the first time in its history.

The process has not been easy, and initially the women and staff of Radio Aitipiri faced opposition from traditional Aymara authorities which saw such training of women as breaking ancient customs. With time, however, the women have taken ownership of the project and have learnt to speak with their own voices over the air- waves.

Building Communication Rights

PALESTINE: Creating a web site for creative women

Women Media and Development (TAM or Tanmiyet wa Aâlam al Mar'ah) has launched a website bringing together the creative work of Palestinian women from all over the West Bank and Gaza strip. It showcases the work of writers, singers, sculptresses, photographers, poets, painters, peace-makers activists, citizen journalists and craftswomen. Right from the start TAM sought the opinions of many Palestinian women, including well known figures such as the poet Nathalie Handal, singer Reem Banna, film-maker Buthaina Khoury, writer, cultural critic and poet Faiha Abhul Hadi, and others who supported the initiative. The website can be seen at www.tam-media.org/english/home.htm

HAITI: Changing attitudes that perpetuate prejudice against women

Discrimination and violence against women are widespread in rural Haiti. Despite intense efforts, information on the rights of women is still scarce and it is rare to find women participating in decision-making processes in either the public or private spheres. For nearly a decade the women's network REFRAKA has been working on gender issues and, recently, it has focused on strengthening the role of women in the management and operation of community radio stations, one of Haiti's most important means of social communication. A significant number of women have been trained to produce and present programmes aimed at changing the ingrained attitudes and prejudices that reproduce and perpetuate gender stereotypes and violence against women.

Photo credit: Daniel Morel/Wozo Productions

Communication for Peace

CONGO: 'Giant Peace Dove' campaign

Murals painted with peace messages, eye-catching posters, a competition for the best traditional song extolling women's rights, skits highlighting peace, and doves set free on public occasions. All are elements of a campaign to communicate peace among communities in the conflict-torn Fizi region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The campaign is being run by a coalition of community organizations and individuals, led by women, to foster non-violent, peace-minded solutions to conflict. Organizers use schools, workplaces, hospitals and sports clubs to publicise their messages of peace and solidarity. The aim is to encourage the emergence of a more tolerant and well integrated society and to strengthen peaceful coexistence among different tribes.

NEPAL: Radio for democratic change

Subaltern Forum, an organization of journalists based in Kathmandu, Nepal, has been producing and broadcasting fortnightly radio programmes on non-violent conflict resolution. Naya Nepal (meaning 'New Nepal') offers an exciting mix of news items, commentary and popular music aimed at informing people about political and social ferment in the country. Leading political figures and media pundits offered their views on developments in Nepal, which is facing constitutional reform, talk about the role of women in restructuring the country. News editors discussed the roles and responsibilities of government in resolving the problems facing the country on its road to peace. Balanced reporting and a diversity of viewpoints focus on the likely impact of rapid developments and new policies affecting the lives of the poor and marginalized. Subaltern Forum has clearly demonstrated the democratic potential of radio in a country undergoing deep-rooted political and social upheaval.

Communication and Poverty

ISRAEL: Film documents 'hell' of Palestinian migrant workers

Video 48, the audiovisual wing of Hanitzotz Publishing House, is committed to bridging the gap between Arabs and Jews and fighting for recognition of Arab Israeli's rights. It produced 'Six Floors to Hell', a documentary addressing the invisibility of Palestinian workers who 'illegally' by-pass military checkpoints and the separation wall between the Occupied Territories and Israel in order to find work Trying to earn a living, they survive as fugitives and are treated as criminals. Arrested over and over by the police, they insist on coming back to look for daily jobs while living in an abandoned underground parking structure beneath a huge unfinished shopping-mall. They live without water, electricity or fresh air.

PERU: Women communicate to tackle environmental degradation and poverty

In Chimbote, a fishing port north of the city of Lima, Peru, poverty was tackled in communication training organized by the Instituto Natura. More than half of Chimbote's 200,000 inhabitants are women. They form the backbone of this community in its daily struggle for survival. To become active contributors and agents of change, they needed leadership and communication training skills. Natura empowered them and made them visible by developing their management capacities, organizing and conducting 12 workshops on different themes, whose proceedings were recorded, edited, and broadcast on community radio. Many local women were trained to become radio reporters and correspondents. They learnt how to design development projects for income generation and, as a result, formed a women's communication network to protect the environment.

HIV and AIDS and Stigma

COLOMBIA: Defending rights by communicating citizenship

Training leaders among people living with HIV and AIDS to use digital technologies and community communication in 12 of the country's major cities, producing case studies of legal constraints and publicising them, developing a tool-kit to train people in practical ways of defending their rights, and creating a database of NGOs, state organizations and communication media. These are some of the achievements of 'Positive Communication', which aims to increase public awareness of how people's rights are being infringed

especially in regard to health care provision and access to medicines. Public perception of HIV and AIDS was tackled through its web site, radio programmes with audience participation, and a campaign of press releases.

NIGERIA: Breaking the silence on stigma

Hope4AIDS Outreach has equipped itself with excellent materials to boost its teaching and learning processes. A highlight of the project was HIV Testing for pastors participating in the training. This aspect of the project was posted on a local e-forum and within a week its inbox was full of commendation messages. As a result the issue of pastoral HIV testing became a standard part of monthly training and by the end of November 2007 over 90 senior Pentecostal Pastors had been tested and had committed to extending the exercise to their respective congregations. Many who heard of this initiative nominated Hope4Aids Outreach for the Breaker of Silence category at the prestigious annual Nigerian Red Ribbon Awards. It was named second best organization in the fight against stigma and discrimination.

Ethics of New Communication Technologies

BENIN: Raising questions about new communication technologies

Tackling the ethics of new information and communication technologies in relation to women and society means getting the attention of opinion leaders. Advocacy workshops to mobilize leaders have taken place in a country where, since 2003, there has been a national policy for the development of new information technologies, drafted in consultation with stakeholders in the field, and civil society in general. Developing and implementing policies have implications for governance, the environment, health, rural development, education and commerce. These include issues of access, public information, cultural diversity, and the right to information. A package of awareness-building initiatives included seminars for women leaders on the gender implications of new technologies and public debates on ethical questions broadcast on radio and television.

INDIA: Empowering the people using new communication technologies

The vast sub-continent of India is a land of contrasts. Development and underdevelopment go hand in hand. How can new information and communication technologies help address the multiple problems facing Indian society? Despite the digital divide, how can these technologies help to empower ordinary people? Providing new vision and perspectives on a range of social issues in India, the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society has turned its attention to such ethical questions and to 'reading' the new media. It has initiated a year-long study of the roles played by new information and communication technologies and produced a trainer's manual and digital resources on new media literacy.

Photo credit: Abir Abdullah

Communication for Ecumenism

PHILIPPINES: Linking churches and grassroots communities

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) led programmes that support the restoration of justice, peace, and human dignity in conflict-situations in the country. For the NCCP, ecumenism is an expression of interaction between church leaders and grassroots communities. Communication initiatives promote ecumenism by facilitating better access to information, educational activities for the wider community about issues of dialogue and reconciliation, and providing platforms for reflection and joint action. Results were shared in newsletters, book compilations, CDs and the NCCP website and made available to communities throughout the country.
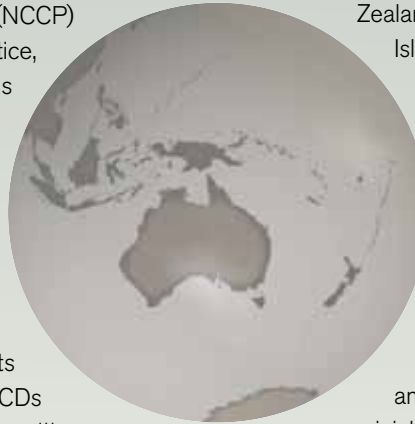
NEW ZEALAND: Pacific women tell their stories

Manahine Pasefika, a group of women theologians in New Zealand publishes its First Study Guide to empower Pacific Islands church women. Six members of Manahine contributed each of the six studies to the study guide, Women's Ministries in the New Testament and in Oceania: Six Reflection-Action Bible Studies. They related stories of women in their own island contexts to six New Testament ministries in which women were involved (apostle, evangelist, deacon, prophet, patron, and practical care). Each study guides participants in making concrete changes in their own churches and communities to enhance women's roles in these ministries. Manahine Pasefika intends to have the study guide translated into local languages.
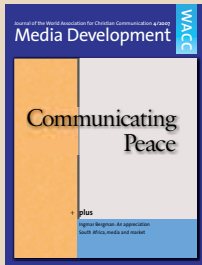
Fundamentalisms and the Media

SOUTH AFRICA: Studying culture to change gender discrimination

More than 10 years after the country's first democratic election, South African women are still disenfranchised in various parts of society. Women live in economically fragile communities, are often their family's sole providers, are the targets of violent abuse and are vulnerable to the sexual health crisis in the country. Religion has not only been the matrix of cultures and civilizations, but it has also structured today's reality – including that of gender. And the media have reinforced that structuring of reality in ways that have perpetuated particular views of womanhood. The Southern Africa Media and Gender Institute (SAMGI) is using a media monitoring programme and community discussions to help South African women analyse their colonial and Christian missionary history. It is an attempt to reflect on religious culture and to discover the roots of economic disadvantage and poverty, of racism and sexism, and to offer women resources to make their voices heard.

WACC runs an annual photo competition to promote visual expressions of communication. In 2007 the theme was 'Communication for peace'. The winner was P. Knobil with 'Peace March: Pittsburgh'.

Media Development, WACC's international quarterly journal, aims to bridge the divide between communication practitioners and academics. In 2007 it looked at different aspects of conflict transformation, covering 'Fundamentalisms Revisited', 'Mediating the Middle East', 'Media and Terror', and 'Communicating Peace'.

In 2007 the electronic bulletin **Media Action** was relaunched. Sent monthly to members, partners and affiliates, it now has a stronger focus on WACC activities, stories and news.

Two six-page **No-nonsense Guides** to New Technologies and Social Justice and to HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality and Communication were also published.

WACC supported the work of Ecumenical Juries at the four major film festivals as well as the 4th International Ecumenical Film Conference on the theme of 'From conflict to reconciliation in a range of cinematic contexts'. Held at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, it was jointly organised by INTERFILM, SIGNIS, GEP and WACC. The conference saw WACC-SIGNIS award its prize for a film dealing with human rights to 'Story of a Massacre Foretold' (photo right), by Scottish director Nick Higgins. The documentary recounts the massacre on 22 December

1997 of 45 Mayan men, women and children by an armed force in the village of Acteal, Chiapas, Mexico.

$\mathscr{W}\!eb$ **site**

Complete information about *WACC*, its many activities, programmes, public statements and initiatives can be found on WACC's website at **www.waccglobal.org**. It is a vital source of up-to-date news and information about current concerns and crucial to maintaining links with WACC partners of all kinds. Recently introduced sections include stories and illustrations of WACC's global work and activities. Other sections cover WACC's major communication programmes with links to detailed information and resource materials. The front page carries news, feature articles and events.

The website is easy to navigate and regularly updated with new information and photographs. Traffic has increased over the year with an average of 20,000 visits every month. Media Action, a monthly online collection of news items resumed in September 2007 focusing on the life of WACC's eight regional associations and the build-up to Congress 2008.

Communicators and media activists committed to promoting a culture of peace are taking part in **Congress 2008,** in Cape Town, South Africa, 6-10 October. The theme is Communication is Peace: Building viable communities.
This five-day event will focus on:

- Communication rights
- Media and gender justice
- Power, conflict and peace: Telling the story
- New communication and information technologies and peace

For more information, visit: www.waccglobal.info

Over 400 faith-based and secular communicators from around the world are expected to attend Congress. This is the fourth global Congress on communication organized by WACC. Previous events have taken place in the Philippines (1995), Mexico (1995), and the Netherlands (2001).

Congress will offer professional development and networking opportunities through: Keynote presentations by international experts in communication rights, media and gender justice, peace advocacy, and new communications technologies; regional case studies on communication for peace; daily workshop sessions exploring a myriad different communication approaches to the theme; opportunities to meet communication and peace activists and to network with people and organizations from different parts of the world; and a day-trip to Gugulethu, a local township area, and to Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was jailed.

Funding **partners**

WACC would like to thank its funding partners for their continued support.

Anonymous	FinnChurchAid, Finland
Bröt Für Alle, Switzerland	HEKS, Switzerland
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	ICCO, The Netherlands
Council for World Mission, United Kingdom	Presbyterian Church of Canada, Canada
EED, Germany	Stichting Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, USA	United Church of Canada, Canada
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Finland	United Methodist Church, USA
EZE, Germany	WACC, North America Region
Feed the Minds/SPCK, United Kingdom	Women's World Day of Prayer, Germany

In 2007 WACC's programme activities moved from a largely geographical basis towards a new thematic orientation. The challenge was to bring to life the vision of a new programme operating model approved in 2005 by WACC's international governing body, and to help our regional associations, their leaders and other project partners to travel along this new path. It required developing new skills, learning new approaches and working together as a team composed partly of continuing staff taking on new responsibilities and partly of new staff who joined WACC during the year.

All programme activities were merged into a single programme unit bringing together WACC's long-standing strengths: the ability to identify and form relationships with a range of local partners around the world, a network of well informed regional leaders, the capacity to carry forward innovative thinking and action on emerging global and local communication concerns, and a well informed and experienced international staff. These assets support several thematic programmes developed and carried out through a varying combination of key elements mentioned below.

Research and Studies

Contribute to the knowledge environment related to programme goals to support broader and deeper understanding of emerging and ongoing communication concerns.

Partners and Projects

Work with local/regional/global partners including community based and grass roots groups to carry out activities related to programme goals

Networks

Build and maintain regional and global networks of people and organisations working towards programme goals

Learning and Knowledge Sharing

Increase knowledge, build skills and share information resources through workshops, scholarships, print and electronic publications, and virtual resource centres

Gender Justice

Gender justice is a major underlying concern. The aim is that all programmes take a gender sensitive approach.

Evaluation and Organisational Learning

Assessing outcomes and impact and learning from successes and failures is crucial to ongoing viability, relevance and effectiveness.

*G*overnance **and Staff**

WACC-Canada is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of five Officers and 16 elected representatives of its Regional Associations. Its Officers are Dr Musimbi Kanyoro (President), Kenya; Mr Piet Halma (Vice-President), The Netherlands; Mrs Amany Latif Ebied (Secretary), Egypt; Rev Young-Cheol Cheon (Treasurer), Korea; and The Rev. Randy Naylor (General Secretary), Canada.

Programme Staff

Lavinia Mohr	Director of Programmes and Deputy General Secretary
Philip Lee	Deputy Director of Programmes and Editor of Media Development
Julienne Munyaneza	Programme Manager
María Teresa Aguirre	Programme Manager
Sarah Macharia	Programme Manager
Kristine Greenaway	Programme Manager
Upasana Sharma	Research and Programme Planning Officer
Dave Wanless	Congress Arrangements Coordinator

Services Staff

Tim Meadley	Manager of Administration
Teresia Syombua Mutuku	Communication Officer and Website Manager
Juan Carlos Recio	Funding Development Coordinator
Gisèle Langendries	Administrator for Funding and Programmes
Richard Cridlan	Finance Controller
Jitu Somani	Finance Manager
Edgar Bernal-Martinez	Administrative Assistant
Mike Rowse	Web Development Coordinator

WACC is a worldwide, membership-based Association governed by a Board of Directors. Through eight geographically-based Regional Associations its Members determine the composition of the Board. As a result, the organisation is able to respond to the needs of those directly involved in communication.

Corporate Members include churches, publishers, media outlets, educational institutions, and communication organisations. Personal Members include a wide variety of communication professionals.

At the end of 2007, WACC had 394 Personal Members and 297 Corporate Members in 128 countries around the globe. In addition, there were 542 Personal Affiliates and 177 Corporate Affiliates. This is a total of 1,410 individuals and organisations who have pledged their support for WACC's mission.

WACC members receive its international journal Media Development as part of their privileges. It currently has a circulation of 1,200. Members are also among the 6,081 recipients of WACC's e-bulletins in English and Spanish and the 'Who Makes the News' e-publications dedicated to media and gender justice.

Region	Membership Fees	
	Personal	Corporate
North America	40.00 USD	120.00 USD
Elsewhere	30.00 USD	100.00 USD
Students	10.00 USD	

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WACC

taking sides