Call for Small Project Proposals

Strengthening Communication Rights and Public Voices through Community Radio

May 2015

1. Background

WACC exists for those people in the world who are systematically denied communication rights. Communication rights are at the core of WACC's work and WACC views community media as embodying such rights which are inextricably linked to all other human rights and which enable all people everywhere to express themselves individually and collectively in order to improve their lives and participate fully in society.

Community media are widely recognised by governments, international development agencies, and civil society organisations alike as key agents of participatory development. Their reach and practices are a unique way of reaching and involving people. This is particularly true of community radio, the most prevalent of all community media, which is a vital alternative both to state owned and commercial private radio. Community radio's affordability and reach make it a powerful agent of social change.

Recognition of community radio as a legitimate and key element in development efforts and the potential to empower marginalised and disenfranchised communities, has pushed a number of countries to introduce laws and regulations that acknowledge community radios as a distinct media sector. In those countries an enabling environment for community radios has been created.

Despite these advances, challenges persist at global and regional level and in their joint 2010 statement the four international special UN mandated rapporteurs on freedom of expression (*) expressed their concerns at the lack of specific legal recognition of the community broadcasting sector in licensing systems which are based on criteria that are appropriate to this sector as well as the failure to reserve adequate frequencies for community broadcasters or to establish appropriate funding support mechanism .

While at regional level the challenges vary, at global level there is some coincidence. The most highlighted global challenges are: lack of proper enabling legislation, community radio sustainability, and scarce sharing of community radio networks practices and knowledge. A fourth challenge indicates that the exclusion and marginalising of women witnessed in mainstream media is sometimes reproduced in community media practices.

(* the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, .the Representative on Freedom of the Media of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression for the Organisation of American States, and the Special Rapporteur of Freedom of Expression and the Access to Information for the African Commission on Human and People's Rights)

2. What does WACC want to achieve?

WACC is committed to strengthening public voices and participation of poor, marginalised, excluded and dispossessed people and communities in communication. WACC believes that communication rights strengthen public voices and participation of marginalised sectors in society by ensuring that those voices are heard. Community radio can be a vehicle for communication rights.

The aim of the **initiative Communication Rights and Public Voices: Strengthening Community Radio** is to increase the number of communities benefitting from new, stronger and more inclusive community radio in order to advance democratic participation and active citizenship of marginalised people and communities.

WACC is seeking project partners in the Global South to build on efforts to develop community radio so that more communities, especially in rural areas and areas where community radio is relatively new, benefit from stronger and/or more inclusive community radio.

Priority consideration will be given to regions of the world where community radio is less established.

WACC is committed to gender equality and expects projects to demonstrate a gender perspective.

WACC also encourages project applicants to consider the needs of young people and people with disabilities.

Projects will achieve one or more of the following expected outcomes:

- Strengthened community radio (broadcast or Internet) associations and/or networks in areas where community radio is new and where community radios are advancing communication rights.
- Establishment of pioneering community radio (broadcast or Internet) in countries or areas where community radio is new and there are significant unmet needs.
- Strategies to advance and ensure long-term participation of women in all aspects of community radio.
- Better and stronger knowledge and good practice-sharing in the community radio movement.

WACC's role
WACC will provide a communications infrastructure focused on information and knowledge sharing.

Who Can Apply?
Church-related and secular institutions and civil society organizations are eligible to seek support. WACC will check the standing and credibility of applicants. WACC will consider only one application at a time from each organization. WACC does not accept project applications from individuals or government institutions.

How much money will WACC give for a project?
Most project support provided by WACC ranges between 8,000 to 10,000 Euros. We will consider grants up to about 15,000 Euros. A grant can be for the entire budget or for part of a larger budget up to 30,000 Euros whose balance of funds is guaranteed by another partner.

Due to the nature of agreements with some of WACC's funding partners, WACC is normally able to provide funds for new projects that last no longer than one year.

What does WACC <u>NOT</u> support?
- Projects whose main purpose is income generation.
- Emergency appeals to replace destroyed equipment
- Programmes that are purely denominational in content and outreach
- Purchases and/or maintenance of land, buildings, offices, and vehicles, and recurring expenditures such as rent and utilities
- Institutional operational costs such as regular staff salaries, endowment fund or revolving fund
- Equipment for purely office administration purposes
- Travel to conferences
- Ongoing projects that started before a request for support to WACC
- Ongoing or new periodical publications
- Cost of air-time
- Per diems (although direct cost of food and lodging for project activities is supported)
- Debt repayment, contingency and depreciation
- Proposals from individuals not representing an eligible organisation
- Proposals from government entities
- Applications from previous project holders with a poor reporting track record
- Applications previously declined by WACC
- A total budget of more than 30,000 Euros

What happens after WACC approves your project proposal?
WACC must raise funds from its donor partners for all its activities including project support. WACC has a long relationship with many donor partners. Every effort will be made to raise the necessary funds as soon as possible. WACC is not in a position to guarantee that the funds will be available to the project until they have been secured. We are fully aware that this uncertainty makes planning difficult. WACC is committed to forwarding funds for the project as soon as they have been raised.

How to apply
The application process consists of two stages.

Stage One: Concept Notes

1. Applicants are invited to complete a short form based on the criteria for project support.

2. Your concept note must be accompanied by letters of reference from two individuals representing verifiable national or international organizations (other than your own) who are familiar with your organization. The letters are expected to comment on your organization's past work and suitability to undertake the proposed project.

3. The concept note deadline for projects commencing in early 2016 is **26 July 2015**.

4. WACC will review the concept notes in the context of programme criteria and current priorities. Only some applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Decisions will be announced by **4 September 2015**.

Stage Two: Full Proposals
5. Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal by the deadline of **4 October 2015**. Please note that there will be only four weeks to complete and submit a full proposal.

6. Final decisions will be communicated to applicants in **December 2015**.

Where should the application be sent?
If your project fulfills the criteria above and clearly corresponds to WACC's current programme priorities, you may send your concept note (once only please) by email attachment in Word format (**not PDF**) to the address below with subject line: **Strengthening community radio.**

PLEASE DO NOT SEND THE CONCEPT NOTE TO ANY OTHER WACC ADDRESS. You should receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your concept note by 31 July 2015.

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