



**WORLD ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RADIO BROADCASTERS
(AMARC)
AMARC INTERNATIONAL**

AMARC – ACTIVITIES REPORT 2004

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1. INTRODUCTION

2004 has been a good year for the community radio movement. There is an increase in the recognition of the social impact of community radio and AMARC, even though it does not embrace the whole movement, plays an important role in facilitating the achievement of development goals, mainly in poverty reduction, inclusion of women and marginalized and democratization of the communication.

In the perspective of AMARC International, the International Secretariat staff is becoming an efficient working team and appropriate financial management and operational efficiency, has permitted to reduce the accumulated deficit to some 13,500 cad. This is the result of the establishment of good governance that allows for discussions for an integrated management approach for increased efficiency of the whole organization, avoiding overlapping with the regional structures. The relations among the different bodies of AMARC are becoming further connected and coordinated. We have reinforced working relationships with the regional offices and supported the development of our presence in Asia accompanying the development of community radio in the region. The image of AMARC in the Web has been ameliorated with the new website; the relations with the members have been reestablished and three newsletters have been distributed this year. The Round table on community media for sustainable development held in Marrakech, in November 2004, was a groundbreaking activity that paved the way for the establishment of the much needed community media Fund.

In 2004, AMARC has been able to better coordinate delivery of the international and regional activities of AMARC programmes and projects of the AMARC 8 Strategic Plan 2003-2006, voted by the members in Katmandu in February 2003. We have secured funding from usual donors and from new ones, such as the Ford Foundation. AMARC representatives have been present in main international events of civil society; have reinforced strategic partnerships and international institutions, among others, FAO, UNESCO, ITU, EcoSoc, CRIS Campaign, IFEX, UNIFEM, and GKP. We have strongly advocated in multilateral institutions and international Forums for an enabling environment for community radio and for the recognition of its social impact in allowing the voices of the marginalized to be heard. AMARC has also been able to develop policy exchanges regarding the challenges facing the community radio movement through electronic lists and building coalitions and partnerships, as the Campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society.

2. - GENERAL OPERATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL REINFORCEMENT

Activities in 2004 in the International Secretariat were centred in re-establishing the international secretariat as an operational entity of AMARC, thus allowing for proper support to members, coordination of project delivery and development of new initiatives, policy discussions and definitions for the community radio movement. The new team (4 staff) in the International Secretariat with the support of the Executive Committee normalized the operations and the finances by undertaking a greater workload that would have needed a larger team and counting on the support of the members of the Executive committee.

Financially, the accumulated deficit was reduced from 113,578 cad to 13,865 cad thanks to a surplus of 2004 operations of 98,400 cad. In order to achieve these results we have developed tools for following cash, budget and project allocation performance. AMARC

has been able to secure fundraising from various sources at the international and regional levels. The financial situation of AMARC International and Latin America has slowed the results on core funding initiatives. We expect openings in the future. Support for specific projects has permitted to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan for 2004. The support grant from the Ford Foundation has reinforced our global advocacy program as well as in the regions. Funding from other quarters such as SIDA (Sweden), IDRC (Canada), Development & Peace (Canada), EED (Germany), Ford Foundation (USA), SDC (Switzerland) among others ensure adequate financing but more effort is needed if we want to reinforce partnerships and respond to the needs of our members worldwide. We still have important dependency from DFID (UK), and there is need to diversify funding.

The executive played a key role this year. It had monthly teleconferences and a face-to-face meeting. The annual meeting of the International Board of Directors of AMARC was held in Marrakech in November on the side of the Roundtable for community media and sustainable development organized by AMARC and the Orbicom meeting on Africa and Arab States and the Information society. Some highlights were the discussions on the situation of community radio sector worldwide and the threats and opportunities created by globalization and the importance of influencing the WSIS process. The process to define the host of AMARC 9 world Conference to be held in 2006 was launched. The Board adopted a series of concept papers to increase the efficiency of the Association in terms of internal governance, communications, evaluation and financing. The integration of the AMARC websites in 2004 was an important step forward in presenting a friendly access to the world of AMARC, ameliorating our visibility and coherence.

AMARC Africa had a strategic planning in February 2004 where it decided to concentrate the efforts in capacity building and service to its members. It opened a sub-regional office in Dakar, Senegal, to attend the specific needs of West and Center Africa. Simbani, AMARC Africa News agency was reinforced with 15 correspondents and seminars for content development for VIH/SIDA, food security, local content and news were held. The assistance in access to ICTs was facilitated for 24 radios and capacity building in the use of ICTs was enhanced. Capacity building was also developed to create an enabling environment for community radio, enhanced with the coordination with the AMARC Global advocacy program. Capacity building was also a key aspect of the Gender programme of the Women International Network in Africa. It empowered women to participate in community radios and in advocacy or broadcast campaigns. The Africa Portal was put on line in French, English and Portuguese. AMARC Africa participated in several global (Women's International Day, Voices without Frontiers), as well as in regional broadcasting for the World Food Day.

In 2004 AMARC Latin America and the Caribbean region successfully ended its restructuring and decentralization process in 2004, consolidating its standing in the Santiago regional board meeting in March 2004. The governance model developed by AMARC LAC is decentralized. Its regional board has sub regional representations from Mexico, Central America, Andes, Brazil, Southern Cone and the Caribbean. It also counts on 18 National representations in most countries of the region. Besides the regional coordinator and staff in the Argentina regional Office, the staff responsible for the programmes is decentralized. The main areas of work in 2004 were the advocacy programme based in Uruguay, supported presentations to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, a seminar in Brazil and developed the solidarity alerts and lobbying connected to the Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign. The programme is a key part of the AMARC global advocacy programme keeping updates on national legislations for the communication sector and particularly for community radios. Pulsar, AMARC LAC, information agency, participated in world broadcastings in the WSF in Mumbai, for the WSIS and developed its subscription to news distribution as well as regional events coverage. The gender programme based in Brazil participated in

world broadcastings and supported with capacity building its members. Content programmes such as Centro America en Sintonia and World Environment citizenship and Onda rural related to ICT and rural radio.

One of the important advances in 2004 was in the establishment of AMARC Asia Pacific region. Following the plan of action decided at the AMARC 8 world Assembly in February 2003. The regional office in Katmandu, Nepal was established and legal difficulties solved. The working regional board elected in Katmandu held a meeting in the Philippines and reinforced the plan of action. Membership was expanded, a website was put on line and the region participated for the first time in global broadcasting campaigns. The regional office successfully organized the coverage and participation in the World Social Forum held for the first time in Mumbai, India. The Global advocacy programs is a key line of action for the region where community radio is struggling for recognition and where state monopoly is still a key factor in spite of the liberalization of the airwaves.

In Europe and North America, relationship with the members and national federations were reestablished encouraging their participation in global campaigns, in advocacy and policy discussions as well as in supporting community radios elsewhere. There is need to advance in 2005 towards integrated proposals explaining how AMARC will execute them ensuring no overlapping by regions. The key intervention of the International Secretariat will be to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experiences between regions and thus increase social impact. The resolution adopted by the IBOD in Marrakech in November 2004, following the proposal of the fundraising action committee, was a step forward into proper allocation of efforts within the AMARC structure avoiding overlapping.

3. PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES OF AMARC INTERNATIONAL 2004

As defined in the AMARC 8 World Conference, our strategic plan 2003-2006 determined the activities for 2004 in the areas of public education and social mobilization, legislation and advocacy, capacity building and ICTs; of the Women International Network (WIN); the Asia regional development and the Community Media Fund.

3a. – Public Education Programme

Public education projects in AMARC pursue the objective of empowering civil society, democratization and inclusion of women and the marginalized. One key aspect is establishing partnerships and coalitions with civil society organizations in order to increase the impact of the communication alternatives for development put forward by the community media sector. Other key line of action is related to support and broadcast content allowing people's voices to be heard as a basic aspect for communications for development.

Main activities executed in 2004 were the participation of the AMARC delegation in the WSF in Mumbai, the broadcasting of radio campaigns intended to allow local communities to be heard and exchanges of information to support poverty reduction, inclusion, conflict resolution and others.

In January 2004, AMARC actively participated in the discussions for the World Social Forum in Mumbai, India, organizing workshops on communication rights in the information society, on Women and community radio and training for web casting. It was the first time the event went to India, opening the way for the development of new partnerships and for the development of civil society in the region. AMARC entered the International council of the WSF. AMARC also participated in the European Social Forum and in the Americas Social Forum held in Quito.

Information about legislations, content for radio in areas related to VIH/SIDA, environment, Human Rights, food security, trade issues, media in conflict and others were made available to community radios and the public. One key global activity was the Radio Voices without frontiers 21 March 2004. It was the 7th annual broadcasting campaign organized by AMARC to mark the United Nations International Day against racism and discrimination. A highlight of this global broadcast was the contribution of Asian community radios. Altogether, more than 200 community radios participated in the web streaming reaching some 2 million listeners around the world, in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and in North America. Languages used were English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and local languages ranging from Nepalese to Mapudugun.

AMARC also developed a new look for its websites, integrating the resources in order to facilitate interaction and exchanges between community radios and with the audiences. AMARC Link newsletter was widely distributed in English, French and Spanish.

3b. – Legislation and Global Advocacy programme

AMARC continued to be actively involved in the campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society following the Geneva phase of the WSIS. AMARC coordinated the participation on the preparatory committees in 2004 leading to the second phase of the WSIS to be held in Tunis in November 2005. AMARC was actively represented in the discussions Tunis and Geneva and followed the relationship with the International telecommunications Union. It also participated in a fact-finding mission organized by IFEX regarding the Human Rights situation in Tunis.

It also participated in the discussions in UNESCO, leading to an International Convention on the Protection of Cultural diversity.

AMARC representatives actively participated in the 9th Roundtable for Communications for Development organized by the FAO in September in Rome. An international Agreement was established with the FAO to reinforce collaboration with AMARC Africa and to put forward the multi-partner agreement "Onda Rural" in support to rural radios in Latin America.

In 2004, AMARC reinforced its Global Advocacy Programme in terms of country monitoring, alert production and capacity building for lobbying National authorities as well as international organizations for the right to communicate. This programme was launched in August 2004 in Latin America, Africa and Asia as a groundbreaking initiative to mainstream community radio and allow the poor and marginalized to be heard.

3d. – Technology and capacity building

Capacity building activities were done mainly in the field of radio production, management and use of new Information and communication technologies. The International secretariat supported activities and reporting on the Catalyzing access to information technologies in Africa (CATIA). This support resulted in that SIMBANI won an international prize for the navigability of its website.

Support was also given in Latin America, Asia and Africa, on the use of ICT in interactive web cast and exchange of programs between radios through the Internet for the World Social Forum, the Radio Voices Without Frontiers, and regionally in Asia for the Broadcasting for Beijing + 10 Conference or the Americas Social Forum in Quito.

Capacity building manuals in several topics (audience development; radio formats, strategic planning, etc.) was also developed in partnership with other organizations in

developing the Multimedia Tool Kit with UNESCO, Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and others. In house or external resources manuals on several areas were also made available to members in terms of legislations, sustainability and management, use of ICT

3f. – Women’s participation

Women empowerment in community radio as well as in the society at large is a key-crosscutting objective of AMARC reinforced by the networking and the activities of the Women International Network. There has been in 2004 specific support being given and coordination done with the WIN Vice-president and regional representatives to develop women participation and leadership in community radios. There has also been support to ensure WIN representatives in international activities and in streaming in specific conferences. Among others, in January for the World Social Forum in Mumbai, India; in February, for the Preparatory committee of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS); for the Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing + 10 in June and early July 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The regional women international network received also support in the coverage of the Voices Without Frontiers campaign, in the reinforcement of the relationship with the World march of Women activities in December in Rwanda. There was also support for the campaign against violence against women in Latin America.

The reorganization of the WIN included the drafting of the 3 year plan of action in order to better coordinate efforts and establish strategic priorities as well as funding capacities.

3g. – Community Radio in the Asia-Pacific region development

The AMARC 8 world Assembly in February 2003 gave a specific mandate to the International secretariat to help the development of the MARC Asia Pacific Region, involving diverse countries and community radio experiences. In 2004, a regional coordinator was hired and the regional office in Katmandu, Nepal was established and legal difficulties solved. Networking of community radios and NGO has been supported and encouraged through meetings and the use of communication tools such as mailing lists and the Asia Pacific website, as well as the Asia Pacific Newsletter, resulting in an increase of memberships. The working regional board elected in Katmandu held a meeting in the Philippines in January and September, reinforcing the plan of action and the definitions for the region.

The activities also increased the visibility of community radio in the region. Among others, the organization of AMARC presence in the World Social Forum in Mumbai in January, the participation for the first time in the global broadcast of Radio Voices without Frontiers in March, the participation in the WSIS process and in the High level meeting held in September in Thailand. The Global advocacy programs is a key line of action for the region where community radio is struggling for recognition and where state monopoly is still a key factor in spite of the liberalization of the airwaves there were seminars held in Katmandu, Nepal and in Bandung, Indonesia, that is becoming a good opportunity for the development of community radio in the region.

3h. – The Community Media Fund

The AMARC 8 Global Conference proposed the challenge of building a Community Media Fund to support the sustainability of the sector and facilitate up scaling of community radio in countries where the enabling environment allows it. During 2004, we concentrated in exploring strategies for support of the sector in Africa in order to

enhance the impact of the sector in achieving the millennium development goals; in order to exchange experiences and compare models. These discussions converged in the Marrakech Roundtable on Community media and Sustainable Development, held in Marrakech, November 21st, 2004. In the closing declaration, the participants agreed in calling for a donor/civil society partnership to invest in and support community driven information and communication initiatives, using traditional media and new ICTs including projects that make provision for the poorest communities, for cultural and linguistic diversity and for the equal participation of women and girls. The participants agreed in the establishment of a Task Force on Funding and Resourcing Community Media to take forward the proposals and evaluate its implementation.

4. - LOOKING FORWARD

AMARC and the community radio movement face many challenges. As discussed during the International Board of Directors Assembly in Marrakech in November 2004, donors like the access to local partners facilitated by a grassroots international organization as AMARC, but tend to overlook the vital role of the international secretariat in terms of global advocacy for enabling environments, governance, evaluation of social impact and experience sharing. We should consider the International Secretariat as the coach in funding research in interface with local teams, by regions. The burden of an integrated approach that shares responsibilities and attaches financing as a global movement is upon us.

AMARC faces the challenge of supporting the local and global impact of the community radio movement in a context that is not favorable to global NGOs. On the one hand, AMARC is a grassroots organization at the service of its constituency, on the other hand it is a global NGO that needs to represent the community media movement in order to ensure the recognition of the sector, increase the social impact of community radio through experience sharing of best experiences, evaluation and capacity building, among others. Even though, 2004 was a good year in terms of the recovery of operational capacity, with better coordination and an increased presence of AMARC, both at the local as well as the global levels, strategic thinking and discussions are needed in order to improve the efficiency of our organization at several levels. The establishment of discussion committees will allow preparing the way for the analysis of our strengths and weaknesses in order to help establish a clearer picture of the challenges we are facing and how we may confront them.