



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

**AMARC – ACTIVITIES REPORT 2005**

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## AMARC INTERNATIONAL – ACTIVITIES REPORT 2005

### 1. INTRODUCTION

2005 started with the 4<sup>th</sup> World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January, and ended with the Tunis summit on the Information Society thus marked a year consecrated to communication rights efforts by community radio practitioners worldwide. The first AMARC Asia Pacific Regional Conference held in November 2005 was also a key development for community radios in the region. Likewise there is wider recognition of community radio social impact in facilitating the achievement of development goals, mainly in poverty reduction, inclusion of women and marginalized and democratization of the communication. Consequently, and in preparation of the AMARC 9 world conference the International Board of Directors decided on the launching in 2006 of an evaluation process on the impact of community radio in poverty reduction and in achieving millennium development goals, MDGs.

From the perspective of AMARC International, 2005 was a very good year as the accumulated financial deficit was erased and a surplus of close to 100,000 cad> The new situation will support the International secretariat efforts to reinforce the links with the donor community. The international secretariat can also concentrate in its role of developing good governance in AMARC worldwide by assisting the regional bodies and supporting an integrated management approach for increased efficiency of the whole organization, avoiding overlapping with the regional structures. The valuation process will also include an AMARC evaluation element to better prioritize its activities according to the environment.

The relations among the different bodies of AMARC are becoming further connected and coordinated. AMARC under the coordination of the International secretariat advanced strongly with the global advocacy program in terms of country reports, developing advocacy campaigns, regional and country seminars as well policy definitions. We have reinforced working relationships with the regional offices and supported the development of our presence in Asia with the first Asia Pacific regional conference. In Africa, we have been supporting the efforts by the regional office to hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pan African Conference, and adaptation for the end of the catia project. In Latin America there has been support for the organization of the advocacy held in April in Nairobi accompanying the development of community radio in the region. There are very important challenges to face in this domain.

Communications with public and members has been developed reinforced policy discussions and debates in the community radio movement, and communication for development stakeholders. New applications and better integration has been developed for the websites and ICT use in holding world broadcast have been reinforced as a capacity building tool. The newsletters to members have been developed and there has been the production of InteRadio, the specialized magazine of community radio broadcasters and challenges.

The main shortcomings for the year were related to difficulties in reinforcing partnerships with stakeholders and smoothing out the relations with the donors to go ahead with the objective of developing a much needed community media Fund. 2006 will be under the sign of the 9<sup>th</sup> World Conference where a new strategic plan for 2006-2010 needs to be established.

## 2. - GENERAL OPERATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL REINFORCEMENT

Activities in 2005 in the International Secretariat were centred in increasing its capacity of the 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, AMARC finished 2005 with close to 100,000 cad, accumulated surplus resulting from an operations surplus for the year. In order to achieve this performance we have reinforced the use of tools for following cash, budget and project allocation performance. It has corresponded though to funding strictly connected to project delivery. This reduces the operational flexibility of the Secretariat and highlights the need for core funding. The only way to achieve this is through an integrated approach that shows the global nature of AMARC and its capacity to act globally as well as at the grassroots level. The relationship with SIDA was clarified and Africa is getting new support, the situation of Latin America is in standby. Some increased support has been obtained from some donors, particularly from Development & Peace, from EED, from IDRC. Others are in stand by for project renewal, such as for the Ford Foundation after a one year prospecting grant. Furthermore, some relations with old donors such as SDC and CIDA have been restored for specific projects, and some new donors are contributing for the first time as is the case of Novib and Australian Aid. There are possible new donors such as UNIFEM. There is room for improvement particularly in terms of major donor s such as DFID, DANIDA and others. In other cases, such as the relationship with FAO, in spite of a global agreement, the project relationship has no coordination between regions, not allowing for experience sharing and best experiences exchanges. Efforts in this regard by the International Secretariat have been fruitless.

The challenge that remains is to develop a global consolidated annual financial and narrative report of all the components of AMARC. This is a basic tool to support an integrated fundraising strategy for AMARC that will allow benefiting from the positive environment to community radio that exists in the donor community. From a more concrete perspective, this is a practical tool because it will show that AMARC as a whole has a larger capacity to absorb global projects than what it can at a country or regional level.

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 Hammamet, Tunis in November on the side of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Some highlights were the discussions on the importance of evaluating the social impact of community radio in achieving millennium development goals, and to engage in strategic planning process for the definition of the strategic plan at the AMARC9 World Conference to be held in Amman, Jordan in November 2006. The Board adopted a series of concept papers to increase the efficiency of the Association in terms of concept paper to define the guidelines for the evaluation and strategic planning process.

There has been support for specific regional activities bringing the global perspective or experiences. There is a general agreement on the importance of the exchange between regions. Language has proven a difficult barrier but there have been some good experiences specially in international events..

The international secretariat activities range from the facilitation and the active participation in meetings to specific services given to the regions (mainly in terms of information and web services).

During 2005, AMARC Africa continued to create and to cement partnerships as a strategy to maximize services to its members. Collaboration has proven to be an effective means for extending partnership to others and generating involvement in the process of accomplishing the goals for AMARC Africa. There were some challenges to the year in the implementation of projects and activities resulting in the postponement and shifting of activities. AMARC Africa had its 3<sup>rd</sup> Pan African Conference in April, in Nairobi, Kenya. One hundred and fifty (150) participants from community radios of all the continent and civil society initiatives, policy makers and regional and international partners attended the Conference. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Pan African conference discussed the challenges for the region elected the new regional board of directors and defined the strategic plan for the next three years. Some highlights are eight training sessions, the gender caucus activities for the WSIS, equipment roll-out for stations, 20 country reports and media policy papers were developed. 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 2005 AMARC Latin America and the Caribbean region reinforced its decentralized structure with the regional office based in Buenos Aires. There are 18 national representations in most countries of the region. The program responsables are based in countries where the conditions for coordinating the programmes are more efficient. In February 2006, AMARC LAC was able to conduct a regional board of directors meeting with all the national representatives in Porto Alegre. The main areas of work in 2005 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 Porto Alegre, and for many other events, such as the Americas Summit and the and the people of the Americas summit in Mar del Plata, Argentine, and for the WSIS. Capacity building programmes were also developed. Content programmes such as Centro America en Sintonia, World Environment citizenship and Onda rural related to ICT and rural radio.

One of the important advances in 2005 was the reinforcement of the Asia Pacific region, thanks to the First AMARC Asia Pacific Conference where a regional board was elected, the challenges of the region were analyzed in a Jakarta declaration, and the plan of action orientations were defined. The office in Nepal was reinforced and there was the participation of AMARC in the International Advocacy mission participated by 12 leading international organizations including UNESCO, International federation of Journalists, to see the situation of press freedom and freedom of expression in Nepal. AMARC launched an international solidarity campaign with community and independent radios in Nepal. Indonesia was also an important country for advocacy work. There was a seminar held in July in Yogyakarta. The Global advocacy program was a key line of action for the region. The production of 15 country papers and analysis has been serving as a base for action in the region.

In Europe and North America, relationship with the members and national federations are being reinforced by the way of encouraging their participation in Radio Voices without frontiers and in policy discussions as well as in supporting community radios elsewhere. An agreement has been established with the national federation of Community Broadcasters (USA) in order to better reinforce the links with community

radios (NFCB) in the United States of America. Links have also been reinforced with the national Campus and Community Radios (NCRA) the Alliance of Community Radios of Canada- *Reseau francophone des Ameriques* (ARC-RFA), with *Association des radio diffuseurs communautaires de Quebec* (ARCQ). Delegations of Canadian and USA community radios participated in the WSF, WSIS and the Peoples Summit. In Europe there has been a reinforcement of the links between AMARC and community radios and the advocacy work regarding the development of the European community have been developed. Further to participate in the European Social Forum and the WSIS, there was extensive support in terms of the participation in monitoring the freedom of expression situation in Tunis.

2005 was the year for the development of communication tools in the secretariat. First of all, the adaptation of new communication technologies have resulted in increased amount, efficiency and appropriateness of the information distributed as press releases, announcements or content material. The efficiency of the distribution of information has increased with new applications allowing for the establishment of lists according to the different levels of disclosure. As a result, the number of visits to the website have increased ten fold. There has also been a constant flow of membership demands from radios as well as individuals and civil society groups.

The website was developed to show all AMARC network and a resource base rendering it the portal for community radio. The AMARC websites network, addresses general as well as specific issues of interest to members and there has been an important effort in terms of making available the web to different regions and countries. In this regard, it is also important to note that community radios are broadcasting constantly through our website as part of a pilot project. This links the AMARC to radios in the ground and highlights our constituency-based nature. In terms of more traditional communication tools, we have brought back to life *InteRadio*, and rendered AMARC Link a regular production, available in the website as well as in hard copy. The key objective achieved is to present a comprehensive global image of AMARC that highlight our international, regional and local presence and our grassroots strong component.

The Global advocacy project created the condition for the production of more than fifty country papers centred in the study of the legislation. There has been also production of Manuals for the MMTK project sponsored by UNESCO. The *Obsmedia* website, along the *legislaciones* website of AMARC LAC are essential tools for community radios working for communication rights and freedom of expression. There was also the support through the posting or distribution of papers regarding the communication rights campaign, regarding the cultural diversity campaign as well as those related to content topics. The distribution of declarations and principles related to community radio sector are essential tools to the definition of the sector.

A substantial amount work was dedicated to the decision process on the venue for AMARC 9 in support of the executive and the debates in the IBOD. The SG travelled to Amman to assess the organization of the Conference. Follow-up with the local host organization will be shared as a topic for the IBOD.

### **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. This was the end year and it can be said that we have properly achieved the main objectives in the plan.

#### **3a. – Public Education Programme**

AMARC seek all through 2005 to increase awareness on the public about the community radio role in communication, as a strategic tool for the protection and development of democracy. There was highlighting the importance to increase the level of democratic participation and the empowerment of local communities by reinforcing the capacities and abilities of practitioners to broadcast and transfer knowledge to those communities.

Main activities executed in 2005 were the participation of the AMARC delegation in the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre the end of January 2005. This forum was the one where civil society recognized the importance of community media and in general of communications in developing public awareness as well as social movement mobilization. AMARC actively participated in the World Forum on Communications. It also organized workshops (Cultural Diversity, Communication rights, Women & the millennium goals, and a working session of regional representatives of the Women International Network. The coverage of the Forum coordinated by PULSAR was webcasted in several languages and for more than 10 hours a day bringing together community radio journalists from Africa Latin America USA and Canada and Europe. AMARC also participated in the meetings of the international committee in the Haye and in Barcelona on the margin of the European Social Forum. There was also support to the European Forum in Barcelona and to the coverage of the counter-summit of the Group of 8 in the UK.

The global webcast campaign for the March 8 Women's day was held in conjunction with the Consultative Status of Women meeting of the UN on the Beijing +10 platform and the launch of the World March of Women Charter for Humanity campaign. The VSF global campaign on March 21<sup>st</sup> was also held this year, with the participation of community radios from Asia Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America. (See annex for impact).

There was also the support to the World March of Women final rally in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in October 17, in collaboration with the World march of women. At the beginning of November the 3<sup>rd</sup> People's Summit in Mar del Plata Argentina, was covered by Pulsar and by a Canadian delegation of 8 community radio journalists. The WSIS final summit was held in Tunis, Tunisia, and AMARC made a global coverage, and developed meetings of the Communications Forum as well as the best experiences of ICT & community radios. Advocacy work in support of the communication rights and human rights in Tunisia took an important place in our activities for the summit.

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.

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 continues to be 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 in the year of the second phase of the WSIS. At the multilateral level, substantial follow up efforts were done to ensure participation of AMARC delegates in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Prepcoms of the WSIS, by our own means and in relation to the CRIS campaign. A website as a reference source of our activities was also implemented in the building up of our participation in the second phase of Tunis. The President of AMARC partnered with IFEX in developing the Tunisian Monitoring Group, to oversee the respect of freedom of expression in that country host of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of WSIS. Several activities and a coverage of the WSIS was done by AMARC delegates and journalists coming from all over the world.

The main objective for 2005 in this field was to create a working solidarity network mechanism monitoring situation of community radio in particular and community media in general globally. This was obtained in part by the Obsmedia website but more work is needed in order to establish a working network.

The AMARC Lobbying and advocacy program for 2005, looks to influence world civil society as well multilateral discussions and Forums. This was integrated to the long standing campaign in favours of the recognition of community media as a tiers sector of communication with the development of support material, the website Obsmedia and alert campaigns.

Also at the multilateral level, AMARC followed up the discussion for the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity mainly through the CRIS Campaign. AMARC also participated in the Steering committee organizing the World Conference on Communication for Development expected to be held in October 2006 in Italy with the objective to mainstream communications for development.

In terms of coalition building, besides the CRIS campaign, AMARC reinforced the links with IPS at the World Social Forum. We ensured the participation of a delegate in the meeting of the WSF International committee in the Netherlands and in Barcelona. No follow-up could be ensured for the meeting in Mali.

Regarding campaigns for freedom of expression, In Nepal, following up the King takeover, restrictions to community and independent media were imposed under the state of emergency and lately an ordinance avoiding the production of news and public affairs information. The SG accompanied an advocacy mission with 13 International Organizations, including UNESCO. An international support campaign to community radios was launched and had an important impact in the working capacity of the Save the Independent radio Movement struggle for communication rights. In this regard, the First Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Jakarta was an important occasion to consolidate the regional support to Asia and to develop strategic advocacy plans for the whole region.

The production of more than 50 country papers on the situation of community radio and related matters was an important basic policy tools for the definition of a more comprehensive exchange of information and of best experiences in enabling community radio access to the waves. In this regard, the existent *legislaciones* website, and the *Obsmedia* Website are becoming important tools to build up the work for community media.

AMARC International gave support to the execution of regional or country seminars in connection to the Global advocacy project. A seminar was conducted in Indonesia and a third one was done in conjunction the Asia Pacific Conference. In Latin America, seminars were conducted in Brazil and at the regional level. In Africa, there were seminars in three countries as well as during the Pan African Conference.

Furthermore, AMARC coordinated the alerts regarding the situation of specific community radios. More than 70 alerts were distributed at various levels. The effects varied from one country to the other.

### **3c. – Technology and capacity building**

2005 was an important year in terms of consolidating our network. The Database for members and the regional or country websites were updated. AMARC International bought its own server and established better management mechanisms for the electronic lists. There were new pages opened or reorganized for WIN, for Mexico, for community radios in Africa, for Nepal, for the Asia Pacific Conference, for the WSIS process. The transfer of capacities was reinforced with the World webcasting campaigns in Porto Alegre, for March 8, with VSF and other activities.

Capacity building activities was 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.

The execution of 3 manuals for the MMTK project in January 2005 (Strategic technology planning, audience participation and on radio formats) increased the manuals available to members. Besides these tools, there was substantial work done in terms of the production of publications using the Internet (AMARC Link, InteRadio, etc). Some community radios were established in the website to highlight their programming.

### **3d. – 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 2005 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 Porto Alegre, Brazil, for the March 8 launch of the Women's Charter for Humanity, the March 8 International women day, and for UN Consultative status of women, also for the end of the relay of the World March of Women in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. For the first time a campaign was also developed on the Campaign against Gender Violence in November and early December.

There was no specific funding this year for the Women's International Network, but as a cross cutting program, all the expected activities were implemented. The WIN Website was reorganized and updated, following the activities of the Network. Besides the Workshop at the WSF, a face-to-face meeting from regional representatives was assured in Porto Alegre, to coordinate both the March 8 Web cast and the activities coordination with the World march of Women.

The web casting for March 8 and the participation of a WIN delegation for the Consultative Status of Women at the UN Headquarters was facilitated and documents were distributed. In this occasion there was also the launching of the WMW campaign from Brazil. There was also participation of WIN in the 21<sup>st</sup> of March world webcast. The 17 of October there was the world coverage for the World March of Women Charter for

Humanity final activity in Ouagadougou. The main challenge continues to be to fund specific activities of the WIN.

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.

### **3e. – Community Radio in the Asia-Pacific region development**

The Asia Pacific region acquired increased autonomy in 2005. On the one hand there was increased participation of community radios in the region in the global activities such as Radio Voices without frontiers, March 8 International Women's Day, the WSIS and in the campaign against gender violence.

The regional office was also able to increase its position in spite of the situation that prevailed in Nepal. Three newsletters were distributed and the Asia Pacific Website, the Nepal Website and the Conference website increased the presence of AMARC. The [participation of the SG in the Global advocacy mission of International organizations in July 2005, gave a boost to the press freedom and freedom of expression movement in Nepal. A campaign was launched to support the broadcast of news and current affairs in independent and community radios. It had some effect because it supported the case presented to the Supreme court that ordered that news to be authorized in conformity with the constitution.

The Global advocacy program activities in the region was 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, in Yogyakarta, and for the First Conference of AMARC Asia Pacific. There was also the production of 15 country papers on the situation of community radio and several alerts were launched.

Following the decision by the executive to increase the support for the building of the Asia-Pacific Region, the organization of First AMARC Asia Pacific regional conference in Jakarta, Indonesia from the 24-27 November, took a substantial amount of time from the secretariat. This Conference permitted to attain the objective of setting a working Regional Board that will open the regional coordinator position to hire a permanent staff. Besides confirming for 2 extra years the EED funding for the region, more than 100,000 were secured to finance the Conference. The Regional Office is fully functional, but it suffers from the new situation in Nepal. An evaluation of the siege of the Regional Office may review the situation.

The main results, so far have been the creation of a Nepal working group and, in Indonesia, the establishment of a coalition of 4 organisms to organize the Regional Conference, including the Community Radio Association of Indonesia. Links were also reinforced with AMARC members in other countries of the region.

### **3f. – 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.

The Marrakech Roundtable on Community media and Sustainable Development, held in Marrakech, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004 opened the way to the creation of a Task Force on Funding and Resourcing Community Media to take forward the proposals and evaluate its implementation.

Following the Marrakech Roundtable in Communications for Development, organized by the Secretariat, with the support of Africa, there was a follow-up done with the distribution of the notes of the conference and other materials with the proposal of creating a task force. As the perspectives for a Community Media fund seem possible in Africa as a pilot experience. It has been difficult to make the fund evolve.

#### 4. - LOOKING FORWARD

AMARC and the community radio movement continue to face many challenges. 2006 will be the year of the 9<sup>th</sup> World Conference and general Assembly of AMARC. The World Conference will be held in Amman, Jordan from 11-17 November.

In recent years there been a shift in the thinking of development professionals, and development institutions, from an excessive emphasis on market driven economic growth and technology transfer to a more people-centred discourse. Voicelessness and powerlessness have come to be seen as key dimensions of poverty while democracy, equity and civil rights are seen as not only intrinsically desirable but as directly contributing to the realisation of human security, well-being and opportunity. Access to voice, information and knowledge is now seen as vital to the achievement of development goals.

Radio is the most widespread electronic communications device in the world and a unique means of reaching the world's poorest communities. Community radio in particular puts the tools of communications into the hands of communities for cultural expression, news and information, dialogue and development. Even though community broadcasting is gaining legitimation it is also facing new challenges. How can its social and economic sustainability be assured? How can it interface with the new media platforms and technologies? How can its contribution to the public good be demonstrated? How can it provide a voice for critical and alternative perspectives and not be co-opted by government agendas or assimilated into the marketplace?

AMARC has reached a crucial stage in its development where it needs to review its past successes, evaluate current activities and determine the way ahead for the 2006-2010-program period. Support is required so the network will be able to conduct an eight-month sector review and strategic planning process that will culminate with AMARC's 9<sup>th</sup> Global Conference in Jordan in November 2006.

**Comment [k1]:** The goal and 3 objectives (from the logical framework) could be stated more explicitly at this stage, as in paragraph 1 and 2 on top of page 6)

The Jordan conference will be crucial in determining AMARC's plans for the coming five-year period. The goal of the Sector Review and Strategic Plan is to develop a medium term plan 2006-2010 focused on reducing the barriers to establishment and increasing sustainability and the effectiveness of community radio in achieving social and development goals. In order to properly define the challenges, in relation to the community radio movement, we need to:

- Assess the current state of the community broadcasting movement worldwide, clarifying AMARC's own role and scanning our strengths and weaknesses;
- Assess the evolving environment in which we are operating, at international, regional (Latin America, Africa, Asia-pacific regions) and national levels, establishing priorities with respect to the challenges facing the CR movement;
- Learn from the best experiences at community and country level and reflect on the lessons to be learned from less successful initiatives, evaluate what works and what does not and explore how these experiences can be replicated and expanded;
- Ensure the equal involvement of women and inclusive strategies towards the marginalized in the development of community broadcasting;
- Elaborate objectives and goals and develop a Strategic Plan including projects for the scaling-up of community broadcasting where it is underdeveloped.