

WACC Strategic Planning: Achievements and Learning from the current Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Summary

As WACC enters a new phase of strategic planning, it is helpful to look at the current strategic plan and review what has been achieved, what has fallen short of our ambitions, and why.

WACC Global can count on a number of achievements from 2017 to 2020, despite limitations of staff and funding. The successes have reinforced the relevance of the communication rights approach to sustainable development particularly in project support, of the ongoing priority to address media and gender justice, of the relevance of communication rights-based advocacy in emerging global priorities highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and of digital transformation. External communications have been significantly strengthened, and the visibility of WACC's work globally and in the regions has been increased, but ongoing financial challenges remain, as well as work to build and galvanize our network of members and supporters.

Some initiatives were not undertaken as envisioned as the need and context for them changed. Such flexibility in implementation is a key component of any strategic plan. The following review of achievements and learnings matches the framework of the current strategic plan (2017-2021).

1. WACC Initiatives

The overall goal of WACC's programmes is to ensure that all WACC's activities, projects and advocacy are focused on promoting, implementing, and supporting the communication rights of all, especially the poorest, most excluded and most vulnerable people and communities.

1.1 Advocacy for Communication Rights

1.1.1. Media Monitoring

Goal: To gather evidence of coverage of key issues related to poverty, justice, and peace in the world's news media as a basis for informed advocacy building including misrepresentation and bias.

The Covid-19 pandemic did not put a damper on the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), which took place on September 29, attracting thousands of volunteers from 145 countries worldwide. Although held much later than the set date of April, the GMMP Global Secretariat went back to the drawing board to rethink its strategy for training and monitoring. It also adjusted the research tools to adapt to the news agenda dominated by Covid-19 stories.

Excitement among participants was palpable on social media; photos and video clips of monitoring day were shared, participants engaged with content produced on WACC and GMMP accounts. This resulted in a bump in social media engagement and followers, particularly for GMMP accounts. This year's GMMP attracted more participants than ever, including new ones: Greenland, Myanmar, Iraq, Cayman Islands, Timor-Leste, and Macau. Russia also returned after a period of absence.

In other developments:

- In 2019, the GMMP was awarded the Donald H. McGannon Award at the 37th annual Everett C. Parker Ethics in Telecommunications Lecture and Awards in Washington, D.C.
- GMMP findings on gender stereotypes in the media were among the references used in legislation approved November 6 by Mexico's Senate that would punish digital violence against women.
- GMMP is featured in the newly published International Encyclopaedia of Gender, Media and Communication (IEGMC), a major reference book that explores various aspects and impacts of how gender is represented in the world's media. Published on Wiley Online Library, contributors include more than 300 established and emerging scholars from 40 countries across all continents, including Dr Sarah Macharia, WACC's program manager for Gender and Communication.
- In October 2020, the Mexican Senate approved reform of the law against violence against women to include media and digital violence. The law cites GMMP findings, continuing the trajectory of the GMMP's influence in informing changes to national legislation relevant to gender equality, to media or communication.

However, despite gender justice being a priority for many partner and funding organizations, and the visibility and international recognition of the quality and quantity of data, financial support for GMMP 2020 was a challenge. In the end, enough funds were raised to cover a successful GMMP, with the hope that some current and future funding partners actively involved in the process will support the needed advocacy following the published results.

Aside from the GMMP, WACC has turned its communication rights focus and media monitoring methodology to the representation of refugees and migrants in the news. A number of WACC's regional associations (Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia) have undertaken research on the media representation of migrants and refugees, and WACC has been invited by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to present a proposal on the representation of migration in Colombia, where WACC has carried out work on migration and communication rights since 2019

Media Monitoring has been pursued with notable results as well on the representation of poverty in media content. Clearly, one of WACC's greatest strengths is its media monitoring methodology, which can be applied to different issues.

1.1.2 Campaign – *WACC will campaign to end news media sexism by 2020. WACC to play active advocacy role as host of UNESCO's Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG).*

Under the leadership of WACC as General Secretary and the chair of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), GAMAG has gained visibility, prominence and been publicly appreciated by its members and founding body UNESCO.

- WACC in its leadership role within GAMAG led the Alliance in developing and implementing a strategy to influence the debates at the 62nd and 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) sessions in 2018 and 2019 respectively. The 2018 CSW session was particularly important due to its focus on media, the first time since 2003 that the theme has come under scrutiny.
- In February 2018, WACC participated in a pre-CSW forum in Mexico at the invitation of Mexican government department on women and gender equality issues Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres (INMUJERES). The forum helped shape the media-related interventions by the Mexican delegation to CSW 2018.
- WACC contributed a position paper to a collection to be published by GAMAG in collaboration with UNESCO. Abridged versions of some of the papers covering various dimensions of gender, media and ICTs are carried in *Media Development* (2018:1)
- WACC co-edited the compilation of position papers in the book *Setting the Gender Agenda for Communication Policy: Proposals from the Global Alliance on Media and Gender*. The book was co-published with UNESCO and launched at the IAMCR Madrid conference in July 2019.
- WACC and the GMMP network also organized a workshop titled “Focus on Section J – Taking stock, looking forward” to bring participants up to date on the status of progress on gender and media resolutions from CSW 47 and Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action.
- At the global advocacy level within the framework of the CSW 2018 and 2019 sessions:
 - WACC responded on the question of minimum standards for media in UN Women's Flagship Side Event “Leaving No One Behind for Planet 50/50 by 2030: Every rural woman and girl everywhere” (March 2018). The contribution informed the development of policy standards (for media) necessary in ensuring that the most marginalized women and girls from rural communities are brought to the forefront of the SDGs gender justice agenda.
 - WACC presented a statement at the high-level interactive dialogue at the CSW 2019 plenary session organized in preparation for the Beijing +25 review. The statement underscored the place of media in accelerating

implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action for the advancement of women, drawing on lessons from the GMMP and GAMAG's work.

- The GMMP and GAMAG's work was brought to bear at the 2019 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD); as a panelist invited by UNFPA, the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, and the Rutgers Centre for Women's Global Leadership, WACC discussed the role of news media in ending gender-based violence.

WACC and GAMAG's strategy vis-a-vis CSW bore fruit: The Agreed Conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women reflects media-related issues, the result of lobbying and support from various governments. The high-level recognition of media as central to gender equality and women's empowerment provides additional leverage for gender & media work going forward, including the efforts to mobilize much needed resources.

The End News Media Sexism Campaign rolled out in 2016 has achieved meaningful results, such as:

- WACC partnered with civil society organizations to implement the campaign in several countries including Pakistan, Mongolia, Uganda and Nigeria.
- In Mongolia, the School of Journalism Setguulch led journalism students and early career professionals in gaining proficiency in gender equality reporting and applying a local language version of the End News Media Sexism gender media scorecard.
- UK's Research Center in Pakistan, through its Women's Media Complaint Cell, turned the spotlight on good/ bad media practices from a gender perspective in partnership with media students and female journalists. The Pakistan initiative urged media, audiences, academia and policymakers to act beyond advocacy and awareness.

The advocacy achievements in collaboration with GAMAG are part of the campaign efforts to "end news media sexism by 2020". The campaign goal was of course aspirational, and learnings from the campaign should guide the advocacy goals coming out of GMMP 2020.

1.1.3 Communication Rights Index

Goal: To work towards the implementation of a Communication Rights Index that can serve as a tool to monitor a country's level of accessible and democratic communications.

In 2012-14, WACC implemented a three-year project in Bolivia that included an index assessing the communication rights of people living with disabilities. It was expected that WACC would later build on and replicate that experience nationwide and then in other countries. One or two possibilities were explored but lack of funding placed the initiative on hold. The concept of the Index involved gathering data from several existing

sources^[1], devising a way of aggregating and weighting it to produce comparable results, and to use the evidence as part of advocacy campaigns for change at the national level. WACC did not pursue the idea partly because of the complexities involved, partly because of a lack of understanding outside the organisation of the relationship between communication rights and development/social justice, and partly because the concept was not given high priority among likely funders.^[2]

1.1.4 Communication Rights Charter

Goal: To work towards the creation of a Charter for Communication Rights that can serve as a benchmark for good governance and good citizenship.

The benchmark for such was the People's Communication Charter elaborated by Cees J. Hamelink in 1999, which argued that it was is time “for individual citizens and their organizations to take an active role in the shaping of the cultural environment into which all children are born and in which all people live and learn.” The PCC received wide acclaim among actors in civil society, but in a sense, it took second place to the contested outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (2003 and 2005) and began to fade from view with the ITU's emphasis on new information and communication technologies and the evolution of digital platforms, whose early promise was expected to redress imbalances in accessibility and affordability.

In 2017, and in consultation with project partners and others, WACC produced a Communication Rights Charter in the form of a rationale for ten principles or affirmations that state both intention and resolution and which moved the debate from the realm of the academic into the practical. The following “watchwords” illustrate “Ten Affirmations of Communication Rights” expressed as entitlements:

1. Freedom – Everyone is entitled to communicate, to inform, and to share knowledge.
2. Equality – Everyone is entitled to dignity and respect.
3. Justice – Everyone is entitled to just representation.
4. Identity – Everyone is entitled to their own cultural and linguistic identity.
5. Capacity – Everyone is entitled to communication skills and media literacy.
6. Accessibility – Everyone is entitled to access communication, information and knowledge at affordable levels.
7. Participation – Everyone is entitled to take part in the communication society.
8. Independence – Everyone is entitled to independent mass and social media.
9. Diversity – Everyone is entitled to a diversity of opinions and points of view.
10. Responsibility – Everyone is entitled to responsible content in public communications.

WACC did not conduct a publicity campaign around these affirmations, but they were published in WACC's journal *Media Development* (2/2017) and subsequently in the book *Expanding Shrinking Communication Spaces* (2020). Images from Latin America were designed to illustrate the affirmations and the keywords translated into Spanish and German but there the initiative stalled. Staff will review how they can be applied in future to a more “popular” understanding of communication rights.

1.2. Building Capacity to Promote and Strengthen Communication Rights

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of communication in saving lives. It has also underscored the impact of WACC projects: Community media played a key role in filling the information gaps, especially in marginalized communities. WACC asked some 100 community media partners about their response to COVID-19 and their needs to help keep the communities they serve informed and safe. Here are some examples of their impact:

- WACC partner Community Media Network in Jordan, which trained 15 citizen journalists, including Syrian refugees from Zaatari camp, produced more than 30 stories about Covid-19's economic, social and psychological impact on Syrian refugees living in and outside camps.
- The Indigenous Community Radio Network of Nepal's (ICRN) production of public service announcements (PSAs) about Covid-19 in Indigenous languages has been commended by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as one of the "promising practices" for responding to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Citizen journalists in Colombia-Venezuela border highlight the plight of migrants affected by the pandemic.
- Northern Uganda Radio Apac, Ltd., a community radio station in Northern Uganda and WACC Global project partner disseminated "accurate, reliable and relevant information" about Covid-19 to a largely rural farming population in the districts of Apac, Oyam, Kole, Kwanja and Lango.

In response to the mapping of community media and consideration of how WACC could best respond to the pandemic, WACC launched the Community Media Rapid Response Fund and highlighted the vital work of community media through its web and social media. Feedback received affirmed the visibility and relevance of WACC's approach. The Response Fund was used for a new CanadaHelps crowdfunding attempt which, through personal outreach, received enough funding to support a project in Mexico. Several other community media partners also received grants directly through separate funding initiatives that WACC alerted them to.

In terms of WACC projects overall, despite the relatively modest scale of grants and their short duration, there were positive outcomes of WACC-supported projects, according to a DIP evaluation conducted in 2019/2020. It noted that:

- WACC has made a strong case for the intersection of communication rights and sustainable development goals.
- 36 projects (out of 37 completed) that took place between 2016 and mid 2019 met the 75% threshold of achievement of objectives, with an average score of 83.4%. This figure does not consider projects that reported after the second half of 2019, meaning that the number of successful projects is much higher.

- Knowledge-sharing happens in a variety of ways and corroborated by feedback from partners.
- 13+ partners were supported to attend external events which included knowledge-sharing
- Public recognition bursaries often support dissemination of project-related content to potential and existing audiences
- Projects reached intended direct beneficiaries, who have reacted positively.
- There are many examples of improved communication practices and change in attitudes around communication practices, which could lead to concrete changes
- Partners' advocacy capacity has increased and enabled them to provide leadership around communication rights. "Through WACC, I learned more about media and content relative to gender. It has given me confidence and influence over policymakers," said project partner Subhechha Bindu, media monitor, activist and journalist from ASMITA Nepal.
- DIP contributes to the visibility, understanding and sustainability of communication rights work at a global and national level
- WACC and its partners make clear efforts (implicitly and explicitly) to maximise all four dimensions of Value for Money (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity) at programme and project level respectively
- DIP is equity-oriented. Gender is integrated strategically and as a cross-cutting issue.

In 2018, for example, WACC supported 25 projects implemented by partners in 14 countries, as well as four regional projects implemented by WACC's regional associations in Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Among the outcomes:

- Strengthening of Indigenous community radio and television networks in Central America and Nepal;
- An evidence-based advocacy campaign to change public perceptions about migration in Kenya, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- Targeted efforts to raise awareness about human trafficking in the Caribbean.
- Best practices from individual projects were shared at key international events
- Sixteen WACC partners increased their public recognition through online campaigns and new materials on communication rights

In 2019, WACC refined its programmatic foci to better align with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Starting in 2020, WACC-funded projects will fall under the following themes: Communication and Gender Justice, Indigenous Communication, Migration and Communication Rights, Climate Change and Communication Rights, and Communication Rights and Digital Justice. This shift was the result of a long consultation process that began in 2016 and benefitted from the input of some 90 partner organizations around the world.

1.2.1 Communication for Social Change

Goal: To advance communication rights in practice in order to help bring about societies in which all people everywhere are able to engage in transparent, informed, and democratic debate.

With the convergence of traditional and digital media, WACC continues to see an opportunity to focus on how media platforms can help advance communication rights in practice, while also contributing to broader social change. Projects supported under this programme strengthen the work of civil society organizations in the implementation of efforts such as citizen journalism, community media, citizen-led media for peace, and media monitoring to advance the democratic participation and active citizenship of marginalized peoples and communities.

Following an external assessment of the DIP and recommended grant making strategy, the small project programme was revised in 2019 to the “Communication for All Programme” (CAP) and concentrated on five thematic areas (gender, migrants and refugees, indigenous people, climate change, and digital communication rights) as well as targeting the overall impact of the projects towards building a communication rights movement. The current CAP term runs through 2023 and is funded primarily by Brot fuer die Welt.

Migration and refugees: Communication rights for migrants and refugees has become a major focus for WACC, building particularly on a well-received media monitoring conducted by WACC regions (Europe in 2017 and, Africa, Latin America and Asia in 2018) and two project initiatives in Colombia on the borders of Venezuela and Ecuador that trained citizen journalists. WACC Global collated the evidence and resources for journalists covering migration and refugee news and features on the portal <https://waccglobal.org/resources/migration-reporting/containing> the statistical evidence, reporting guidelines, media ethics codes, good practice examples, downloadable resources and much more.

WACC’s varied work in this area has highlighted a number of strengths, among them: *Media monitoring* as an effective and recognized research tool and the importance of evidence in gaining visibility for work; the role regional associations can play in identifying and responding to key issues in their region that help to raise the visibility of WACC’s work overall; the effectiveness of WACC’s project support in helping communities address real problems in innovative ways. WACC’s visibility in this issue has been demonstrated by invitations to present its work at the DW Global Media Forum and two DW Akademie conferences on communication and migration, as well as an EU seminar organized by the Radicalization Awareness Network.

Climate Change: WACC has partnered with the FAO in identifying and supporting year long projects with local partners in Kenya, Ecuador and the Philippines. These projects, along with others, have been slowed down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A key aspect of these projects involves the establishment of networks of grassroots environmental citizen journalists. The goal is to help build the capacity of communities at the grassroots level – particularly family farmers’ associations – in using local and traditional

knowledge for sustainable resource management and climate change mitigation. WACC has also launched a three-year initiative entitled “Voices of the Andean Moorlands: Network of Environmental Citizen Reporters in Colombia” in early 2020. This initiative, undertaken with a new co-funder, Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, seeks to promote a culture of people-led environmental protection among Indigenous, peasant, and Afro-descendant communities in the Colombian regions that are home to moorlands and moorland-related ecosystems. With Climate Change continuing to be one of the most urgent issues affecting us today, ongoing project support continues to be a priority, as well as further consideration on how communication rights can be most effectively applied to address it.

Digital Communication Rights: In addition to supporting local projects in applying digital rights at local and national levels, WACC and the World Council of Churches are organizing a digital justice symposium with other ecumenical partners in September 2021. The pandemic and the resulting massive increase in the application of digital technologies has given heightened awareness to address digital communication in a rights-based, justice-oriented framework. The use by many governments of monitoring tools in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has raised concerns about their impact on privacy, freedom of expression, and democracy in general. While there is certainly increased visibility particularly among ecumenical partners of WACC’s experience and relevance, this has not yet translated into financial support directly to WACC’s work beyond the CAP projects.

Indigenous Communication Rights: Following four years of fruitful collaboration, WACC and Boston-based Indigenous rights organization Cultural Survival decided to renew and enhance their ongoing partnership. WACC and Cultural Survival are supporting individual Indigenous community radio stations and helping to establish networks of Indigenous broadcasters, with strong examples of impact which particularly highlight the importance of community media in local development and advocacy. Crucially, beyond supporting individual projects, WACC increasingly works to bring project partners and learnings together to strengthen our collective movement for communication rights. Examples include:

- A consultation in Costa Rica in 2017 focused on how communication rights projects can help achieve Sustainable Development Goals. At least 25 project partners participated, along with representatives from UNICEF, Cultural Survival and regional NGOs.
- WACC convened a meeting of its project partners across the Caribbean Feb. 25 to 27, 2019 to reflect on challenges and opportunities around communication rights and linguistic diversity, particularly in relation to sustainable development. Recommendations made are informing WACC’s programmatic strategy for the Caribbean region in the next few years. These recommendations will also guide WACC’s advocacy and research efforts in relation to linguistic rights and sustainable development.

In March 2018, WACC's work with the Development Initiatives Programme (DIP) was commended by the World Summit on the Information Society Forum as a "Champion" in the category "Ethical Dimensions".

1.2.2 Gender and Communication

Goal: To support civil society in the Global South to combat sexism in the media.

Gender justice is a cross-cutting priority in all of WACC's work. Projects in this area examine the gender dimension of news reports through media monitoring. Findings are applied to change actions such as awareness creation, critical media literacy training, advocacy and engagement with media professionals on gender issues in media policy and practice. The focus has been on supporting civil society groups in areas of the Global South lacking a strong sub-regional or regional coordination of gender and media work. Projects monitored gender portrayal and representation in major national or regional print, radio, television and/or Internet news media.

- In 2018, WACC brought 19 project partners from 17 countries to a consultation on "Gender and Media: Challenges and Opportunities in the Post 2015 Era." The event venue in New York organized back-to-back with the 2018 CSW allowed WACC partners to participate in the CSW. Out of this consultation emerged the 'New York Declaration' an update to the 1994 Bangkok Declaration that has been one of the key policy frameworks underpinning WACC's gender programme.
- In 2019, another consultation co-organized with WACC partners African Women and Child Feature Service and the Association of Media Women in Kenya brought together 45 partners to inform directions for the Gender & Communication programme as well as contribute to the 25-year review of the implementation of the 'women and media' recommendations in the Beijing Platform for Action.
- In 2020, a third consultation co-organised with WACC partner GAMMA in Ecuador for 23 partners led to the development and adoption of the Cuenca Declaration that underlines international, regional and national policy support for freedom of expression and the right to communication and necessary for democracy.
- WACC's strategy to partner with national-level women's organisations able to convene national media, lobby State regulatory bodies and mobilize other actors for advocacy action, paid off. In 30 projects implemented in Africa (10 projects), Latin America (10), Asia (6), Middle East (2) and Central & Eastern Europe (2) across 19 countries, the partners succeeded in achieving results beyond those originally anticipated.
- Exposure through the projects helped various partners to gain recognition as gender & media experts, evident for instance in invitations to deliver gender training for media, in requests to develop gender capacity-building resources for journalists and invitations to participate as expert panellists in media programmes. In Uganda, UN Women requested the partner to develop a training manual on gender-based violence reporting. In Egypt, the partner established a toolkit for gender analysis of dramatic works. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the project helped to strengthen cooperation between media and gender equality

NGOs and helped institute a long-term gender & media teaching collaboration between the partner and the University of Mostar. In Mexico, the project led to the establishment of a minimum ethics code for media coverage of land issues with a human rights and feminist approach.

Analysis of the projects' results points to the importance of participatory methodologies – based on WACC's GMMP model – in co-creating initiatives with stakeholders, securing buy-in on the process and results, and attracting support for follow-up work.

Reflecting on the lessons learnt and their implications for directions for work under this programmatic theme, it is clear that:

1. Monitoring is a long-term process that needs to be sustained along with the dissemination of results and advocacy. Monitoring helps make women and marginalized groups visible and underscores communication as a tool for social transformation.
2. An increased focus on advocacy – on digital platforms and offline – will be key. The projects indicate that political will to change media practice is not sufficient, nor is journalists' understanding of gender equality as a measure of professionalism. It will take concerted advocacy among other actions to eliminate media sexism, gender stereotyping, marginalisation and discrimination against women in the media. It will be crucial to maintain pressure on media leaders to actively aim for quality journalism.
3. A closer alignment between the 'Advocacy for Communication Rights' and the 'Gender & Communication' initiatives is a natural way forward to: i) respond to the direction pointed by lessons from the small projects; ii) flow into the use-of-evidence phase of GMMP 2020, and iii) enhance WACC's mandate as a CR champion, taking systematic steps to build and consolidate a CR movement.
4. Alliances with academia will bring innovations from scientific research to bear in strengthening actions as new tools and knowledge are integrated into intervention strategies.
5. Dissemination of the results in the media and public dialogues are important for paving way to awareness on the social role of the media and their power to change the narrative.
6. Numerous organizations dedicated to freedom of expression or journalism have still not incorporated the gender view into their work and while CSOs that defend women's human rights are gradually allocating resources to communication, it is still not a constant practice. It is important for WACC projects across the breadth of all programmatic areas to strongly and systematically integrate a gender perspective and intersectional analysis. This strategy will respond to the persistent gaps and align WACC's project support with current standards in international development practice.

1.3 Communications

Goal: To develop and put into operation appropriate, flexible and effective communication structures, systems and platforms to build networks, share information and knowledge, and promote joint action among members and partners.

WACC is continuing its efforts to build networks, share information and knowledge and promote joint action among members and partners to promote its mission. It also continues to work on increasing the visibility and salience of WACC as a global and regional movement focused on communication rights.

WACC continues to raise the visibility of communication lessons from grassroots communities and evidence from its research to impact policy, education, and media practices. This includes presentations at conferences, such as the Commission on the Status of Women in March, the Internet Governance Forum, the ACT Alliance General Assembly, the International Association for Media and Communication Research, and the DW Global Forum.

In 2019 alone, WACC either organized or participated in *30 communication rights-related international events and consultations held in 15 countries*. WACC issued *11 statements and Calls to Action* to mark UN International Days specific to communication and other human rights, and in response to humanitarian and other crises. At least *50 commentaries and 105 news and feature articles* were written and shared with partners and on social media to raise awareness about communication rights-related issues and to put a spotlight on supported projects that address them.

With a new, part-time staff position in communication, WACC has been able to vastly expand its communication outreach:

As part of its efforts to keep members, partners and others informed about its work and have a platform for sharing ideas, WACC began publishing *The Hub*, a twice-a-month newsletter which reaches about 1,600 subscribers. A special newsletter *Let's Connect* was established to keep the GMMP network engaged and motivated in 2020 when Covid19 disrupted plans for the Global Monitoring Day.

In September 2019, WACC launched a new website and virtual forum for its Centre for Communication Rights to support vibrant citizen media, democratic communication ecosystems and open access to information and knowledge.

WACC Global's website, waccglobal.org, was redesigned a few months later, with a format that is easier to navigate, is user and mobile-friendly, and has a better information architecture. The GMMP website, whomakesthenews.org, was also redesigned to achieve the same results.

WACC has been achieving modest gains in terms of its social media presence and reach. WACC Global, the Global Media Monitoring Project, and the Centre for Communication Rights all have accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. WACC Global is also on LinkedIn account, with 255 followers.

- WACC’s Facebook account gained 584 followers between January 2019 to October 2020. Its Twitter account gained 309 followers during the same period. WACC joined Instagram in March 2019 and now has 310 followers, most of whom are not WACC members or partners.
- GMMP’s Twitter account gained 516 new followers between the same period. Its Instagram account has 232 members. On Facebook, GMMP has 2,714 followers, up by 533 from 2,181 in 2019.

Note: CCR accounts have not seen as many gains, in part because not as much attention has been dedicated to them because of time constraints. Its Facebook account has 21 followers; Twitter, 52; and Instagram, 45.

WACC continued the online publication of its international quarterly journal, *Media Development*, which has tackled communication rights issues ranging from media democracy to climate change uninterrupted since 1976. Subscriptions have declined over the years, undoubtedly partly due to the sheer volume of information freely available on the Internet and partly to the high cost of journal subscriptions (e.g. International Communication Gazette charges \$152 for individuals and from \$2,147 to \$2,338 for institutions). Worldwide there are now hundreds of journals to choose from.

With the switch to digital and with rising costs of publication and distribution, as a matter of principle WACC avoided publishing hard copies of books and other materials. Online we posted an e-book of recent editorials in *Media Development* titled “Creating Openness”. And as a follow up to WACC’s claim that the Sustainable Development Goals lacked strong references to the right to communicate, WACC co-published with Southbound (Penang, Malaysia) the paperback “Expanding Shrinking Communication Spaces”. This book is being translated into French, Spanish and Arabic for maximum visibility.

1.4 Building Bridges, Networks and Partnerships

Goal: To build and develop networks and partnerships as a rights-based organization that works with both faith-based and secular organizations to promote dialogue that advances the cause of communication rights.

WACC regularly assesses its formal and informal partnerships and opportunities to maximize the impact of our advocacy and support and raise our visibility. WACC is a member of ACT Alliance, the Partnership on Religion and Development (PaRD) and the CDAC (Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities) Network. As far as possible WACC staff also maintain relationships with UN Women, UNESCO, UNICEF, the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) and a number of other human rights-based organizations. At the beginning of 2020, staff had mapped out key events and conferences which would be a priority for WACC presence and visibility – which were all subsequently cancelled or moved online which limited involvement.

The gender and media networks continue to be actively engaged through GMMP and the Global Alliance on Media and Gender.

In the face of Covid-19 restrictions, some WACC regional associations have also held their own webinars. The Latin America region has held a series of very well-attended webinars using WACC's Zoom platform.

The WACC Europe regional association in partnership with SIGNIS Europe held its 19th European Television Festival of Religious Programmes in Paris in 2017, but planning for the 20th which was scheduled for June 2020 has been paused.

Current planning for a digital communication symposium has significant potential in building relationships with particularly church-based and ecumenical organizations in Europe.

2. Organizational and Management Systems and Resources

2.1 Fund Development

Goal: To achieve a financially sustainable WACC that will have the required resources to achieve its vision, mission, and programme priorities.

WACC will implement its Fund Development Strategy approved by the WACC Board in 2016, which calls for expanding its donor base and diversifying its revenue sources. WACC will strengthen joint collaborations with partners and donors, expand its global network and outreach through identifying and building relations with like-minded organizations and foundations, increase WACC's visibility, and facilitate fundraising efforts within and amongst its global membership.

In 2016, General Secretary Karin Achtelstetter made an initial attempt to address this goal by employing a Fundraising Strategy & Fund Development Coordinator to “develop a global fundraising strategy for WACC in order to diversify its funding sources.” Despite a lengthy review of the then current situation in 2017 and a Fund Development Strategy, an emphasis on what had been relied on in the past as well as what with hindsight could be seen as misplaced expectations, meant that little came of this initiative.

In 2018, General Secretary Philip Lee instigated new measures to tackle the twin issues of institutional and programmatic fundraising, based on changing priorities and realities in the arena of fundraising. Staff began work on three proposals in support of WACC the institution; Gender and communication/GMMP; and Communication for Social Change. The aim was to be able to fund different aspects of WACC's work, including staff coordination positions, and to tailor proposals to different donor requirements. The various initiatives and steps taken began to be recorded chronologically in the document “Actions 2018-21”.

In 2020, a Fundraising Task Force was set up composed of the Officers and Finance Committee, the General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, and Financial Controller. Its task was to advise the Board of Directors and Staff about fundraising policies and

actions aimed at making WACC financially sustainable in the short and long terms. It approved a Fundraising Action Plan that was developed with guidance from a fundraising consultant to be implemented in their different ways by staff, directors, regional associations, and others. Conversations began with people who might be able to introduce WACC to potential funders, which are seen as critical to attract the necessary core funding. A webinar with board members and representatives of regional associations led by the fundraising consultant shared how everyone has a role to play in enabling these conversations. Staff crafted a new document setting out WACC's vision and purpose titled "Enabling People to be Seen and Heard," as well as an introductory brochure to be used in fundraising, and a more detailed document on the implementation of the funding strategy. Particular attention was paid to making WACC more publicly visible, especially in Canada, and more publicly vocal on issues of communication rights.

Despite all these measures, diversifying funding and securing support for core operations remains extremely challenging, particularly now given the economic upheaval in many sectors due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2 Operational Structure

Goal: To support a clear and efficient management and working structure that enables WACC's effective presence and engagement in international processes aligned with its vision and mission.

With two registered offices, in the United Kingdom and Canada, WACC has taken steps to streamline its governance system, eliminate duplicate membership requirements, and to achieve greater administrative efficiency so that more human and financial resources can be directed towards programme. In 2019, new global officers and a board of directors were elected who oversee WACC as a whole.

2.3 Collaboration and Relationships

Goal: To strengthen relationships among, and collaboration between, members, partners, supporters and staff in order to achieve WACC's mission and programme priorities more effectively.

WACC marked its 50th anniversary with a symposium exploring new challenges in the field of communication for social change. The symposium took place in Hamburg, Germany, following a three-day meeting of WACC's Board of Directors.

It has strengthened its relationship with ACT Alliance by providing office space for ACT's Head of Communications and its Climate Change Communications Coordinator.

The number of institutional and individual memberships, however, has continued to decline, a trend over the last decade accelerated by changing global and local priorities and financial challenges. Reaching and engaging new members requires both global and regional visibility, action, and resources. Membership fees are returned 100% to the

region to support regional association activities. A membership campaign is planned for early 2021.

^[1] Such as: [World Press Freedom Index](#) produced annually by Reporters Without Borders. [Universal Human Rights Index](#) produced by the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. The [Human Freedom Index](#) produced by the Fraser Institute. The [Democracy Index](#) compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), measuring the state of democracy in 167 countries. The [Human Freedom Index](#) published by the Cato Institute, presenting the state of human freedom in the world based on a broad measure that encompasses personal, civil, and economic freedom. [Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index](#) (DARE), a benchmarking tool developed for disability advocates, governments, civil society, international organizations and policy-makers to trace country progress in making Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) accessible for all. The [KidsRights Index](#), an initiative of the KidsRights Foundation in cooperation with Erasmus University Rotterdam which annually measures how children's rights are respected worldwide and to what extent countries are committed to improving the rights of children. The [Global Media Monitoring Project](#) (GMMP), which assesses the representation of women in global news media.

^[2] Such as the Soros Foundation and Ford Foundation, which at different times had expressed strong interest in democratic ideals and the key role played by communication rights.