Truthful Voices Matter

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

WACC
communication for all

Vision

Communication for All

Mission

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) is an international non-governmental organization that promotes communication as a basic human right, essential to people's dignity and community. Rooted in Christian faith, WACC works with all those denied the right to communicate because of status, identity, or gender. It advocates full access to information and communication and promotes open and diverse media. WACC strengthens networks of communicators to advance peace, understanding and justice.

Contents

Front cover: A woman wearing a protective face mask reads a newspaper as she walks on the deserted streets of Ile Saint Louis, Paris, after a lockdown was imposed to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in France, March 18, 2020. Photo: REUTERS/Christian Hartmann

Top Girl washes her hands with soap under running water outside her mother's kiosk as part of measures to prevent Covid-19 infection in Kakuma refugee camp. Photo: ACT Alliance-LWF/P Kwamboka

Bottom Girl attends class via radio during Covid-19 lockdown. Photo: ACT Alliance

Left Migrant from Honduras walks on road leading to Irapauto, Irapauto, Guanajuato, northwest of Mexico City. Photo: Sean Hawkey/ACT Alliance

Message from the General Secretary

Philip Lee
WACC General Secretary

By the end of 2020, it seemed that public trust in democratic governance had been almost completely eroded: on the one hand by elected leaders disparaging the role of news media and on the other by social media spreading misinformation, rumours and lies. "Fake news" was a refrain chanted by populist politicians and their followers as a means of disrupting democratic processes, dismissing scientific evidence, and demeaning alternative voices and viewpoints.

The climate emergency and the Covid-19 pandemic were early casualties, with deep-seated damage done to the credibility of legacy news media and investigative reporting. Highly partisan media outlets in many countries – some government-owned, others with blatantly extremist interests – amplified conspiracy theories and peddled disinformation.

Of course, there is nothing new in tabloid journalism. What is new is that a minority of people who give credence to information coming from unreliable and self-interested sources can rock a democracy. The mistrust generated by that minority spills over to affect the lives of poor people, migrants and refugees, and everyone struggling to advance social justice by highlighting malfeasance, corruption, and greed.

In this situation, public interest media as the unbiased voices of truth have a crucial role to play. People should be able to turn to them for the kind of information that sustains open debate and builds trust in democratic processes.

In peace theory, there are two definitions of peace. It is the absence/reduction of violence of all kinds; and it is nonviolent and creative conflict transformation. We could apply this thinking to the concept of truth. It is the absence/reduction of deception of all kinds; and it is the constructive transformation of deception. The first requires people to know how they are being deceived. The second requires a culture of truth-telling in which deception is recognised, acknowledged, and transformed.

This is why truthful voices matter, at all levels of society and at all times. WACC's current motto – "Enabling people to be seen and heard" – is an expression of why communication rights are important when it comes to improving lives and livelihoods. Everyone has the right to communicate, but to what end? Clearly, hate-speech and incitement to violence should be penalised, whereas voices of reason, dissent, and fair criticism should not.

We are living at a time of competing claims on truth, a time in which digital technologies amplify voices no matter where they come from. That is why public interest media are so important. That is why WACC supports community media, as a counterweight to media ownership and control by government and corporate interests. That is why issues such as gender justice in the news media, promoting the voices of migrants, refugees, and indigenous peoples, and equitable access to alternative communication platforms are vital to an open society.

With public trust in democratic institutions on the decline, WACC will continue to strive for truthful voices to be recognised and heard everywhere.

Top; Radio Al Balad citizen journalist interviews Syrian refugees. Photo: Community Media Network

Middle: Young girls being interviewed in the aftermath of the armed conflict in 2019 between Islamic State militants and military troops in Marawi, on the southern Philippines' island of Mindanao. Photo: MUCAARD/ACT Alliance

Bottom: Boy listens to the radio while walking along Despagne, a rural village in southern Haiti. Photo: Paul Jeffrey/ACT Alliance

Year in Review 2020

The coronavirus pandemic has made far more apparent the best and worst aspects of our communication landscape: the vital role of trusted public service and community media, the relationship of communication and community in times of isolation, the opportunities offered by digital access as well as the dangers of a digital divide, and the destabilizing influence disinformation can have on accountability and democratic participation.

While the fundamental issues are not new, the scale and pace of change is, and our efforts to strengthen communication rights have never been more relevant or urgent.
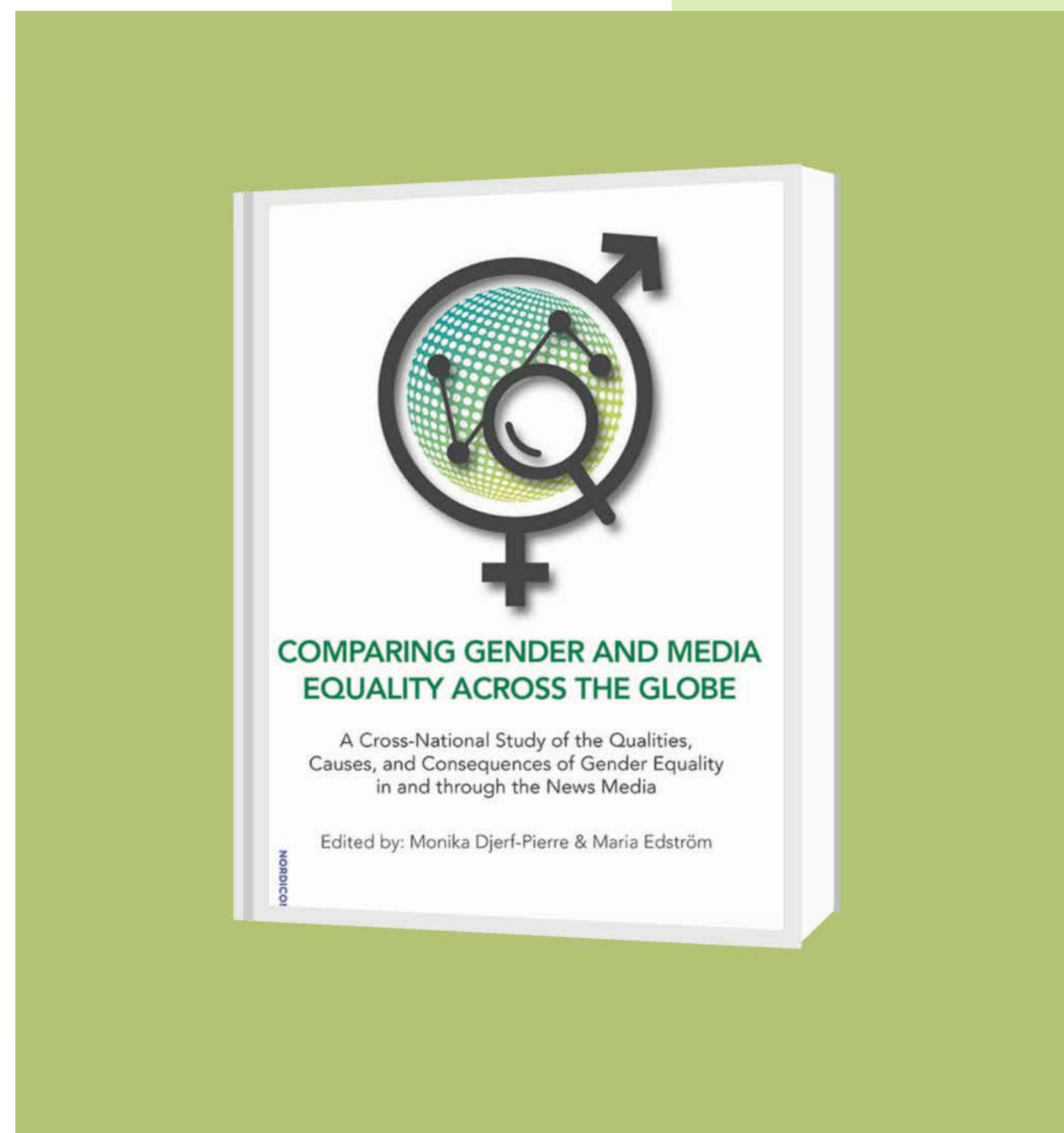
Foreshadowing the glaring challenges to communication rights, early in 2020 WACC published Expanding Shrinking Communication Spaces, an e-book which focuses on communication rights and sustainable development for a digital age. Intended for development practitioners, policy makers, and communication rights activists, the book takes a timely look at communication and communication rights and their continuing relevance in today's world. The book asserts that genuine sustainable development and equitable access to information and knowledge requires an additional Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) that is distinctly missing from the United Nation's list – SDG 18: Communication for All.

The theoretical also quickly became practical. As the coronavirus first started to spread globally, WACC began to receive urgent requests for support from its community media partners in the global South, especially community radio networks working in rural and hard-to-reach areas, to prepare programmes on the Covid-19 response in local and Indigenous languages appropriate for their specific context. WACC was able to redirect some small project funding that resulted in the almost immediate launch of prevention campaigns by some of our community radio partners in Ecuador, Colombia and Nepal.

WACC undertook a mapping of the most pressing needs of its community media partners around the world responding to the pandemic and launched an appeal to donors and supporters for a Community Media Rapid Response Fund that aims to strengthen the vital role of local media in times of crisis. Through WACC's networking and funding efforts, several partners accessed emergency media grants, and a "Get vaccinated against misinformation" campaign was successfully conducted among Indigenous communities in Mexico.

WACC also actively shared stories of the work of local community media to raise the visibility of its critical role and effectiveness in sharing context-appropriate Covid-19 news and prevention information as well as combatting misinformation.

Right and Below Right: Staff at Lutheran World Federation-Cambodia, an ACT Alliance member, distributes and explains Covid-19 prevention posters published in local languages. Photo: ACT Alliance

Below Left: Comparing Gender and Media Across the Globe, published by the International Women's Media Foundation and the European Institute for Gender Equality, features WACC's Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP).

While the pandemic also delayed the planned monitoring day for the 6th Global Media Monitoring Project, it didn't dampen the enthusiasm as more countries than ever participated in monitoring the representation of women in the news media on September 29. The methodology could also be revised to take into account the prevalence of coronavirus-related news. Preliminary results are expected in the first quarter of 2021.

The GMMP continues to be one of the most highly regarded sources of gender and media evidence, as reflected in its inclusion in several new publications including the new International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media and Communication published on Wiley Online Library and Comparing Gender and Media Across the Globe published by the International Women's Media Foundation and the European Institute for Gender Equality.

In addressing communication rights in the digital age, WACC is working with the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical partners to plan a ground-breaking symposium in 2021 that links civil society activism with ecumenical networks and commitments for justice. Contributing to the reflection and action, WACC's European Regional Association launched a report and resource kit in October, "Breaking Down the Social Media Divides: A Guide for Individuals and Communities to Address Hate Online"

As a member of ACT Alliance since 2014, WACC also took the initiative in 2020 to convene a new Global Members Forum to accompany the alliance's regional and national forums. The platform seeks to leverage the global perspective and reach of its current six organizations on ACT's strategic priorities, including gender justice and climate change.

As all conferences and meetings moved online in 2020, WACC continued to involve and profile its community partners. At the October virtual conference, Displacement and Dialogue, organised by DW Akademie, WACC and partners from Jordan, Mexico, and Ecuador led a session demonstrating how providing migrants and refugees a platform to share their concerns, challenges, and aspirations not only helps them, but also addresses xenophobia and helps build bridges with host communities. WACC staff and its partner, the Computer Professionals Union in the Philippines, also spoke during the CDAC Network's 2020 conference on "Accountability in the Age of Algorithms – Championing Pathways in Inclusion in Tech Driven Futures."

As 2020 came to a close, many people looked ahead to 2021 for relief from the medical, political, social, and economic upheaval that affected communities around the globe. While we look for brighter prospects, we also recognize that, as always, communication rights will continue to be central to justice, development and democracy.

Above: Broadcasters from the Community Rural Radio Krishi Radio 98.8, a member of the Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC), bring awareness of the Covid-19 pandemic to far-flung rural communities. Photo: BNNRC

Right: Indigenous community promoters air radio campaign to counter misinformation about Covid-19 in remote communities of Guerrero, Mexico. Photo: CICCAC

Spotlight:

Global Media Monitoring Project takes place amidst Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic did not put a damper on the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), Sept. 29, 2020, attracting thousands of volunteers from over 100 countries worldwide.

GMMP 2020 was the sixth in a series of extensive gender and media monitoring studies conducted every five years since 1995 by WACC Global. By analyzing gender differences in the portrayal and representation of women and men in print, broadcast, online and social media news, the GMMP puts a spotlight on gender inequalities perpetuated in and through the news media and demands for change.

With the pandemic still devastating many parts of the world, most news media monitoring took place virtually from Argentina to Zimbabwe. The enthusiastic response by volunteers – civil society activists, media professionals, university researchers, and students – "attests to a committed and vibrant movement for gender equality in and through the news media," said Sarah Macharia, GMMP global coordinator. Four countries joined the GMMP for the first time: Greenland, Myanmar, Iraq, and East Timor. Russia also joined after a 20-year hiatus.

"This is an extraordinary GMMP due to the complications brought on by the coronavirus Covid-19, having a profound impact both on the news agenda, and on the ability of the monitoring network to organise in the usual manner," said Macharia. "After a postponement of the monitoring day from April 2020, a rethinking of the strategy for training and meeting, and an adjustment of the
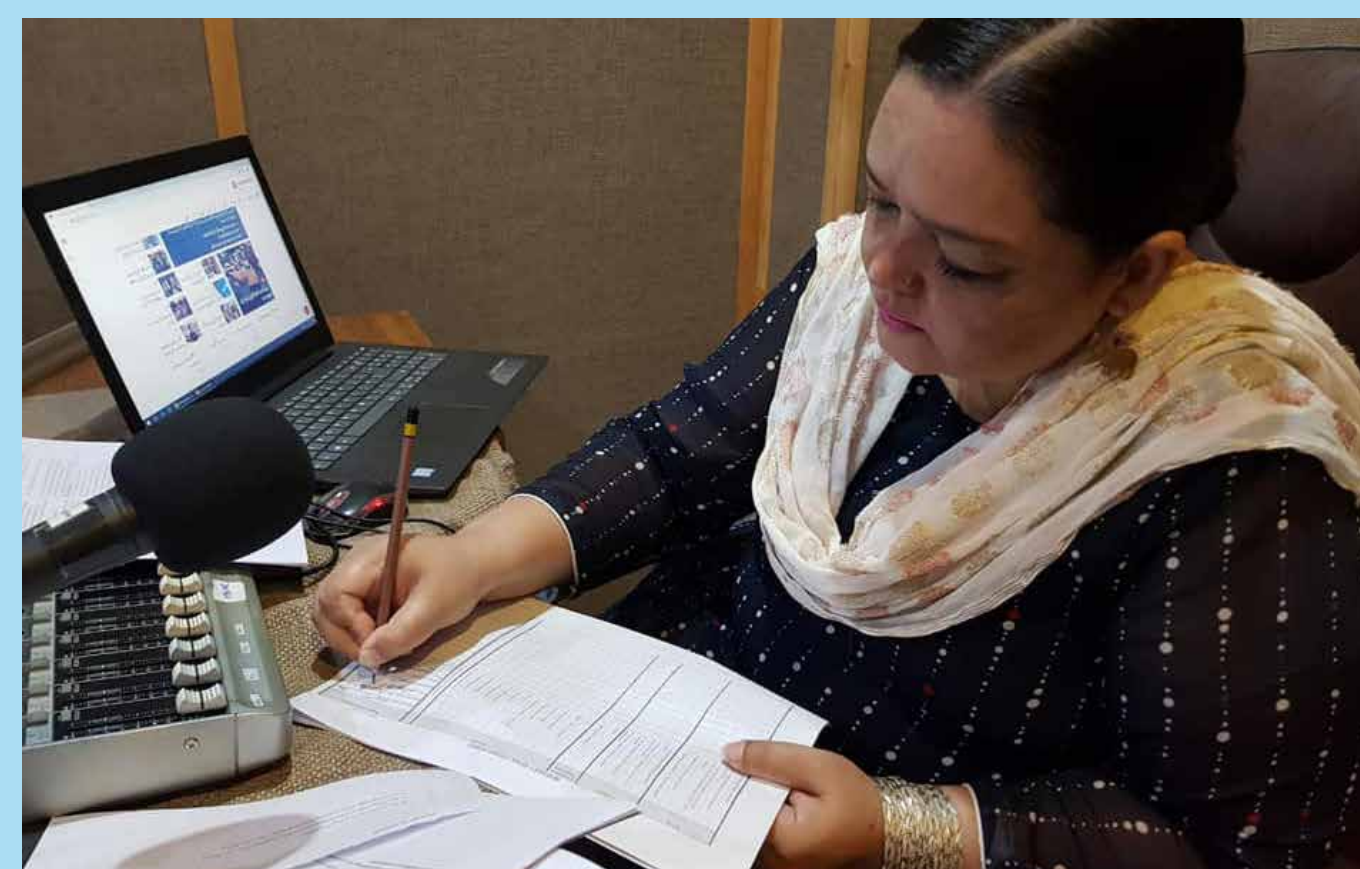
research tools to adapt to a news agenda dominated by Covid-19 stories, the GMMP network set out on its task of building the evidence on gender equality gaps in print, broadcast and digital news content."

GMMP findings will be analyzed to show global, regional, and country-level change over the 25-year period since the first GMMP in 1995, and to direct action towards achieving gender equality in news content.

"The GMMP is one of the most significant achievements in the long journey towards gender justice and equality," commented WACC General Secretary, Philip Lee. "Its findings in 2020 will be all the more important when sustainable development, peace and security are being negatively affected by global geopolitical and economic setbacks that disproportionately impact women."

Past monitoring results have shown extremely slow progress in bringing women's voices to the foreground of public discourse taking place in traditional and digital media. GMMP research show a male-centric view of the world in the news; stories revealed gender bias and extensive stereotyping that perpetuate marginalization, discrimination, and violence against women and girls. Preliminary results of the GMMP 2020 research are expected within the first quarter of 2021.
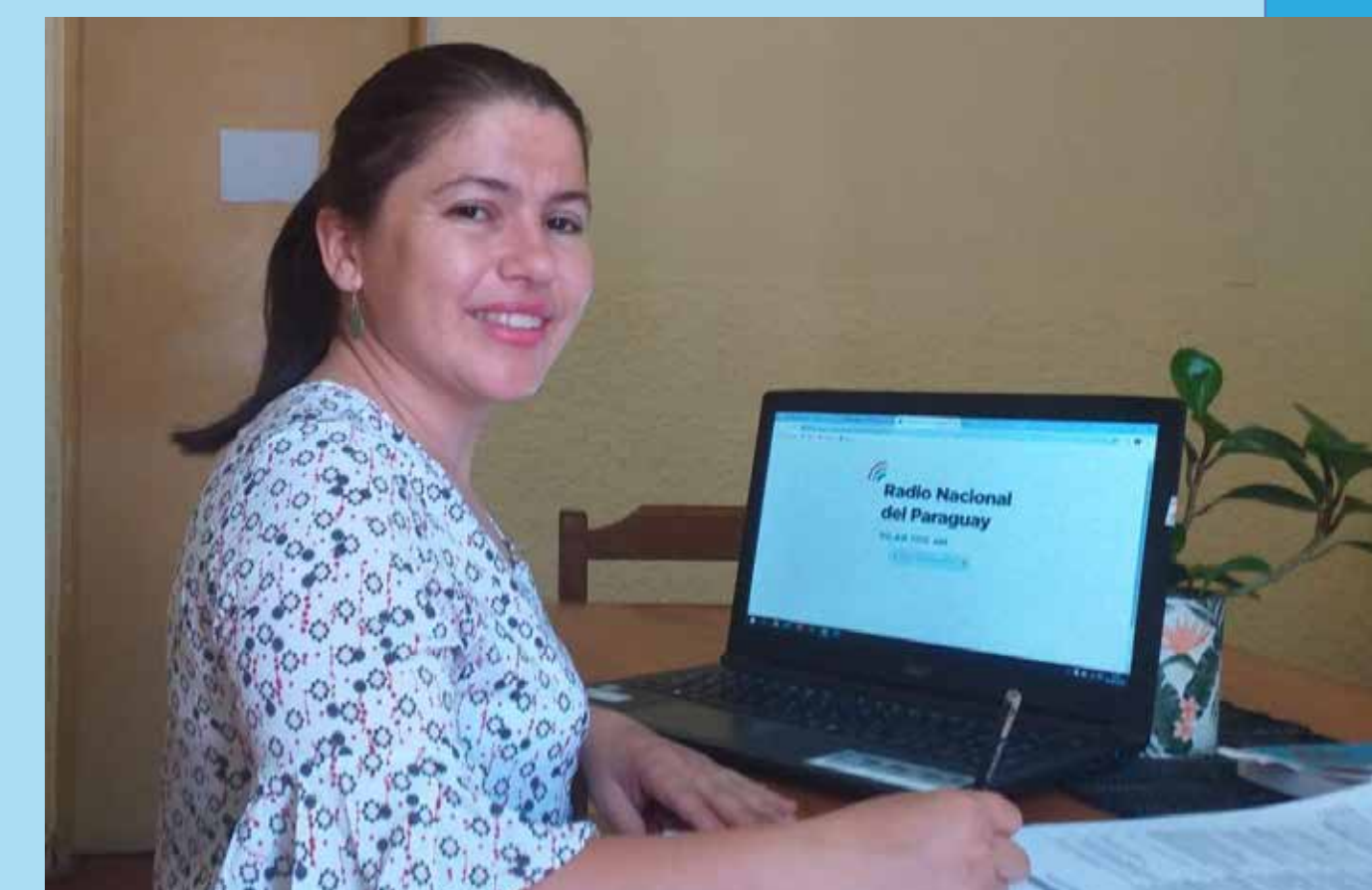

Top: Papua New Guinea volunteers wear protective masks as they study the day's news for the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project, which took place during the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Above Left: Global Media Monitoring Project volunteer studies the day's news from Pakistan.

Above right: Volunteers from Sweden analyse the day's news during monitoring day for the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project.

Right: Global Media Monitoring Project volunteer from Paraguay listens and analyses the day's radio news.

Stories from Project Partners

WACC helps to build capacity and to advance the work of its partner organizations in five main areas.

Indigenous Communication Rights Programme

Nepal: Tharu journalists on the upswing

Tharu-speaking Indigenous journalists in Nepal have enhanced their news and reporting skills, and production of news in Tharu has increased, thanks to a capacity building project undertaken by WACC local partner Prachin Srijansil Aadibashi Samaj.

The project, geared towards helping Indigenous community Radio Gurbaba FM involved a weeklong basic radio journalism training workshop for 16 journalists, and a five-day advanced level journalism training for 11 others. Gurbaba FM was established in 2008 to serve Tharu-speaking Indigenous communities in Nepal's district of Bardiya. There are about 1.7 million Tharu people in Nepal, or 6.6% of the population, according to a 2011 census.

Most of these communities lack access to media in their language. They face different forms of exclusion in the economic, political, and educational realm, primarily because of linguistic barriers, making

Nepal-Tharu: Tharu local journalist receives basic radio journalism training. Photo: Cultural Survival

Guatemala-Ixil Radio: Asociación de Grupo de Mujeres Tejedoras Ixiles Q'imb'al created a community radio to "publicize the value of respect for our culture."

media content on key development issues vital for these communities.

The specialized training for journalists, half of them women, also focused on increasing their knowledge of Indigenous rights. It has also led to an increase in Tharu women journalists, and the participation of women in radio programs, said a project report.

Guatemala: New radio holds up Indigenous voices

In 2016, the Asociación de Grupo de Mujeres Tejedoras Ixiles Q'imb'al, a women-led civil society organization from Guatemala's Ixil region, listened to the desire of their Indigenous community members to have a community radio that would "publicize the value of respect for our culture."

On December 29, 2019, after four years of painstaking work that included seeking support from various entities, learning how to set up a broadcast station, radio programming, and buying equipment, Community Radio Tiichajil Tenam was

officially launched. WACC, along with its partner Cultural Survival, helped support the creation of the radio station.

The choice of launch date was significant: it was the same day that commemorated the signing of the peace accord that ended the 36-year-old armed conflict in Guatemala. The organization itself had emerged in

a context marked by the aftermath of severe state repression of Indigenous communities, including the Ixil, during the Guatemalan civil war.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the radio station played a critical role in informing communities about the disease. Using the Mayan Ixil language, it provided preventive measures against the virus, offered recommendations about food and medicinal plants to improve people's health, as well as other Indigenous knowledge that can be applied. Public service announcements were made in collaboration with other civil society organizations.

After consulting with communities, ancestral authorities, other organizations, the association worked with various youth groups to build the community radio. A workshop was then organized for 16 people (nine women, seven men), who received specialized capacity building/ training on community broadcasting, communication rights, and Indigenous rights frameworks, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Migration and Communication Rights Programme

Mexico: Migrants and refugees tell their own stories

Refugees and asylum-seekers seeking protection in Mexico are producing podcasts about their lives and experiences with help from a WACC-supported project initiated by its local partner, La Sandia Digital.

In the absence of stories featuring the voices and perspectives of people on the move, "we decided to let them speak about their own experiences without an intermediary; they don't answer to any journalist, they are not being interviewed, they just talk about themselves, so that they become more than a number and a report," said Marie-Pia Rieublanc, project manager at La Sandia Digital, a Mexico City-based civil society organization focused on gender justice, environmental justice, and communication for social change.

"To counter xenophobic narratives, we decided to focus the stories that each of them brings from their home country – from their education, their cultural heritage, their inner strengths and what they would like to provide, what dreams they have for their future in Mexico or in the United States," she explained.

As a result of complex human rights and economic conditions in Central America, since 2018 thousands of people from the region have fled their countries in the hopes of migrating to the U.S. A vast majority transit through Mexico, and many end up staying because of tough restrictions in the U.S.

The project – Migrant Voices: Freedom of Expression & Access to Information in Mexico – has empowered 20 women, men and teenagers in transit and at

Mexico-Refugees: Women refugees take part in a workshop to help them prepare their personal narratives. Courtesy of La Sandia Digital

Colombia-migrants: A member of the network of citizen journalists at a migrants' reception centre in Bogota. By Grupo Comunicarte

destinations in Central Mexico to use digital and other communication tools to access information, challenge xenophobic discourse, and share their concerns within their communities and with the wider society.

Colombia: Citizen journalists counter xenophobia against migrants

A project to establish "communication that brings us together" began with a mix of "great enthusiasm and uncertainty" over a year ago in Colombia, as the country grappled with the influx of an unprecedented number of Venezuelan migrants. Today, that project, "Among Neighbours: Network of Colombian and Venezuelan Citizen Journalists" – implemented by WACC members Grupo Comunicarte and Fundación Comunicación Positiva – is thriving with continued support from WACC Global and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

By creating a network of 22 citizen journalists from 22 community and campus radio stations in Colombia and Venezuela the project has been able to provide migrants and host communities with access to relevant information. It has also been helping to address negative stereotypes about migrants that contribute to a culture of distrust,

xenophobia and discrimination.

The concept for the project arose as 770,000 Venezuelans who were escaping their country's economic and political turmoil began arriving in Colombia between September 2018 to 2019. About 1.6 million Venezuelan migrants now live in Colombia, comprising about 3.4% of the total population. An additional 2.5 million are expected to emigrate, many of them headed to Colombia, which so far has an open migration policy. It is a movement described by the International Office of Migration as "the largest displacement in Latin America's history".

The network of citizen journalists has focused on stories about the needs of migrants and refugees, including housing, health, employment, and legal advice. They have also included stories that lift up Venezuelans, by educating listeners about their culture and values as a people, and stories that address issues about xenophobia and racism.

Webinar: WACC hosts event on enabling migrants to be seen and heard

Providing migrants and refugees with a platform to share their concerns, challenges, and aspirations not only helps them, but also addresses xenophobia and

helps build bridges with host communities, WACC partners told participants at an online event hosted Oct. 16 as part of a virtual conference, Displacement and Dialogue, by DW Akademie.

Daoud Kuttab, director general of the Community Media Network (CMN) in Jordan, said his organization decided to focus on Syrian refugees because "we wanted to counter hate speech and we thought the best way to do that was to have Syrian people themselves talk about their issues."

About 1.3 million Syrian refugees reside in Jordan, many of whom arrived during Syria's civil war in 2011. "Syrian refugees have no voice. They have no elected representatives, nobody asks for their opinion," said Kuttab at the event titled Enabling migrants to be seen and heard. CMN began by issuing an invitation for college-aged Syrian refugees to learn journalistic skills, specifically on how to produce a radio show, he said. It later evolved into a radio show, Syrians Among Us, which is supported by international NGOs, including WACC Global.

Maria Teresa Cutimbo, project coordinator of the Coordinadora de Medios Comunitarios Populares y Educativos del Ecuador (CORAPE, Ecuadorian Network of Community, Popular and Education Media) shared how negative perceptions of Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador and Colombia exist among citizens, including those in the news media.

Daoud Kuttab, Maria Teresa Cutimbo, Marie Pia Rieublanc, and Lorenzo Vargas, during the session on Enabling migrants to be seen and heard, at the DW Akademie's virtual conference, Displacement and Dialogue.

In an effort to counter these negative stereotypes and address discrimination and xenophobia, CORAPE launched in July 2020 a WACC-supported project that trained Ecuadorian and Colombian citizen journalists on investigative journalism, media production, migrants' rights, and human rights, to equip them not just with new skills but a new understanding. It was also aimed at meeting the communication and information needs of migrants and host communities in their midst.

Climate Change and Communication Rights Programme

Philippines: What fisherfolk can teach us about climate resilience

Fifteen years ago, Sibuguey Bay in southwestern Mindanao, Philippines, was in an alarming state. Fish and other marine resources were nearly depleted due to illegal, unregulated fishing and mangrove deforestation. But the situation began to turn around in 2005, when the Coalition of Municipal Fisherfolk Associations (COMFAS) began to rehabilitate and establish fish and marine sanctuaries covering 9,000 hectares of mangrove forests. COMFAS members include hundreds of fisherfolk from coastal municipalities in the Moro province.

WACC local partner PAKISAMA is working with COMFAS in a project that will share its experience and knowledge of rehabilitating Sibuguey Bay, in order to "build the capacities of fisherfolks to use and share local and traditional knowledge in promoting climate-resilient fisheries resource management and enhance local climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies." The project is supported by WACC and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

PAKISAMA and COMFAS participants engage in participatory mapping, participatory video production and basic scriptwriting workshops. Local participants are being trained to produce and disseminate videos about local and traditional knowledge and best practices in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

"We are glad to be part of this project with WACC because it will greatly develop the capacity of our organization and teach us how to document very well our best practices, such as taking good care of the environment, mitigating the effects of climate change and how our family farmer members can become more resilient," said COMFAS chair Roberto Ballon.

Roberto Ballon, chair of the Coalition of Municipal Fisherfolk Associations (COMFAS). Photo: PAKISAMA

Colombia: New partnership to protect endangered ecosystem, vital water sources

In early 2020, WACC launched a three-year initiative entitled "Voices of the Andean Moorlands: Network of Environmental Citizen Reporters in Colombia." The project sought 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.

Colombia is one of 20 countries most at risk from suffering the disastrous effects of climate change. Of particular importance to Colombia is the protection of moorland (páramos) ecosystems in the high Andes (above 3,100 meters above sea level), which are critical sources of water (providing approximately 70% of drinkable water) and under serious threat from climate change.

Drawing on the concept of Buen Vivir or Sumak Kawsay, a framework that promotes community-centred, ecologically-balanced and culturally-sensitive development, the project established a network of 10 environmental journalists linked to existing community radio stations, which trained five people in their communities, in areas located in

or near moorland ecosystem. The project was supported by WACC and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, the development arm of the Anglican Church of Canada. It is being implemented by WACC long time member and partner in Colombia Grupo COMUNICARTE.

Communication Rights in a Digital Age Programme

India: Sparking a digital rights movement from the ground up

WACC is supporting a project in India that will help civil society sectors understand and address policy issues around digital rights, which have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The use by many governments of monitoring tools in response to the pandemic has raised concerns about their effect on privacy, freedom of expression, and democracy in general.

The project is being implemented by IT for Change, an NGO based in Bengaluru, and Just Net Coalition, a global network of civil society organizations and individuals advocating for "an open, free, just and equitable Internet." It focuses on the rights of peoples and communities to own their data and digital intelligence about

Below: The project focuses on the rights of peoples and communities to own their data and digital intelligence about them. Photo: Victorgrigas/Wikimedia Commons

them. These ideas are embodied in the Digital Justice Manifesto presented by the Just Net Coalition during an event at the Internet Governance Forum in November 2019.

The project intends to develop advocacy strategies in four key areas – social media, e-commerce, digital payments, and data commons. Parminder Jeet Singh, executive director of IT for Change, said the project "is an important start to make sure that digital policies globally are adequately informed by grassroots perspectives from all the sectors that such polices impact, and that such policies are infused with considerations of equity and social justice."

Palestine: Workshops ensure safer digital life for Gaza women

Sameera Zoroub, who graduated with a degree in media, used to think that her social media accounts were "secure and protected." But when she attended a Digital Security Workshop organized in late June 2020 by Community Media Centre, a Palestinian NGO, she realized that there was much she didn't know about safely navigating the online world.

Sameera said she "learned how to protect my personal information and myself from hacking, bullying, information theft, and blackmail." She also "learned how to employ my personal accounts in a proper and positive way." Sameera said she now feels "an obligation to deliver this knowledge to others." Sameera is one of the 20 female graduates trained on the safe use of digital media by CMC, through a project supported by WACC. Other project

activities include sensitization sessions for marginalized women from all over the Gaza Strip, including gender-based violence survivors and internally displaced women. Topics include digital media literacy, information protection and digital privacy.

Women in the Gaza Strip often lack the necessary knowledge and skills to use digital media platforms to advocate for their rights and highlight their concerns in a safe way. This exposes them to misinformation and disinformation. The project is building the capacity of approximately 700 vulnerable women to communicate on digital media platforms as competent media consumers and contributors.

Gender and Communication Rights Programme

Mexico: First feminist community radio is born

WACC partner Alianza por el Derecho Humano de las Mujeres a Comunicar (ADEHMAC) has launched Violeta Radio, a feminist community radio station in Mexico City that seeks to integrate gender equality across the board – from its management structure to all content produced. The radio station came about as a result of years of advocacy by ADEHMAC to have gender equality included as a priority within Mexico's telecommunications and broadcasting legislative and policy

framework. In 2016, three years after its founding, the Mexican telecommunications regulator awarded ADEHMAC an FM community broadcasting license to serve the metropolitan area of Mexico City.

The project, which received support from WACC, also trained 20 women on radio production and broadcasting from a feminist perspective. "Most of them are now active contributors to the station as staff and volunteers," ADEHMAC said in its project report to WACC. "It is indeed possible to promote gender equality in terms of community radio content and structures," the report said. "This seemed like a major challenge at first, but we found that there was an appetite for our approach among audiences."

The station's content has focused extensively on tackling gender-based violence, which is a major problem in Mexico. Shedding light on the issue has been particularly critical in recent

Violeta Radio seeks to integrate gender equality across the board – from its management structure to all content produced. Photo: ADEHMAC

Colombia-ecosystem: Sumapaz Páramo, located nearly two hours from Colombia's urban capital Bogota, is the world's largest páramo (alpine tundra ecosystem). Páramos are critical sources of water v(providing approximately 70% of drinkable water) and are under serious threat from climate change. By Grupo Comunicarte

Above: Violeta Radio has focused on tackling gender-based violence, which is a major problem in Mexico. Photo: ADEHMAC

months, as the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated violence against women, based on reports gathered by the UN and women's organizations. Violeta Radio has also helped educate women on health issues. To attract a potential audience of 12 million, the radio station has been offering a variety of programs, including music.

Mongolia: Seeing clearly through gender lens

Twenty students and 20 young journalists in Mongolia have gained a better understanding of gender equality in reporting after taking part in a WACC-supported project implemented by the Press Institute of Mongolia's School of Journalism. The project titled "Increasing awareness of gender inequality in media content in Mongolia", included several training workshops, which involved the use of the Media Gender Equality Scorecard developed as part of WACC's End Media

Sexism Campaign. The scorecards were translated into Mongolian. Participants also learned how gender equality in editorial policy enhances professionalism in reporting.

B. Enkhmaa, a journalist at Family Radio 104.5, said she found the scorecard particularly useful. "It would be great if news reporters could get used to writing gender-sensitive [stories] every day using such evaluation sheets," she said. Other journalists who took the training also said they now use the scorecard before submitting their stories to editors, and have shared the tool with colleagues. "This project is another example of the extraordinary work encouraged and promoted under WACC's gender justice program," said WACC General Secretary Philip Lee. "The more media outlets revise and improve their gender policies, the better for gender equality worldwide."

Representatives of the Press Institute of Mongolia also held face-to-face meetings with about 30 media executives to explain the importance of gender equality in reporting.

Mongolia
B.Enkhmaa, a journalist at Family Radio 104.5, was one of those who took part in the gender equality in the media training in Mongolia.
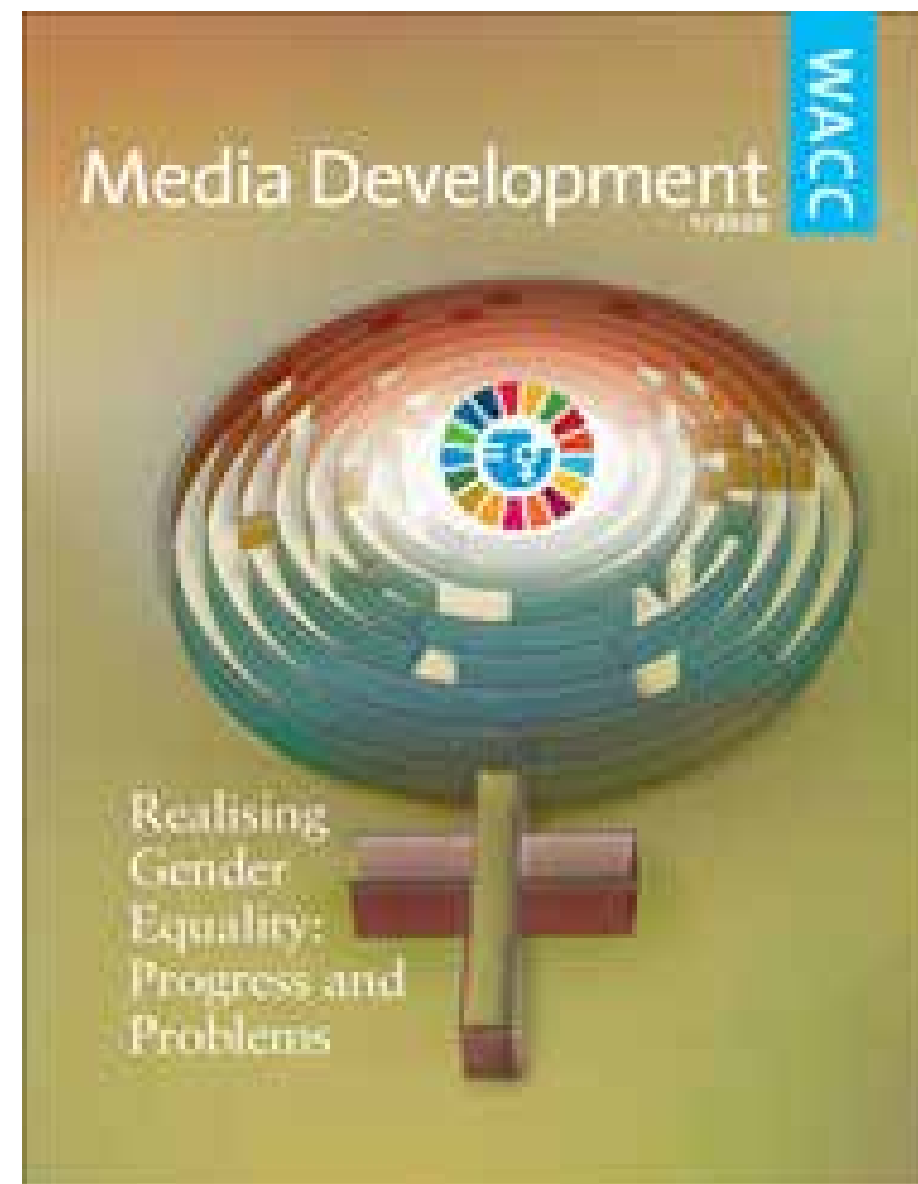
What's in store for 2021

Together with its partners, WACC will be reviewing how time-honoured human rights frameworks and conventions should guide our common digital future and its technologies, especially in matters of inclusion and exclusion. There are many security and privacy issues surrounding the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and biosurveillance. WACC will seek to address the communication rights dimensions of these developments.

Profound changes in media technologies are typically accompanied by promises to improve gender inequalities, yet gender issues are often neglected and oppressive gender relations have taken disturbing forms on social media platforms. Such gendered aspects of media and ICTs significantly hinder social progress. WACC has a substantial track-record in promoting and advancing women's communication rights, which we shall continue to do.

In 2021, we shall also build on the findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2020 to support gender awareness, training, advocacy, and engagement with media professionals in regard to media policies and practices. Actions will be aimed at tackling the biases and stereotyping that normalize and further entrench the unequal power relations that are at the root of discriminatory attitudes.

A crucial area of communication rights has always been that of public interest journalism, i.e. the sources that people turn to in order to form opinions about matters of democratic governance. Digital media provide new platforms and formats for disseminating information and allow for the creation of alternative online communities. With social-networking platforms now a major source of news, information, and disinformation, WACC will be studying how to strengthen the role of public interest media.
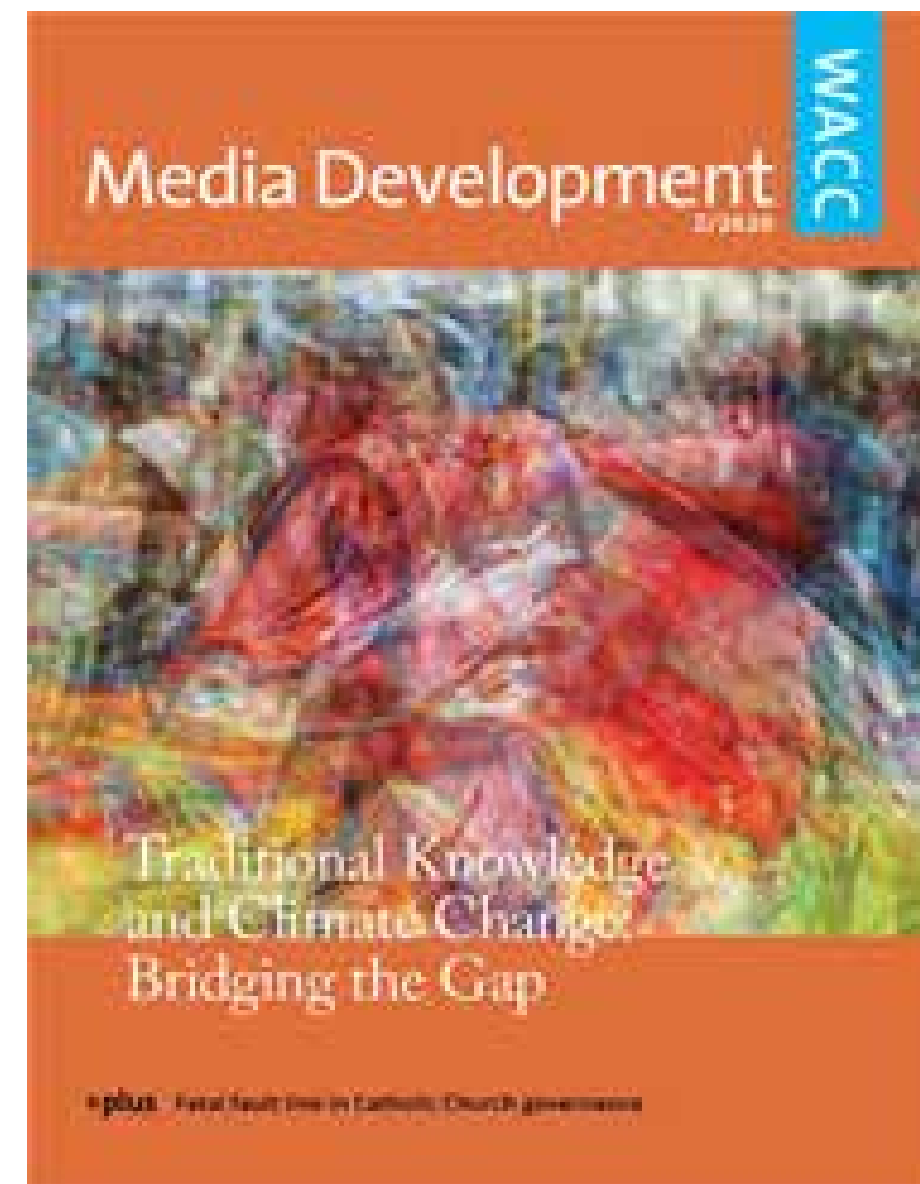
Media Development 2020

Media Development 1/2020

Realising Gender Equality: Progress and Problems

To mark International Women's Day 2020 and its theme "An equal world is an enabled world", Media Development asks how communications and media can help forge a gender equal world. While celebrating many achievements and much positive work worldwide, it also identifies the ongoing need to promote diverse gender perspectives and greater equality.

Media Development 2/2020

Traditional Knowledge and Climate Change: Bridging the Gap

Traditional knowledge held by Indigenous Peoples may provide essential responses to the current climate crisis. It is crucial, therefore, to work in solidarity with often vulnerable and marginalized Indigenous communities to assure our collective future and survival. In the process, Indigenous Peoples will share information and knowledge that will help repair the only sanctuary we have.

Media Development 3/2020

Expanding Public Communication Spaces

In times of crisis, such as Covid-19, information saves lives. Accurate and trustworthy messages are needed so that people know what they need to do and where they can get help. Equally vital are using local languages and reclaiming digital public spaces.

Media Development 4/2020

Communication in a Time of Crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic burrowed its way deep into the human psyche. It fractured family and community. It negated social behaviour. It isolated. It made some people more selfish and others more aware. It highlighted failures in political and economic structures. But crucially, it began to create a sense of resilience, togetherness, and survival.

Expanding Shrinking Communication Spaces

At the beginning of the year, WACC co-published a 127-page book with the title "Expanding Shrinking Communication Spaces". Noting the fact that communication and media were not made part and parcel of every UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), or subject to an SDG of their own, the book pointed to the missing UN SDG 18: Communication for All. Its purpose would be to expand and strengthen public civic spaces through equitable and affordable access to communication technologies and platforms, media pluralism, and media diversity.

Civic space acts as the safety net for an open and democratic society. Well maintained and unimpeded, such a society allows individuals, communities, and civil society organizations to participate and communicate without obstruction. By doing so, they are able to claim rights and entitlements and to influence political and social policy-making. They can also hold governments, corporate entities, and themselves to account, but only when the principle of communication for all is upheld and validated.

The book is available as a paperback and PDF. In 2021, it will appear in Spanish, Arabic, and French.

Financial Overview

WACC Global raised C$2.3 million in 2020 to fund its programmes, 88% of which came in as grants from our long-standing supporters, while the remaining 18% was self-generated from cost recovery, hosting fees, and rental income.

WACC's board, management and staff remain prudent financially and as far as possible minimized costs, while maximizing social impact through various communications rights programmes around the world. Program expenses increased to 97% of the total expenditure for the year, with Governance and Fundraising activities accounting for just 3% combined.

The implied surplus of $578,981 between income and expenses is temporary and will reverse as WACC incurs and reports the project expenses for which these funds are designated by donors.

WACC's worldwide membership, board and staff continue to work closely with friends, partners and well-wishers to raise funds and to diversify revenue sources to ensure the financial sustainability of WACC as a global institution. With adequate funding and careful management of our resources, we will continue to promote communication as an essential aspect of all people's right to peaceful and sustainable lives, dignity, and full participation in their communities.

Note: Financial figures provided are pre-audit. Audited accounts are available upon request .
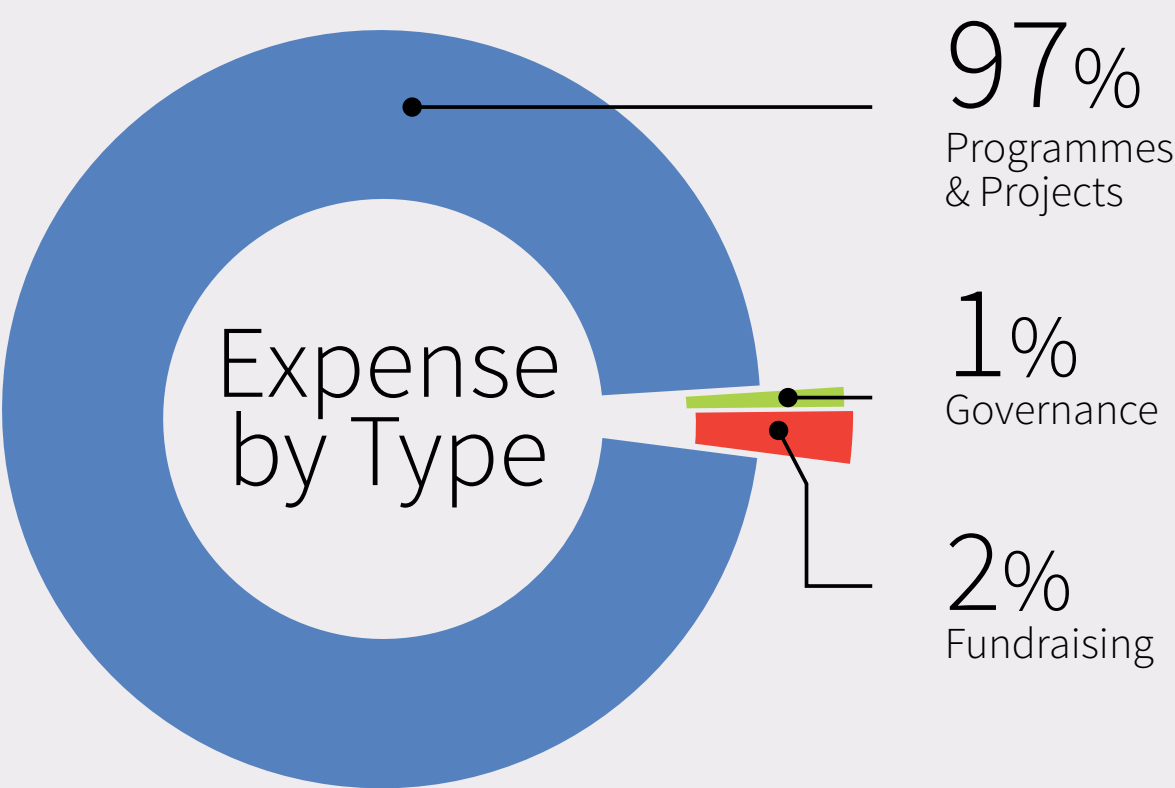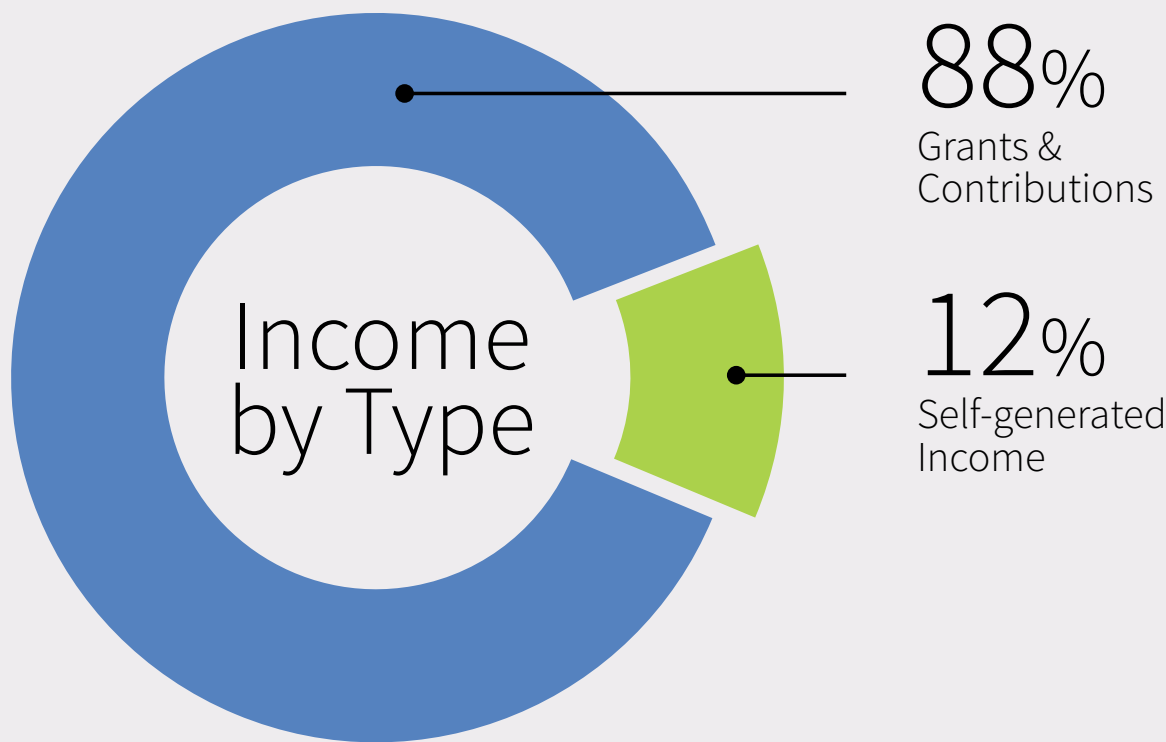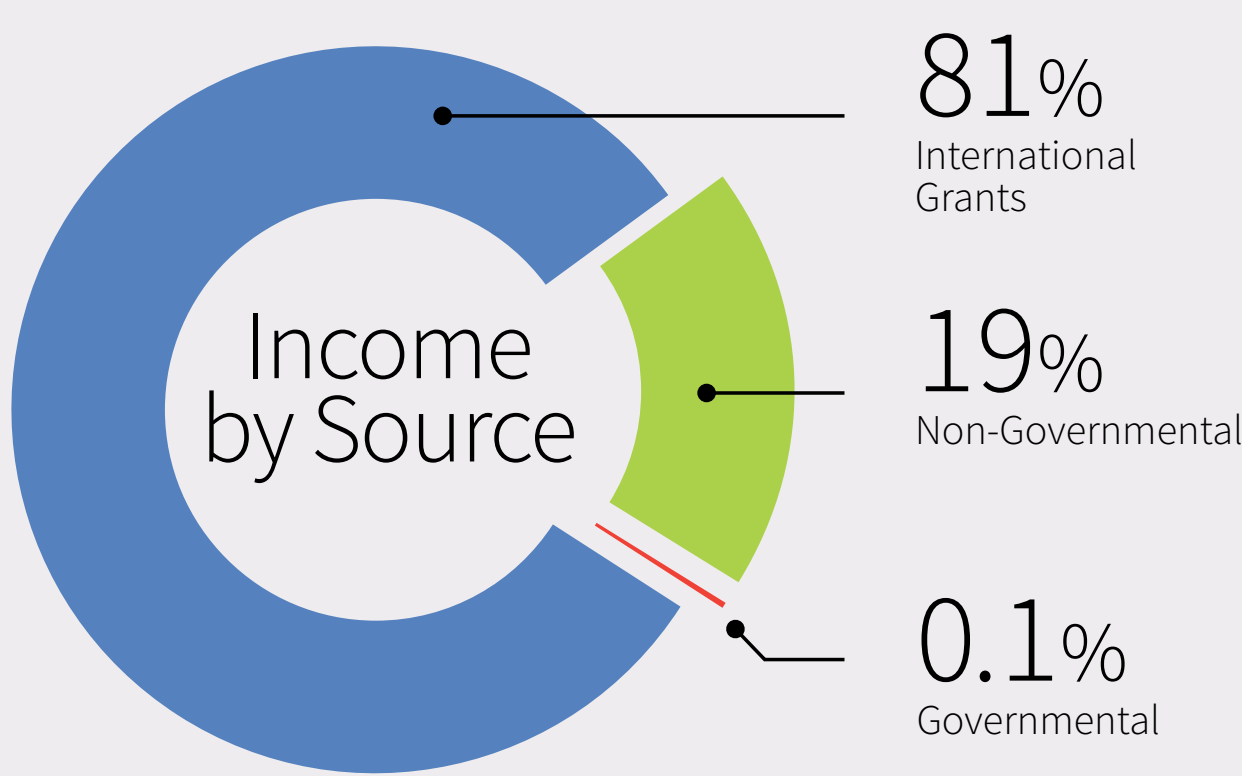
Income by Source

Governmental	$	3,268	0%
International Grants	$	1,875,864	81%
Non-Governmental	$	430,204	19%
Grand Total	**$**	**2,309,335**	**100%**

81% International Grants
19% Non-Governmental
0.1% Governmental

Income by Type

Grants & Contributions	$	2,029,635	88%
Self-Generated	$	279,700	12%
Grand Total	**$**	**2,309,335**	**100%**

88% Grants & Contributions
12% Self-generated Income

Expenses by Type

Programmes & Projects	$	1,678,443	97%
Governance	$	17,304	1%
Fundraising	$	34,607	2%
Grand Total	**$**	**1,730,354**	**100%**

97% Programmes & Projects
1% Governance
2% Fundraising

Funding Partners

In alphabetical order the current and most recent funding partners are:

Bread for the World

FreePress

Tamang Society of California

Centre for Communication Rights

Internews

UNESCO-IPDC

Council for World Mission

Karibu Foundation

United Church of Canada

Cultural Survival

Otto per Mille of the Waldensian Church

UN Women

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Pacific Media Assistance Scheme

Witness

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Primate's World Relief and Development Fund

World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA)

Food and Agriculture Organization

Service Canada Summer Jobs

WACC Membership and Organization

Membership in WACC is an opportunity to be part of a growing network of communicators worldwide who are bringing about greater equality and social justice through an emphasis on rights and responsibilities. Members of WACC are organizations and individuals committed to promoting communication as essential for people's dignity and participation in communities.

WACC's members are organized in eight regions – Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America, and Pacific – which provide opportunities for networking and regional projects. Through the support and active engagement of hundreds of WACC's members and partners, initiatives such as the Global Media Monitoring Project and Media and Migration are not only made possible, but provide ground-breaking evidence and help support strong advocacy at local, national and international levels.

The WACC UK Board of Directors has oversight of the global organisation, its policies and priorities. The WACC Canada Board ensures WACC's viability and compliance with Canadian regulations.

Join Us

waccglobal.org/join

WACC UK officers and directors (2019-2023)

President Embert Charles, Saint Lucia

Vice-President Mathilde Kpalla, Togo

Vice-President Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls, Fiji

Treasurer Stephen Brown, France

Gregg Brekke, USA

Jim McDonnell, UK

David Morales Alba, Colombia

Vincent Rajkumar, India

Rania Rashad William, Egypt

Ary Régis, Haiti

Alba Sabaté Gauxachs, Spain

Philip Lee, WACC General Secretary (ex officio)

WACC Canada Board (2019-2023)

Embert Charles, Saint Lucia (WACC President)

Stephen Brown, France (WACC Treasurer)

Glory Dharmaraj, USA (WACC North America President)

Kristine Greenaway, Canada

Philip Lee, WACC General Secretary (ex officio)

Testimonials

Leonardo Felix (Argentina)
President, WACC Latin America

Ser parte de la familia de la WACC es saberse siempre, parte de un cambio, de un proyecto común para todas y todos. Es persistir a diario por una comunicación abierta, democrática y plural donde todas las voces y las historias son parte de la construcción diaria por un mundo mejor, sin brechas, sin odios y sin intolerancias.

Being part of the WACC family means you are always part of a collective project to create social change. It is to work daily to promote open, democratic and pluralistic communication so that all voices and stories are part of a daily effort to build a better world, without divides and without hate.

Rania Rashad William (Egypt)
Member, WACC UK Board of Directors

أنا عضوة في "الواكك" لإيماني بأهمية التواصل و الإعلام والمعرفة كأدوات للتمكين لكل فئات المجتمع، لكل الشعوب. ومن خلال دوري كعضوة في "الواكك" أساهم بجعل الناس في منطقتي يدركون أهمية التواصل والتواصل بحرية. الناس في منطقتي، مثلهم مثل مختلف مناطق العالم، يحتاجون للتمكين للتغلب على المحرمات أو المحظورات في التواصل، بحسب السياق السائد في المجتمع... قد تكون قضايا النوع الاجتماعي، الجنس، حرية الديانة والمعتقد، أو غيرها. وهو ما يقوم به "الواكك" لمساعدة الجميع بغض النظر عن النوع أو العرق أو الديانة أو المعتقد للتغلب على هذه المحظورات، وفي نفس الوقت لبناء قدرات ومهارات التواصل لديهم بمختلف الطرق. أنا عضوة في "الواكك" لأن التواصل الحر يتضمن المعرفة والمعرفة تتضمن القوة والتأثير، و "الواكك" يدعو للتواصل للجميع.

I am a WACC member because I believe in the importance of communication, media knowledge as empowerment tools for all members of society, and for all nations. As a WACC member, I can contribute to letting people in my region realize the importance of communication and communication freedom. People in my region, as well as in other parts of the world, need to be empowered to overcome communication taboos, on issues such as gender, sex, freedom of religion and belief. WACC helps all people – regardless of their gender, race, religion or belief - to overcome, while building their communication capacities and skills in various ways.

Tuomo Pesonen (Finland)
Member, WACC Europe Regional Executive Committee

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is a member of WACC to support an understanding of Christian communication and its essential role in our worldwide community. WACC provides a great forum for communicators around the world.

Mathilde Kpalla (Togo),
Vice President, WACC Global

« Etre membre de l'Association mondiale pour la communication chrétienne a été significatif aussi bien dans ma vie personnelle que professionnelle. J'ai grandi au contact d'autres histoires, d'autres vies, au travers desquelles je me suis retrouvée et cela m'a permis de comprendre l'importance de l'égalité des droits pour tous les humains que nous sommes partageant la même humanité. ».

Being a member of the World Association for Christian Communication has been meaningful in both my personal and professional life. My journey was accompanied by other stories, other lives, in which I could find myself and this allowed me to understand the importance of equal rights for all humans sharing the same humanity.

WACC Staff 2020

Philip Lee
General Secretary

Sara Speicher
Deputy General Secretary

Programmes

Sarah Macharia
Programme Manager – Gender and Communication; Monitoring Rural Poverty Reporting

Gisèle Langendries
Programmes and Funding Officer

Lorenzo Vargas
Programme Manager – Communication for Social Change

Administration

Joseph Patterson
Financial Controller

Lisa Gu
Accounting Assistant

Shari McMaster
Administrative Coordinator and Board Liaison

Consultants

Marites (Tess) Sison   *Communications Consultant*
Saskia Rowley   *Design Consultant*
Keith Nunn   *IT Consultant*

Top: WACC program manager Lorenzo Vargas, (far right), with Henry Gamba (middle) and Carolina Martinez (second from left) of Grupo Comunicarte, a WACC partner in Colombia, visit Serrania Estereo FM in the town of El Cocuy. The community radio station is participating in a WACC and Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) project. "Voices of the Andean Moorlands: Network of Environmental Citizen Reporters in Colombia."

Middle: (L-R) WACC Deputy General Secretary Sara Speicher, PEN International programme director Aaliya Ahmed, and WACC General Secretary Philip Lee, during a visit to the PEN headquarters in London.

Bottom: (L-R) Embert Charles, Gisele Langendries, Lorenzo Vargas, Lisa Gu, Shari McMaster, Sara Speicher, and Philip Lee
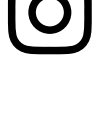
Connect with us

WACC Global

Tel: +1 (416) 691-1999
E-mail: wacc@waccglobal.orgg
Website: waccglobal.org

in linkedin.com/company/world-association-for-christian-communication-wacc-

f
o @waccglobal
y

Global Media Monitoring Project

Website: whomakesthenews.org

f @Global.Media.Monitoring.Project
y @whomakesthenews
o @gmmpglobal

Centre for Communication Rights

Website: ccrvoices.org

f
o @ccrvoices
y

WACC is a member of ACT Alliance
actalliance

WACC has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council

ECOSOC