

Foto: Round table at the conference on the occasion of CAMECO's 30th anniversary: On the left Fr. Franz-Josef Eilers SVD, one of the founders, the facilitator Toni Görtz (Editor-in-Chief of MISSIO aktuell), Dr. Daniela Frank, present Executive Director and her predecessor Hans-Peter Gohla sitting next to the President Fr. Henk Hoeckstra.



30 YEARS OF CAMECO

A Look back ... to the Future

Celebrating 30 years of an institution's existence is also an opportunity to look back to its origins and to reflect on how the original objectives were put into practice and could possibly have changed over the years. During our seminar, we had the chance to bring several people together who were directly involved in the foundation of the Catholic Media Council. Together we shared memories and reflections at a roundtable.

One of the key persons in the history of CAMECO is Fr. Franz-Josef Eilers SVD. He was very much involved in the preparatory activities which finally resulted in the foundation of CAMECO and he became one of its former executive directors. He remembers: „At the 1968 world congress of UCIP¹, in Berlin, Dr. Otto Kaspar told me that they had a development commission in UCIP, a group of people of which he was president, trying to promote support for Catholic press projects. From his experience, he realised that there should be more co-ordination, co-operation and planning for publication projects. Struggling for support from the funding agencies for publication projects, it became clear that they should have some kind of office to promote these projects and the necessary planning. That was the basic idea for the founding of CAMECO.“

In 1969 – a few years after the Vatican Council II with its Decree on the Means of Mass Communication „Inter Mirifica“ – there was already a growing awareness in several funding agencies, about the importance of communications and accordingly a growing need for professional advice for these types of projects. Dr. Kaspar asked Bishop Heinrich Tenhumberg, the head of the co-ordination office of the German Bishops' Conference with the government in Bonn, to arrange a meeting, on neutral ground, of the funding agencies and the representatives of the Catholic media organisations Unda², OCIC³ and UCIP, to discuss the idea of founding an office dedicated to this area of concern. The first official meeting in preparation of the future Catholic Media Council took place on June 14th, 1968. Six months later, Cardinal (at that time Msgr.) Andrzej Deskur participated for the first time, thereby representing the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, which had been involved right from the beginning. After many discussions the association known as the Catholic Media Council was founded in Germany on June 16th 1969. The principal objectives formulated in the first statutes are still valid: „The objectives of the association are the promotion of the work of the Catholic Church in the field of social communications in developing countries, particularly with advice, planning and assistance in education and further studies“. (Original version in German)

The name was Fr. Agnellus Andrew's (Unda) suggestion, and at a later meeting it was proposed that it be abbreviated to CAMECO. Msgr. Jesús Iribarren from UCIP became CAMECO's first president and Mr. Karl Höller was nominated as first executive secretary in October 1969. The office in Aachen opened on January 15th 1970, in three rooms with one pencil, one typewriter

¹ UCIP is the International Catholic Union of the Press

² Unda is the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television

³ OCIC is the International Catholic Organisation for Cinema and Audio-visual

and Mrs. Dangel, a very committed secretary. Karl Höller recalled the many questions they were dealing with in the beginning, like: What are the criteria for the evaluation of communication projects? How to define the role of press and communications in the process of development? Would it be sufficient to evaluate a single communication project without taking the communication system of a society into account? How to underline the importance of qualified training? How to make use of the modern communication technologies for the Christian media groups?



When CAMECO started operating there was already a clear idea of its tasks and these tasks were in four major areas:

Firstly, to animate round table discussions between mass media organisations and funding agencies. A „Kuratorium“ or advisory board consisting of representatives of agencies, of experts and of the media organisations OCIC, UCIP and Unda, was founded for that purpose. Secondly, to open new fields of co-operation with non-Catholic or non-Christian groups and institutions. CAMECO representatives travelled a lot in the first year for that reason, including visits to the World Council of Churches in Geneva, WACC¹ in London, UNESCO in Paris, FAO in Rome and American foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation, all of which dealt with media projects.

The third task was to prepare the basis for the evaluation of media projects. Therefore it was necessary to read scientific papers and studies, to visit congresses, etc. The Catholic Media Council's archives were set up at that time, and are meanwhile, one of the most important archives for communication – and not only for Christian communication – worldwide.

The fourth task was to evaluate media projects presented to the funding agencies by the Third World partners. CAMECO soon gained the confidence of most of the agencies and in July 1970 was already “overloaded” with 22 mass media projects from all continents.

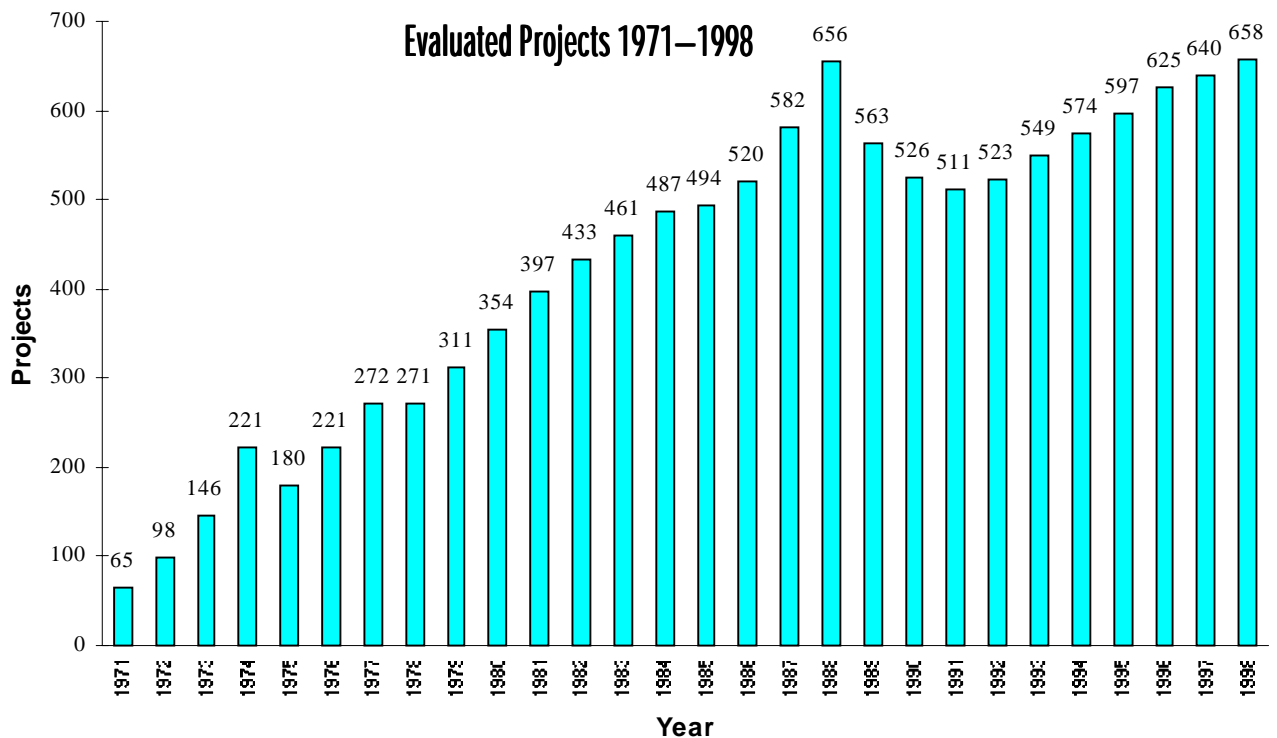
Although the initiative was started in Germany, it soon became clear that not only German agencies (like Missio, Misereor, Adveniat, Church in Need) were interested in the services offered by CAMECO, but also those of other European countries too. Thus, Swiss Lenten Fund joined, as well as Vastenactie, AMA and Cebemo (Netherlands), Katholische Jungschar Österreichs and the „Koordinierungsstelle“ (Austria), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium) or the Catholic Relief Service (USA/Geneva), to name just some of them.

In his review of the “good old days” Franz-Josef Eilers stated “that more and more people started to approach CAMECO directly before presenting an application to a funding agency. By that time the number of projects had, of course increased because the funding agencies’ trust in the Catholic Media Council was growing.”

He also remembers that in the beginning, during initial discussions, certain people in the funding agencies were hesitant to the need for a new organisation. Contrary to this, other agencies emphasised the necessity of a joint venture, as not all funding agencies had their own communications department.” Therefore, CAMECO developed, step by step, into a specialised office where basically all western funding agencies were co-operating, including those working in the field of development as well as those oriented towards pastoral activities”, Fr. Eilers summarised.

¹ World Association of Christian Communication

The following statistic gives an overview of how the number of initiatives evaluated by CAMECO has developed since its beginning:



In all these years, the central activity of the CAMECO staff, but not the only one, has been the evaluation and assessment of project applications in order to be of help in the decision-making process for the funding agencies. With the growing experience of the collaborators and the establishment of contacts with media initiatives and organisations in the different continents, it has also been more and more possible to give direct advice to people on the spot concerning the professional development of their work, and also with regard to the question, if, and how their initiatives could receive financial support from the international funding agencies. Meanwhile, more than a third of the applications received at CAMECO are so-called “advice projects”.

Even in the early years of CAMECO, there were requests to realise in-depth-researches on the situation of a specific media sector or the work of an institution. As early as 1971, CAMECO had already completed research on the situation of the Catholic press in francophone Africa. Other works followed on daily and weekly papers, on radio-school projects in Latin America or on the use of “cinema mobiles” in India. CAMECO is frequently involved in the preparation and realisation of on-the-spot evaluations in the different regions and in the overall planning of communication activities in a specific sector.

The following are some important projects in which CAMECO collaborated in the past:

- Data Transmission System (DTS) in the Democratic Republic of Congo

- Content analysis and evaluation of the management of “Lakroa n’i Madagasikara” (Tananarive, Madagascar)
- National Institute for Social Communication, Research and Training of the Indian Bishops’ Conference in New Delhi
- Evaluation and new conception of the “Communications and Pastoral work” courses (Latin America)
- The planning of journalistic training at the “European Centre for Communication and Culture” of the Jesuits in Warsaw (Poland)

Some structural changes also took place in all these years. Originally, according to the Statutes of 1969, the three international Catholic media organisations UCIP, Unda and OCIC were the legal members of the Association and formed its General Assembly, while representatives of the funding agencies and a certain number of media experts would constitute the “Kuratorium”, a counselling body. In 1982, the agencies brought up the discussion of how their active participation in CAMECO (including Board and Assembly) could be assured, also giving them voting rights.

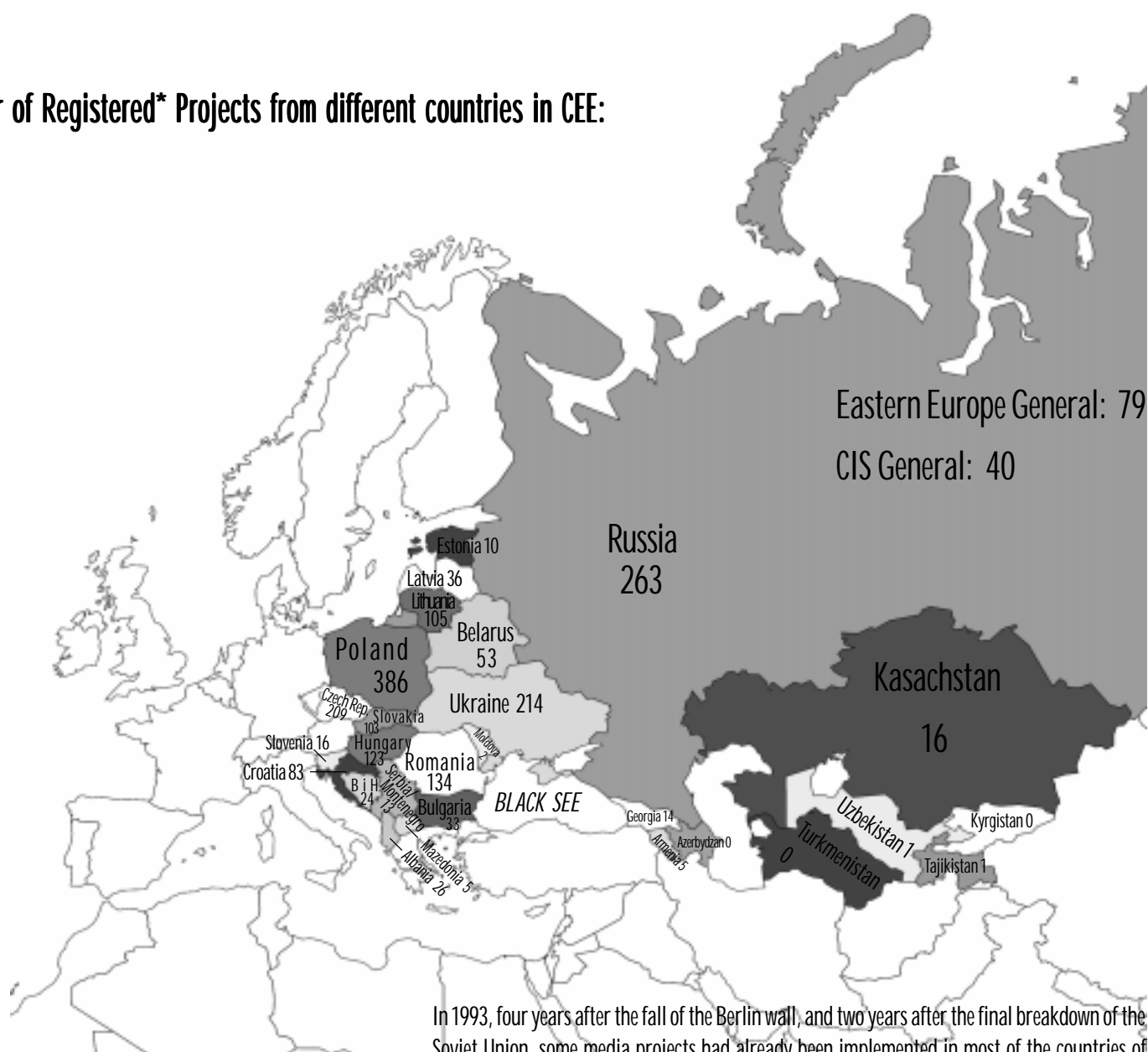
Up until then, they financed the operational budget of CAMECO and had an advisory role in the “Kuratorium”, but no official possibility to influence CAMECO’s policies. The following consultations resulted in a revision of the Statutes, according to which one third of the members of the General Assembly would be members of the funding agencies, one third representatives of the international Catholic media organisations and one third independent media experts, proposed by the Zentralstelle Medien, the secretariat of the Episcopal Commission for Social Communications of the German Bishops’ Conference. In 1992 it was finally agreed to extend the number of funding agency members to six.

Central and Eastern Europe

After the fall of the iron curtain, several organisations, particularly in Germany and Austria, extended their support to the local churches in Central and Eastern Europe, but mainly without co-ordination in the first years. After the breakdown of the Eastern Bloc, the churches in the old as well as in the newly formed countries faced a tremendous need of educational and informational material and they also searched for publications, news agencies and publishing houses to spread the gospel; their messages could now be heard on radio and their presence could widely be seen through TV. A growing number of applications were sent to funding organisations, and CAMECO was also asked for assistance. As a result of these increasing demands CAMECO established a desk for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in 1993 on a provisional basis.

There were two underlying reasons for the temporary status: It was too optimistically assumed, that the Churches in CEE would need only a short period of time to re-build their own self-sustaining structures. Besides this it was also obvious, that the needs and the concepts of the development of the Christian media landscape in those countries was completely different from the regions that CAMECO had been dealing with traditionally. The question was therefore, whether CAMECO could really offer adequate services to the funding organisations as well as to the partners in the East.

Number of Registered* Projects from different countries in CEE:



In 1993, four years after the fall of the Berlin wall, and two years after the final breakdown of the Soviet Union, some media projects had already been implemented in most of the countries of CEE, while CAMECO somehow had to start from the beginning in building up the informational structures (archive, personal and organisational contacts etc.) for the work of the new department, which was fully integrated and received permanent status in the third year of its existence.

The partners in the respective countries were not used to funding organisations' procedures or to consultative institutions like CAMECO. They were suspicious and afraid of openly stating their ideas and the philosophy of their projects, while the donors in the West had to present clear views and perspectives, based on proper planning to enable the respective board to come to a decision. This was only one of the factors, which made CAMECO's work more difficult.

At the same time, the countries were undergoing processes of accelerated changes in society: The political systems and the laws, the economy, the culture and the official languages changed rapidly. The ability to react to those new needs was restricted, not only by financial problems but also by the fact that Catholics were not allowed to work in the media sector in many countries during communist times. Therefore most of the communications projects were started with an euphoria of new freedom, but lacking professional personnel.

**Registered projects include – besides those evaluated by the CAMECO staff – the data taken from the project lists provided by nearly 20 funding organisations.*

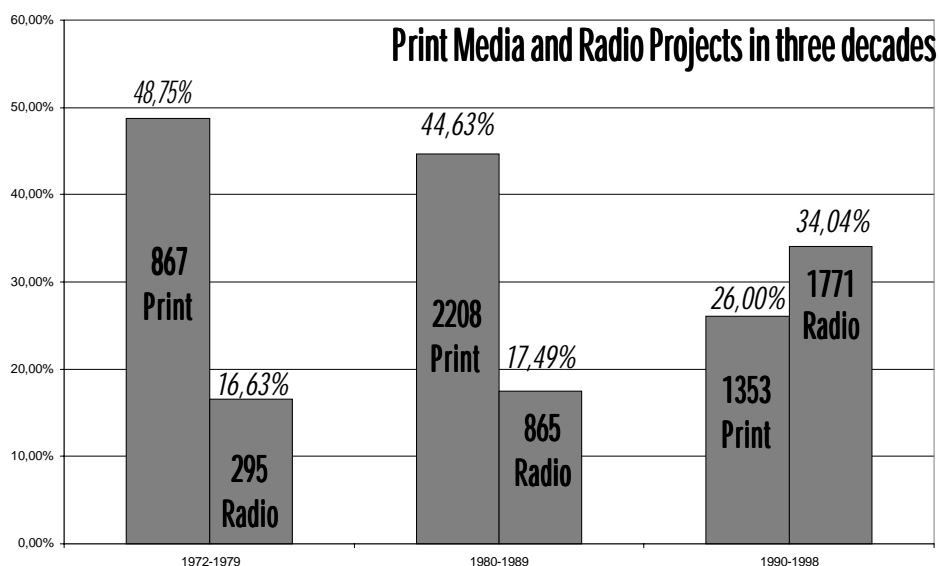
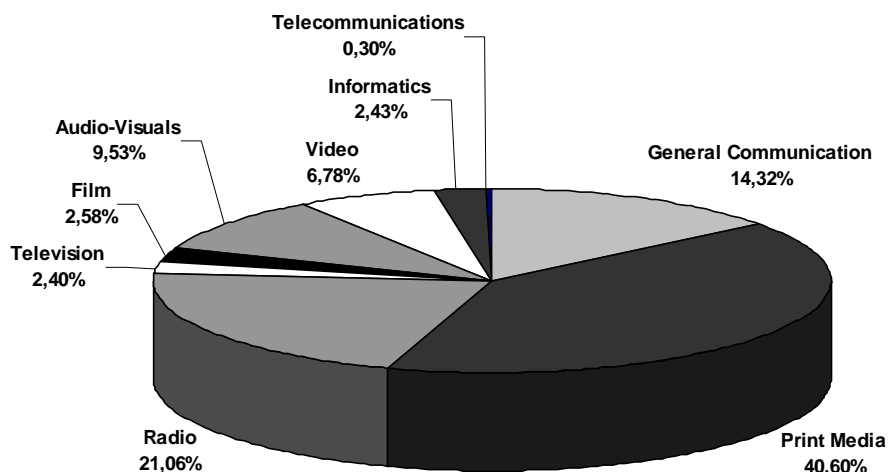
Meanwhile it would be difficult to find common characteristics in the variety of countries that the department for CEE is dealing with, ranging from the middle of Europe to the centre of Asia, including the countries of the former and present Yugoslavia. There are different needs, pre-requisites, cultures and visions of the national Churches. Therefore it would be misleading to generalise the development too much. However, the map shows, that some of the smallest countries had a tremendously high number of applications registered, e.g. Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary or Lithuania. It can be assumed, that this is due to the fact that the majority of the population is Catholic and the church structures were built up quite soon, or – like in the case of the Czech Republic – the involvement in the media field was considered as one of the main “political” priorities by the church hierarchy.

If we consider the different fields of media engagement, we can presume, that the Churches followed the traditional structures: they first (re)established publishing houses (incl. printing presses), (re)opened their own periodicals before they started being active in radio or video or TV production. However, in most of the countries this period of catching up was rather short, compared to other regions of the world.

Nevertheless, with the globalisation of the media scene we also find that the problems and challenges that the Church has to face in a global media world do have many similarities.

Whereas the involvement of CAMECO in the communication activities of the Churches in Central and Eastern Europe is relatively new, we were in touch with partners from Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific from the beginning. During the 30 years of CAMECO’s existence, tremendous and rapid changes in the communication sector have taken place, which also influence the media involvement of the Church strongly. For a long time, CAMECO predominantly received projects in the print sector (magazines, publications and printing presses), in the meantime the audio-visual or electronic media have gained importance in most regions. Whereas Latin America can be traditionally considered as a continent of radio, it is only in the last few years that changes in legislation have made it possible to operate private or community radios in many African countries. Accordingly more and more local Churches have jumped into audio production or established radio stations, sometimes in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations. This development is clearly reflected in the number of radio projects registered at CAMECO during the last years. The trend from “print media” to “radio” (see

Evaluated Projects 1972–1998



„Categories of CAMECO's Documentation Department“) can be verified by comparing the number of projects evaluated during the three decades of CAMECO's existence. Whereas the number of “print media” projects has declined during this period, there is also a clear growth of projects in the field of radio, particularly since 1990.

Which development tendencies are perceptible in the different regions?

Africa

Looking back on the Church media scene in Africa over these 30 years, it can be stressed that during the '70's and '80's, the situation was very stable, and largely dominated by print media, predominantly printing presses and periodicals. At that time the Church newspapers were the only independent voice all over the continent, except in a few countries like Senegal, Nigeria,

Categories of CAMECO's Documentation Department:

General Communication: Media centres and communication commissions, traditional communication media (dance, theatre, puppetry, oral communication, etc.), training at academic level and general communication courses.

Print Media: Establishment of printing presses, purchase of printing equipment, news agencies, daily newspapers and non-daily periodicals, publication of books, support of publishing houses, training in printing technologies and publishing.

Radio: Purchase of broadcasting and studio equipment, production of radio programmes, support of production centres, establishment or extension of radio stations, training in radio technologies and production.

Television: Purchase of broadcasting and studio equipment, production of television programmes, support of production centres, establishment or extension of TV stations, training in TV technologies and production.

Film: Purchase of production and projection equipment, film production and support of production centres, support for mobile film units, cinemas, film libraries, training in film production.

Audio-Visuals: This category comprises audio cassettes, film strips, slides, posters, charts, photolanguage, comics, etc.

Video: Purchase of video production and projection equipment, video production and support of production centres, support for mobile units, video libraries, training in video production and technologies.

Informatics: Purchase of hard- and software, Local/ Wide Area Networks, support of data bases and Electronic Data Processing centres, multimedia, Internet/ Intranet, training.

Telecommunications: Purchase of consumer and professional satellite devices, telephone systems, satellite communication, training.

Research, freedom of expression or legal matters of the respective media are further items considered within all media categories.

Kenya and South Africa. The main question however — even now still valid and of great importance — was how to reach solid ground for a financial self-sustainability. The second concern during these two decades was the presence of the Churches on state radio and television.

At the end of the eighties, the wind of democratisation brought tremendous changes: newspapers mushroomed all over Africa, but particularly in the frankophone areas and in Western Africa. This new independent press corresponded to the strong popular call for freedom: freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of association. In many countries, new media and communication laws were passed, opening new opportunities. The most important result was the development of independent (commercial, local, community, rural) radio stations. Although we could question whether the Churches took the changes in the print media scene serious, there is no doubt that they jumped into broadcasting with its new opportunities, and this process is still going on. These developments have also changed CAMECO's work drastically.

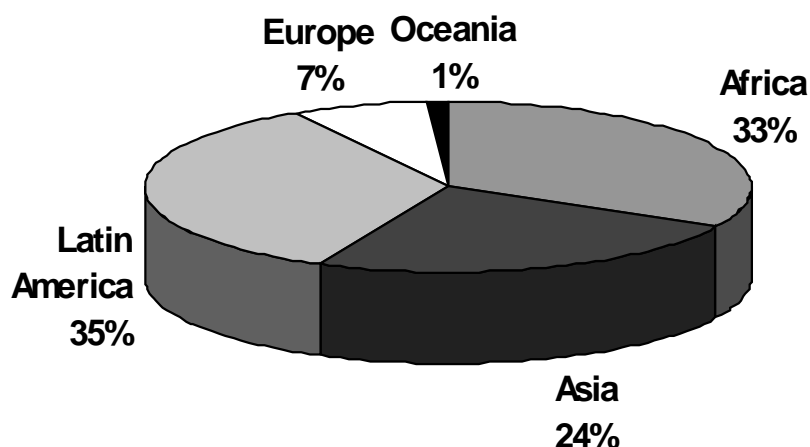
Training in communications was always an important concern of the Church in Africa as well as of CAMECO. During this last decade, a large number of highly qualified and skilled people have entered the communication field at the service or in relation with the Church of Africa. This fact also influences the quality and strategical importance of the applications received from Africa. The growing potential of human resources in the media, and Church media in particular in Africa, is definitely the most promising sign for this continent, and especially for the Church in Africa. The emphasis on training has been an important concern over this period, and now the seed is slowly giving fruit, although there is still a long way to go. Training programmes in communication at all levels continue to be a demanding priority, including the challenge to create an overall concept for the different formation activities.

Asia

A review of the last 30 years of media work in Asia shows that the print medium is still the main tool for the Catholic Church to communicate in the region. While nowadays there certainly is excitement among the Catholic media workers about the possibilities of new communication technologies, we have to realise clearly that most of Asia still uses traditional means of communication. Besides the print medium, dance, puppetry and street theatre play a significant role. However, the utilisation of audio-visuals, for example — slides, photography and audiocassettes has decreased strongly, here obviously the invention of video technology and the steadily falling hardware prices have replaced these traditional group media tools. Mass media such as radio and TV are slowly being utilised by the Church, but in several Asian countries there are still too many legal restrictions of the state owned media, so that the Church has very little opportunity to use the full potential of these influential mass media for its social communication apostolate. And more important, church-related media workers have too little know-how on the best means of professionally using it, particularly with regard to the potential of the visual medium. Hence training remains top priority.

During the latest Unda/OCIC Asia meeting in Taiwan another alarming development was noticed by the Asian media workers themselves. Never before has such a small number of women been engaged in church-related media work. One could count on one hand the number of female

Evaluated Projects by Continents:



participants – sisters and laywomen – who attended the meeting. It was decided to start a project with media training exclusively for women to counter this commonly considered negative tendency. 30 years ago such a project would have been non-existent – the necessity would not even have been recognised or felt. Obstacles in the way of professionalizing media work in Asia obviously seems to be affected by wider issues than lacking resources, for example the fact that in the majority of Asian countries the Christians form a minority, and that co-operation attitudes seem to be difficult to develop in spite of dwindling resources.

Latin America

As already stressed, Latin America could have been seen as the continent of radio. Most Latin American countries can look back to a long tradition of Catholic radio stations, running mainly in rural areas. Many of them started as so-called radio schools, dedicated to the formal and non-formal education of the rural and marginalised population. During the last three decades, the concept of alternative radio was regularly adapted according to new challenges faced on social and cultural levels. Humberto Vandenbulcke's article on „The Changing Role of ‚Radios Populares‘ in Latin America“, published in this issue, gives an overview on these developments.

Community radios have gained importance in several countries, strengthening the possibilities of participation of the population and thus strengthening civil society. In Bolivia, Peru and the Dominican Republic the long-running radio networks of Catholic and development-oriented radio stations are an important voice in their national context. Thousands of community radio stations have emerged recently, particularly in Brazil and Colombia. In Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay the Church is also involved in the endeavours for the legalisation of community radios. Wherever permissible by law, networks are created to foster the exchange of programmes and the creation of a stable financial basis, e.g. by offering transmission time for advertisements as a network, and not as a single station as used to be.

During the last few years, there is a clear tendency in the Latin American Church to jump into TV. Taking the growing importance of television into account, the Church also has to face the question of how she wants to be, and how she can be present, in this influential medium. The range of answers is very broad, from national Catholic TV channels (like in Brazil and the Dominican Republic) to small community TV initiatives under the auspices of the Church or efforts to strengthen the production capacities to reach a qualified presence in existing public and commercial channels (see also the report about the workshop „TV, Civil Society and the Church“ in this issue).

In all these years, CAMECO's policy was to encourage the partners in the developing countries as well as in Central and Eastern Europe towards the planning of communication structures beyond isolated initiatives, facilitating the co-operation of different projects on national and regional level and effecting thus a stronger unity of the Church and the non-governmental sector in the media field. From CAMECO's point of view, the Episcopal Commissions for Social Communications should and could play an important role in co-ordinating the communications efforts of the local Church, promoting the development of a common pastoral plan of communications according to their specific context.

Special attention should be paid to training. Without any doubt, the availability of qualified and experienced personnel is a key factor for an effective performance of Church media institutions as well as for the development of adequate media strategies and the continuity of projects. Thus, in all these years much attention has been paid to the formation of communicators and of pastoral agents involved in media activities, including the development of adequate training programmes and the corresponding institutions in the continents themselves.

CAMECO was founded to support the work of the Churches in the field of social communications. The way that this support has been given might have changed in some aspects. In the same way that communication strategies and techniques are developing, CAMECO has the duty to constantly reconsider the services we should and could offer, to support on the one hand the donor organisations and on the other hand the project holders in their work. Therefore CAMECO tries to offer itself as a dialogue partner, asking together with communicators, Church leaders and agencies how the possibilities of the media can be used in an adequate and effective way for evangelisation as well as for development. To be able to offer this service, one of the great advantages of CAMECO has always been its independence and „neutrality“. Hans Peter Gohla, Executive Director of CAMECO between 1991 and 1999, put it as follows: „My desire was to be as impartial, neutral and professional as possible. I wanted to continue with this professional approach in assessing and analysing projects. From my point of view, one of the most important things for CAMECO has always been that we never had own funds for projects.“

This position makes it possible to be in close contact with the funding agencies as well as with communicators all over the world, mostly those working at the services of the Christian Churches, but often also with secular organisations committed to the same objectives. These contacts also force us to learn and adapt ourselves to the new dynamics of communications introduced by political and social developments, by new technical possibilities or new legal conditions. All these aspects are not only challenges for CAMECO but – according to our understanding – for the Church, for her presence in the world and her way of handling communications as well as for all our partners around the globe.

Dr. Daniela Frank, Executive Director