



## **World Association for Christian Communication**

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), whose central office is based in London, is not an international donor agency but rather an association of communicators which aim to prioritise Christian values in the world's communication and development needs. WACC has, therefore, a strong advocacy role. Support for communication activities and projects is another crucial aspect of their work and goes hand in hand with the advocacy aspect.

Concern for the poor lies at the very heart of WACC's support for media projects and activities amongst grass roots groups, NGOs and churches in the South. Since its creation, some 25 years

ago, WACC has prioritised and emphasised the crucial role of communication in the transformation and democratisation of societies. This commitment was crystallized during the 1980s in WACC's *Christian Principles of Communication* which encourage us to strive for the kind of communication that creates community, is participatory, liberates people and contributes to the support and development of cultures. A further, very important dimension is that communication must be prophetic, expressing itself in words as well as deeds, and must be willing to challenge the powers that be. It is through the communication projects that WACC supports that these principles and beliefs materialise and grow.



Source: Radio Actions 9/1996

Based on the number of requests we receive for support, interest amongst grass roots and marginalised groups in developing communication projects is increasing year by year. There is evidence of a growing awareness among these groups that the freedom to speak with their own voices and participate actively in society, i.e. to communicate, is a fundamental human right. This awareness raising, combined with new and cheaper technologies, means that more groups now have the skills to handle and access forms of communication and information which they never had before. A good example is the way community radio stations throughout Latin America are using satellite links and digital technology to receive and distribute information relevant to the needs of the communities they serve. Another example is how a group of African women, some of whom had participated in a WACC-funded electronic network workshop, were able to organise a successful international email campaign to have a fatwa, imposed by the country's religious authorities, removed from one of their members.

WACC-supported projects involve communication and the development of awareness amongst individual human beings, small groups or whole communities. Communication plays a central role as a building block in the development of the whole community, as a tool for the preservation of people's culture, and as a prophetic voice which unmask and makes explicit the causes of social and economic injustice. WACC has seen this very clearly in some of the projects in Haiti where the broadcasting, publication and dissemination of news and information in Creole is playing an important role in the strengthening of civil society, and in particular of the poorest sectors, in that country.

It is WACC's belief that the media projects it supports play a key role within their respective countries in the process of development and democratisation, and that they are indispensable in the quest for true citizenship for everyone.

María Teresa Aguirre,  
Director Regional Development Sector and  
Regional Coordinator, the Caribbean & Latin America