



Dear Friends,

In December 1991, upon the initiative of the London-based World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) in collaboration with Isis International in Manila and the International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC) based in New York, the concept of the Women Empowering Communication global conference was crystallized.

Now, over two years later, and after several planning meetings and preparatory work, the global conference, Women Empowering Communication in Thailand is a reality.

Isis International, in addition to its principal role as a co-organizer, wanted to make a tangible contribution to the conference. Thus we bring to you this issue of Women in Action, a collection of articles on women's experiences in community media from the regions of Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific.

The conference participants constitute representatives of women's networks, alternative media, grassroots groups, the academe and other disciplines. It seems only fitting that we share with them how individual women and women's groups have creatively expressed themselves in various media forms in the community setting. In fact, we have featured some of the participating groups in the conference such as Video SEWA, Sistren Theatre Collective, and Cine Mujer.

These women have set inspiring examples of how we can utilize varying media expressions not only to attain self-empowerment but also to improve the portrayal of women in media. They have shown us the similarities in the lives and struggles of women all over the globe, despite cultural and geographical boundaries.

What is even more encouraging is that these women's voices come from the community. They have successfully explored in very creative ways the use of low cost media such as song, dance, street theater, drawings, posters, puppetry and flipcharts.

There are many other women's groups who have done some very good work in community media such as FIRE (Feminist International Radio Endeavour), a feminist radio program in Costa Rica and the East Sepik Documentation Project in the Pacific. We also acknowledge the value of traditional forms of expression such as arpilleras and tapestries, woven stories on cloth by women in Chile, Peru and the Philippines and the khanga, a piece of cloth used as a communication tool by women in Africa..

What we have presented here is but a microviewing of women's experiences in community media. In bringing this to the Women Empowering Communication conference, we join in the gathering of women communicators who will enrich us with the breadth and depth of their experiences in media.

Mabuhay and Sawasdee Ka!

Isis International - Manila