



The following three excerpts of media activities (video, theater and film in Latin America), were taken from the summary document of workshops and seminars **Communicative Identities and Alternative Proposals for Women** that were undertaken in Lima, Peru in November, 1991. This meeting of women in alternative media organizations aimed to discuss, assess and answer what women media groups have accomplished in the last ten years, and how they have contributed to new gender identities. In the evaluation, women's participations were assessed directly in order to understand their demands, their relationship to alternative and mass media.

The main goal was to establish how women understood alternative messages, how they identified with them and what impact they had on this group. In addition, assessments were made in order to understand their everyday use of mass media and the impact on their lives, social identities and gender.

Aymara Women Access Video

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Translated by Luz Martinez

The women's center **Gregoria Apaza**, whose goals are to promote women in Bolivia, undertook a communication project to video Aymara women as they respond to their ideas and feelings toward mainstream television programming.

The project was divided into three sections:

- ◆ to reflect and systematize all the responses;
- ◆ to study the consumer habits of this group; and
- ◆ to record their reception and use of institutional productions.

The target group was Aymaran urban women who have migrated from the rural areas. The

objectives of this communication project were as follows:

- ◆ to develop the capacities of these women to express themselves;
- ◆ to provide them access to a media tool;
- ◆ to form public opinions on problems experienced by this group;
- ◆ to systematize all these experiences.

The reports gathered by this investigation are intended as a method of advocacy support and as an educational tool for this and other centers.

Evaluation process

A group of evaluators, women announcers from popular radio programs, educated women from a local parish and college, were chosen to critique the video. Additional evaluation reports were generated each time the video was shown in other institutions.

Highlights of the results

The themes proposed by the project were well supported. However, the women interviewed were seeking information and orientation to their everyday experiences and desired to see their problems through other perspectives and requested referrals.

They expressed the need to learn from other experiences. Examples cited by the report were that the women were not satisfied with investigative reports that only focus on projecting problems familiar to them. Many of the women expressed that they want to receive orientation and information from television and radio programs.

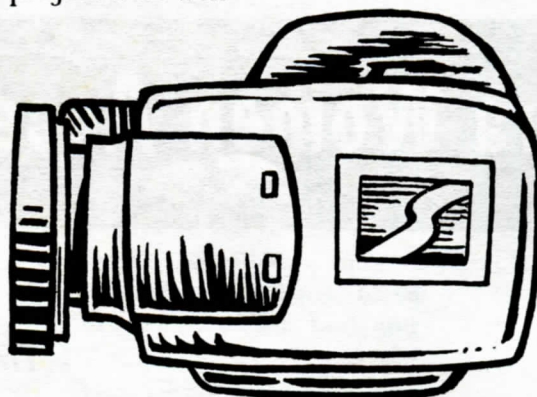
Another point raised was the importance of seeing Aymara women on television. The women stated that this was important in order to value themselves as well as their own language. They emphasized this not only in terms of better programming but also as a way of legitimizing their culture via media.

The project also confirmed that the women's attention was captured by the video and they proved to be active respondents. They freely commented and expressed themselves as they

were being videotaped, and the viewers of the video have engaged in discussions that have broadened their perspective of national problems.

The problem cited by the respondents was that the cultural aspects of the Aymara people are not portrayed accurately in mainstream media.

- ◆ the gender relationship among the Aymara culture is wrongly perceived. Their relationships differ greatly from Western style relationships.
- ◆ the problems of being marginalized, when the Aymara woman migrates to the city.



Grace de Jesus-Sievert

In general the project highlighted the gender problems that emphasize the need for women's rights. It also verified, that discussions of women's rights are shared among organized women but not women who are not organized. The latter experience these same rights conflicts but they perceive them in a different way. Many gender conflict issues need to take cultural differences into account.

When responding to mass media, Aymara women do not identify with the female images of television. For example, they do not relate to the women in soap operas but wish for their daughters to be more like the women portrayed on television.

Source: *Identidad Comunicativa y Propuesta Alternativa para la Mujer - Memoria de Seminario Taller, CEAAL/Red de Educacion Popular Entre Mujeres/CALANDRIA, Lima, Peru, 1993*
