

WOMEN in ACTION



international

4 / 93



WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN COMMUNITY MEDIA

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Women's Experiences in Community Media

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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



African rural women initiate environment project

Dear Isis,

The Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW), an affiliate of the International Alliance of Women, is a non profit, non government organization established in 1978.

Its main objectives are:

- * to improve the welfare of women and children in Zambia;
- * to instill in women a sense of self reliance through constructive work;
- * to ensure all such reforms which are necessary to establish real liberties, status and opportunities between men and women; and
- * to urge women to accept their responsibilities and use their rights and influence in public life to ensure that the status of every individual, without distinction of sex, colour or creed, shall be based on respect for a human being, the only guarantee for individual freedom.

In pursuance of its objectives, ZAW is currently working with rural women. One such group at Chibombo about 30 km. outside the city centre recently embarked on an agro-forestry project. They are planting a nitrogen fixing plant (*Sesbania sesban*) as well as fruit trees for their own use and for surplus sale. They have heard of the success of the Uganda Tree Planting Movement and would like to visit Uganda in order to observe and learn from the Ugandan experience.

Yours faithfully,

E. C. Manda
President
Zambia Alliance of Women
P.O. Box 51068
Lusaka, Zambia

☛ *We are interested in women and environment issues. Please keep us informed about your activities.* –
Editor

Indian group requests information on hearing impaired women

Dear Isis International,

Silent Valley is a non government organization working for the cause of hearing impaired women. Our initiatives include programmes for their social, economic, cultural and educational development.

I am a school teacher for the hearing impaired for the last 12 years. The concern for their problems relating to gender discrimination and disability prompted us to work with them. We are in search of global initiatives for their cause and would like to get more details about this. Please provide more information about Isis International and send me **Women Envision**.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Annas C.P.
Project Officer
Silent Valley
2/372 Paravattany, Thrissur
Kerala 680 005 India

☛ *We are including you in our mailing list and we hope that our readers will be able to send you more information on global initiatives for hearing impaired women.* – **Editor**

Apology

We wish to apologise to **Liza Azarcon** for omitting her name from a reproduction of her art work on page 52 of our last issue of *Women in Action* (2 & 3/93) - **Women and Migration**.

Adva Center in Israel shares health report

Dear Sisters,

I would like to share with you a report on health services in Israel produced by Adva Center, an independent research and advocacy institute working to promote equality between gender, national and ethnic groups in Israel. A major part of this report is devoted to women's health.

This report, like all our reports, is published in Hebrew, Arabic and English. I am enclosing copies in Arabic and English. If you are interested, I would be happy to send you copies of other reports we have published or will publish in the future.

Also enclosed is a brochure about Adva Center (in Hebrew, *adva* means ripple, the effect we would like to have on our society). Unfortunately, the Women's Resource Center is still in the planning stage.

I have been receiving **Women In Action** because my personal address was also that of the Peace Quilt project, undertaken in 1987-1988 after the outbreak of the Palestinian *intifada*. The project is no longer operating, but our objectives are now being achieved. Negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and the end to the occupation are taking place.

Perhaps you can send future copies of **Women In Action** to Adva Center. We would like to be part of the Isis network.

In sisterhood,

Barbara Swirski
Director, Adva Center
P.O. Box 36529
Tel-Aviv 61363 Israel

☛ *The health report will form part of our resource collection. We would appreciate receiving your other reports in the future. We will include you in our mailing list of **Women in Action**. - Editor*

Problem drugs launched

Dear Isis,

We are very proud to announce the launch of **Problem Drugs!**

This is a revised edition of a campaign and information pack produced by Health Action International in 1986. It covers: drugs and children, women and the elderly; antidiarrhoeals; antibiotics; analgesics; cough and cold remedies; growth stimulants; drugs in pregnancy; contraceptives; hormone replacement therapy; and psychotropics.

It also contains sections on individual drugs or sub-categories which are particularly problematic, either because they are obsolete, harmful, ineffective or unnecessary. We produced **Problem Drugs** in order to recommend improvements in drug policy, to promote more rational drug treatments and to provide background information on medicines for health activists lobbying for changes in policy, researchers, health professionals, journalists, and the general public. The scope of the publication is international; marketing and regulatory actions in developing and industrialised countries are described throughout.

We have already sent a review copy to **Women in Action** at Isis, but I am now enclosing a further copy of **Problem Drugs** and a flyer for the pack so that Isis would be able to write a review article or distribute flyers along with your other publications.

Please feel free to get in touch with me for more information.

Best regards,

Barbara Mintzes
Health Action International
Jacob van Lennepkade 334 T
1053 NJ Amsterdam
The Netherlands

☛ *Thank you for sharing the information on **Problem Drugs** with Isis and with our readers. We will announce the flyers in our other publications. - Editor*

Media Watch in India

Dear Editor,

I am an avid reader of your esteemed publication, **Women in Action**. I shall shortly be laying down office at the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Development in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and joining a non-commercial, non-profit making association of media watchers in India. I would be grateful if you could send me a complimentary copy of your very informative publication regularly.

My services will be available to you in case you want any writeup on the media scene in India in particular and in the Asia-Pacific region in general, with special reference to broadcasting and environment.

Looking forward to closer cooperation for mutual benefit and thanking you.

Yours faithfully,

H. Hanumantha Rao
Media Lab
8 Lakshmi Nagar, Sheikpet Nala
Old Bombay Road, Hyderabad 500 008
India

We have updated your address on our mailing list and will be in touch with you in the future regarding possible media coverage in the region. – Editor

Women's Health Network in Australia

Dear sisters,

Please accept our greetings. Our organisation would be very interested in receiving any information and in being included in your contact list.

We would be happy to send you our newsletter or in some other way communicate with your network.

Following is a brief description of our very new organisation:

The Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN) is a non-profit, non-government, feminist organisation. Its aim is to give a national focus to women's health. It is a national lobbying body and an umbrella organisation for State/Territorial Women's Health Networks. Its activities will benefit all Australian women by raising the profile of public debate on women's health issues and through the dissemination of health information through a regular newsletter to its members and other health organisations.

Regards,

Julie McCarron-Benson
GPO Box 432
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

Welcome to our network! We have included your organisation on our publications exchange list and will be sending you information about our activities in the future in particular those concerning health. – Editor

Announcement

Orders for "Power to Change" and other Women's Feature Service publications and video tapes can be obtained from:

WFS
49 Golf Links
New Delhi 110-003
India

Tel: (+91-11) 4629886
Fax: (+91-11) 4629886/4629699
Telex: 3161922 KAJA INN
E-Mail: DIALCOM 141:TCN 1850



Women's News Watch

As part of Isis International's efforts to share information, we produce a weekly news and features newsletter - **Women's News Watch** which can be sent either through the mail or through e-mail. It focuses on women's issues, news and views from around the Asia-Pacific Region. The following are replies to our first batch of issues:

Dear Isis,

Greetings from CHETNA!

We are thankful to you for sending us a weekly news - **Women's News Watch**. It will be greatly useful for our library and will become a storage of information. Kindly keep CHETNA's name in your mailing list.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

Jyoti Gade

Sr. Field Officer, CHETNA
Lilavatiben Lalbhai's Bungalow
Civil Camp Road, Shahibaug
Ahmedabad 380 004, Gujarat, India

Dear Isis,

Many thanks for the 29 October-12 November **Women's News Watch** via E-Mail. There is some interesting material there which I shall keep on file.

I find the contact addresses that you supply with many of the articles particularly useful.

Our priority coverage at Panos are environment and development, with some health issues (particularly when they are connected with public health).

We are keen to carry more articles on and by women. So, I hope we can build on these initial contacts. I shall certainly do my best to spread the news about **Women's News Watch**.

Best wishes.

Denise Searle

Acting Editor, Panoscope and Panos Features
9 White Lion Street
London N1 9PD, U.K.

Dear Isis,

Thank you for your letter of 19 November and the enclosed **Women's News Watch**. Really I find the news and features very interesting and used one of them in our newsletter No. 23 on ethnic minority people in Thailand, in the section of *News from Around the Region*. The newsletter (*Thai Development Newsletter*) is coming out at the end of this month, hopefully. At the time of writing, it is at the printers already.

As our main issue of interest at the moment is natural resource management and ordinary people, most of our space in the newsletter tend to cover more of the mentioned issue than women's. Besides, the issue itself is more attractive than such distant natural resource management. Therefore, I think those working on women's issues do not apparently have a problem presenting their perspective to their audience.

Let's keep each other posted.

Yours sincerely,

Suntaree Kiatiprajuk

Editor, Thai Development Newsletter
Thai Development Support Committee
530 Soi St. Louis 3,
South Sathorn
Bangkok 10120, Thailand

Dear Isis,

Greetings!

Thank you for continuously sending us copies of **Women's News Watch**. This will make us updated on different issues confronting women in various fields.

We are still hoping that we are going to receive them regularly this year.

Again, thank you and more power.

Sincerely yours,

Vida B. Subingsubing

Coordinator, BUNSO Resource Center
(National Coalition for the Promotion of Breast-feeding and Child Care)
5 Basilan Street
Philam Homes
Quezon City, Philippines

Dear Isis,

Greetings from Swadhina, India. Many thanks for recent copies of **Women's News Watch**. We would like to receive it regularly. Therefore we have filled up your form. Enclosed please find the order slip. With every best wish.

Yours sincerely,

Saswati Roy
Secretary, Swadhina
34/C Bondel Road
Calcutta-700019, India

Dear Isis,

Thank you for the offer of the **Women's News Watch** weekly. We would like to get this publication.

If it is convenient for you to mail it to us on a monthly basis, that arrangement will suit us fine.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Nan Peacocke
Publications Editor, Women & Development Unit
The University of the West Indies
School of Continuing Studies
Pinelands
St. Michael, Barbados

*To all the above and to others who have so far responded, we thank you for your encouraging comments. To everyone now receiving **Women's News Watch** and to those of you who will be receiving it in the future, we hope that the disseminating of women's news continues to expand and that we, as women, will learn that what we have to share is important, relevant and vital to our growth. - Editor*

If you would like to receive **Women's News Watch**, please photocopy the application form below and return it to:

Communication Networking Program
Isis International
85-A East Maya Street
Philamlife Homes, Quezon City
PHILIPPINES

NAME OF ORGANIZATION: _____
ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION: _____
NO./STREET: _____
TOWN/DISTRICT: _____
CITY/COUNTY/STATE: _____
COUNTRY: _____

TELEPHONE: (Country code/area code/local code) _____
FAX: (Country code/area code/local code) _____

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX:

- send us weekly copies of **Women's News Watch** by mail
- send us weekly copies of **Women's News Watch** via electronic mail
Our E-Mail Address: _____
- we do not wish to receive any weekly news briefs

SIGNED: _____ PRINTED NAME: _____



Building Whole Communities: Community Publishing's New Approach to Women and Development in Zimbabwe

by Richard Adams

As I approached the door to one of the two side-by-side, 15' x 15' offices that make up the headquarters of the Community Publishing Programme's National Bookteam, I heard a round of hearty laughter coming from inside. Kathy Bond-Stewart, Chris Hodzi, Lucia Chikuhuhu and Talent Nyathi - the four people who make up the Bookteam and who are responsible for publishing, so far, three of the most innovative development manuals around - were just recovering from the launch of their most recent book - a seven volume set on women and development entitled *Building Whole Communities*. In spite of their exhaustion, they continued to display the camaraderie and good humor that I had experienced in observing their work over the previous few months.



National Book Launch for *Building Whole Communities*

The Community Publishing Programme (CPP) is a part of Zimbabwe's Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives. Founded in 1986, the CPP was begun as an attempt to decentralise and democratise the process of creating tools for use by village-level development workers. In the past few years it has developed a process for incorporating hundreds of voices of rural people in creating these books.

CPP is the brainchild of Kathy Bond-Stewart, whose experiences with adult literacy in South Africa, Portugal and Zimbabwe had brought her into close contact with the ideas of Paulo

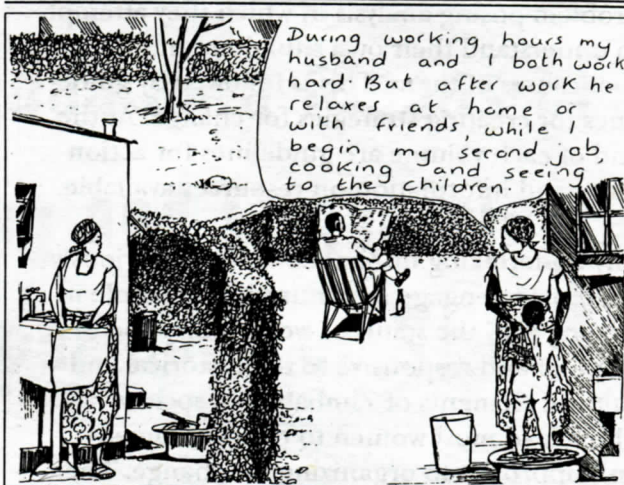
Freire. Chris Hodzi, who had done the illustrations for Anne Hope's and Sally Timmel's *Training for Transformation* and who had collaborated with Kathy on earlier publications, was the other original Bookteam member. Chris and Kathy crisscrossed Zimbabwe consulting with people about what they needed from and what they could contribute to a development manual that they could really use in their work in their communities.

In most cases, the Bookteam were the first central government officials in the young government of this southern African country to seek out and take seriously the ideas, the priorities, and the stories of rural workers in areas of the country remote from the capitol, Harare. The initial result was not only *Let's Build Zimbabwe Together*, a community development manual, but also an enthusiastic, energetic and dedicated group of development workers with a new-found sense of importance and competence and a real commitment to publishing more books.

Building Whole Communities is the third book to emerge from the Community Publishing process, following *Let's Build Zimbabwe Together* and *Building Wealth in Our Village*, an introduction to rural enterprises. By far the most ambitious undertaking by the Bookteam, this seven-volume set on women and development grew out of the same basic process which gave birth to the previous books. In all, about 2000 people, most of them from rural areas, were involved. The process includes many workshops explaining the purpose of the book and soliciting ideas, stories, etc.; an initial draft by the Bookteam; testing workshops to see how well the Bookteam has put everything together; a final draft; printing; and then a series of launchings introducing the finished book at national, regional, and local levels.

The result is a book which is full of the voices of the women, and men, of Zimbabwe. They are quoted and cited on almost every page, and their thoughts are given expression in the

The double workload (ie ordinary work plus domestic work and childcare)



Source: *Building Whole Communities*, Vol. 2

evocative drawings by Chris Hodzi which capture the essence of the issues of concern to women, but which also provide a number of Freirian "codes" which can serve as the basis of problem posing and problem solving. The juxtaposition of text and drawings, the concern with language which can be understood easily by people with minimal formal education, and the use of narrators throughout, make the book highly accessible for use in rural areas.

Each volume of *Building Whole Communities* focuses on a particular issue: an introduction to women in development; women's social and cultural situation; women's legal and political situation; women with special needs; and organizing for future. Highlighted in each volume are women's accomplishments as well as challenges for them to define and participate in areas where change is needed.

The volumes are constructed in such a way that reading them itself becomes a process of community participation. Each section begins with a brainstorming exercise. Then information and perspectives on the issue are provided, much of it being the words and ideas of rural women themselves. Next comes a guideline for analysis. Participants are encouraged to choose from among a series of pictures - the Freirian "codes" - one which represents the

issue most relevant to them. They then do a problem-posing analysis in which they attempt to understand their own situations and the root causes of them. This is followed by guidelines for creating strategies for change. At the end of each volume are guidelines for action plans and information on resources available.

Any undertaking in Zimbabwe which seriously attempts to engage communities of people in dealing with the status of women must be aware of and responsive to the historical and cultural elements of Zimbabwean society which lead most women to reject a women-only approach to organizing for change. The Bookteam takes this message seriously; and in producing *Building Whole Communities* it sought out and engaged men as participants. Frequently this involved inviting skeptical or even hostile men to book-building workshops and encouraging them to participate in participatory exercises which allowed them to listen to women and rethink their own assumptions. As a result, some of the most effective advocates for both the Community Publishing process and the women's book are rural men. Had it not been for this involvement, many of these men could have been powerful opponents to the kinds of possibilities for change which the book seeks to promote.

The good humor and commitment of the Bookteam is matched by the enthusiasm and energy of rural development workers who have engaged in the creation and use of these books. The whole process provides a model for the kind of development which truly engages voices of everyday people in creating priorities and strategies for change.

About the author: *Richard Adams* is Associate Professor of Sociology, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon, USA.

Building Whole Communities is published by the Government of Zimbabwe, and has only been available to community development workers in the country. However, arrangements are being made to make all of the Community Publishing books available on a commercial basis. Enquiries about the books and about the CPP itself should be addressed to:

The National Bookteam Community
Publishing Programme
Ministry of National Affairs,
Employment Creation and Cooperatives
Private Bag 7735, Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe



Video as a Means of Training and Organising: The Experience of SEWA

by Namrata Bali

The **Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)** in India was established in 1972 with the purpose of organising poor and self-employed women. Since its establishment, it has organised women into trade unions and cooperatives to fight for fair wages, improvement of legal protection for women workers, and the improvement of women's access to materials and market.

Other than organising women to fight for their rights, SEWA provides supportive services to its members such as the SEWA Bank which provides loans to its members, childcare services, community health services and legal aid. Video SEWA is part of the SEWA Academy which coordinates and implements the training activities of SEWA.

Video SEWA was established in 1984 as a means to provide training to the members of SEWA and to motivate, mobilise and strengthen the existing membership of SEWA through the use of video recordings and tapes.

SEWA's organising efforts often begin with worker's education classes. These generally involve one week of training and discussions in which the goal is to raise awareness among a particular trade group of self-employed women workers.

The one week training usually begins with a session in which the participants introduce themselves - their names, where they live and where they work. During this session, each participant has to repeat the names of at least five colleagues. This whole session is recorded on video tapes which are shown to the participants on the next day. At first, on seeing themselves on the screen, the women would burst out laughing. Then a self-evaluation will start in which the participants will observe the way they stand, the way they introduce themselves next time. The video encourages them to perceive and motivate them to think.

During this one week training, the women workers would also have a chance to learn from their leaders on the video. They would see a number of SEWA organisers and leaders who have, through their own struggles, overcome social and economic difficulties and succeeded to organise unions or cooperatives and emerge to become leaders. After watching

this video, the participants would analyse and bring out the qualities of a group leader.

Understanding the strength and power of collective action comes slowly to the grassroots women who participate in the training of SEWA. For many, it is a completely new idea. Videos which record the demonstrations of the women workers, such as poor women marching on the streets of Ahmedabad chanting their demands, would raise the spirit, inspire confidence and solidarity and illustrate the power of collective action.

Once we took this tape of the garment workers' procession to Lucknow where we are organising the women who do *chikan* embroidery. They are the worst paid that I have seen anywhere and they are Moslem. We did some training with them and talked about organising, coming out of their homes and not wearing *purdah*. On the last day, we showed this tape to them. They were so excited that they jumped up to plan out the route of their own procession. In reality, they were nowhere near the stage where they could take out a procession, but this enthusiasm was helping them to get organised. When women actually see that



Grace de Jesus-Sievert

others like them have succeeded through organising, it makes a really big difference.

Video activities have also proved very helpful in supporting other organising work, especially on legal actions.

Self-employed women workers often have no formal employer-employee relationship.

They must, therefore, turn to the courts to settle their disputes with their contractors or to establish their rights to a minimum wage. In these cases, the self-employed women workers have to attend the court hearings and to give evidence, and the outcome often depends solely on the women's testimony.

However, the atmosphere in the court is very intimidating for the SEWA members. The lawyers try to cut their evidence into pieces and call them liars. This is very difficult for the women to deal with and they sometimes change their statements. In these cases, videos are used to prepare the women workers for court hearings. For example, when a group of *bidi* workers (women who roll the native cigarettes) were preparing to testify in court, a mock court with a judge, witnesses, plaintiff and defence lawyers, a bailiff and a court

***Videos which record the demonstrations
of the women workerswould raise
the spirit, inspire confidence and
solidarity and illustrate the
power of collective action.***

...SEWA tapes are a source of information as well as inspiration

audience was set up. The proceedings were recorded on tape which was seen and reviewed by the women who had to testify. The SEWA lawyer then had a discussion with the women. This helped the women a lot as the process was very effective in building their confidence and in preparing them to stand up for themselves in court.

Watching video tapes helps SEWA members to feel a connection with a larger movement. The tapes give members of SEWA an opportunity to see and understand issues pertaining to their own and other women workers. For example, the issues of piece rate workers are similar everywhere and in different trades. Tapes produced by SEWA convey this effectively.

Seeing women like themselves who become leaders in the movement help new members of SEWA to feel more connected to the movement as they identify with women on SEWA tapes. Some village women watched an interview with Chandaben, a used clothes dealer and a senior SEWA organiser. They were delighted to see that even Chandaben takes snuff and speaks very quickly like they do. Moreover, they are delighted to see that women like themselves are leaders.

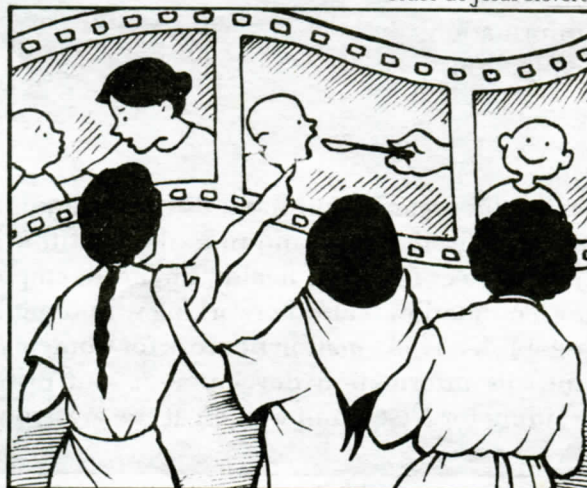
Some video tapes of SEWA are made to fulfil more formal training. For example, in SEWA's health and childcare programs, a tape that explains the causes of

diarrhea and the way to prepare the oral rehydration solution is regularly used. SEWA members, many of whom are illiterate, have also gained valuable knowledge from video tapes on how to build a smokeless stove, reason and training of immunisation. SEWA trainers themselves are involved in the design and production of their training videos as the tapes fulfil their needs more precisely than outside materials ever could. Videos produced by the trainers help to reinforce the identification of the members and the organisation. Video SEWA members, that is, the producers of the videos of SEWA also help in leading and facilitating group discussions and programs in which their tapes are used. In this way, the producers of SEWA's videos become involved in and are responsible for the impact of their work.

Since 1984, Video SEWA has produced countless tapes and more than a hundred programs of organising, training and advocacy. These tapes reached villagers and slum dwellers in Gujarat as well as policy making in Delhi and Washington. Gradually, video has become an

integral part of SEWA's activities and also for all the ongoing work. For women workers and the members of SEWA, SEWA tapes are a source of information as well as inspiration.

Grace de Jesus-Sievert



Source: *Asian Women Workers Newsletter*, Vol. 12, No. 4, October 1993, pp. 11-12, CAW, Hong Kong

Radio Programme Provides Information on Food Technology to Rural Women in Pakistan

About the Aurat Foundation

In 1986 **Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation** was set up as an information and advisory service for women as well as a clearing-house of information on women. The organisation generates information for women's empowerment in society and disseminates it through established and alternative channels of communication. The major focus of Aurat Foundation has been the women from the low income strata who have the least access to organised information which can enable them to make decisions in their daily lives and reduce their dependence on social structures and relationships that perpetuate their suppression and subordination in society.

The strategy of Aurat Foundation is to focus at two levels:

- ◆ at the grassroots level, for facilitating and developing women's capabilities, confidence, and organisational efforts, which will also ensure that they are able to benefit from the services and opportunities provided by the government and NGOs for their development.
- ◆ at the macro decision-making level, for bringing about a positive and critical change in the policies, programmes and laws which impact on women's lives.

The work of Aurat Foundation is organised under the following areas of activities:

- ◆ collection of information
- ◆ development of information
- ◆ information dissemination
- ◆ networking
- ◆ training

For undertaking this work, the organisation has a documentation and resource centre, which consists of a library, a publications unit and an audiovisual unit. It has also established a number of information services for legal, health, financial, employment and environment information. Aurat Foundation is also networking with organisations and agencies working for women to establish an information network for women's development. Other activities which feed into its information development and dissemination objectives include research and training for NGOs and women at the grassroots level.

Women lack access to technology in rural Pakistan in three levels:

- ◆ women lack information on technologies which raise productivity in activities which are shared jointly by males and females.
- ◆ in female-specific tasks like household chores or food preparation there has been very little development of technology and where there is, very little acquiring of it by the household, reflecting the low priority given to women's work.
- ◆ where technology is introduced for female-specific operations, it is immediately taken over by males because of profitability.

Most training programmes for enhancing agricultural productivity do not take into account women's time commitments and the constraints that prevent them from taking part in the training. Without the necessary training, women are unable to utilise the new technologies and hence are replaced by the men in the activities which were once defined as female-specific. When new technology is introduced, it usually helps men with their task of ploughing and irrigation, while women continue with their back-breaking work of weeding and transplanting, either picking by hand or using primitive implements. Even when technology is introduced for tasks done traditionally by women, the machines tend to replace women completely rather than easing their work. Men take over the moment the activity becomes commercially feasible.

There is thus a definite need to reach out to women in the rural areas through the radio with information related to food production technologies, including agricultural production, crop and food processing and preservation, agro-forestry and rural energy.

Aurat Foundation has developed a project whereby a weekly, 30-minute radio programme will be run over a period of two years. It will provide rural women the information they need for technologies relevant to their roles in the food production cycle. Although the programme will reach a very large target group, its short duration needs to be accompanied by supplementary activities which are vital for a continuing impact. A follow-up action plan has therefore been formulated to main-

tain continuity in information communication, develop two-way communication channels between women and technology institutions, and respond to expressed needs.

In the current phase of this project, Aurat Foundation is doing the following:

- ◆ conducting field research from primary and secondary sources to build up activity profiles of rural women with information on indigenous technologies in the food production cycle.
- ◆ conducting research on the relevant appropriate technologies available with the government and the private sector, including information and agreement on providing training for rural women, as well as arrangement of demonstrations at accessible locations.
- ◆ conducting a survey amongst a sample of villages to determine women's listening time preference, their language preference and their information needs.

The follow-up activities to the radio programme include:

- ◆ repackaging information in the form of printed material, audio-cassettes, etc.
- ◆ dissemination of material through various channels such as mailing, or directly to the women in listening centres, or through rural-based organisations which are part of Aurat Foundation's network.
- ◆ arranging for technology demonstrations and training by relevant institutions and agencies wherever rural women express such a demand.

Any project for women's economic upliftment cannot always imply providing more work for them but must undertake to recognise their work, time and energy commitments and to decrease their workloads while increasing their productivity and income.

Source: *Aurat Quarterly Newsletter*, Vol. V:1 (1993). Aurat Foundation, 4-A LDA Garden View Apartments, Lawrence Road, Lahore, Pakistan 54000

Village Women in North India Learn Creative Ways of Expressing Their Sexuality

by Janet Price

The work presented here is the cumulation of three years involvement with a small non-governmental women's organisation, based in the foothills of the Himalayas in India. SUTRA was started about twelve years ago by an Indian social worker from Maharashtra, Subhash Mendhapurkar. Moving from a service-based approach to development, SUTRA's work underwent a major shift in direction in the early 1980s, adopting a participatory approach, with a clear focus on working with local village women. The organisation has grown to the point where it has a strong base in women's groups within the surrounding villages, and links with more recently established sister organisations in neighbouring districts.

Staff members of the organisation are people from the local area, in the early days predominantly men, but of recent years a major effort has been put into employing and training local women staff. There were many barriers to break down before this was possible. Many of the problems experienced initially were due to rules and regulations laid down by the organisations, such as the need to be literate, rather than any reluctance on the part of women.

Over the years the women have become involved not only in campaigning and working for local development initiatives, such as village water supplies, but also in organising state-wide campaigns around issues such as deforestation and liquor.

With the growing number of women becoming involved in SUTRA's work as staff members, and at a village level in women's groups,

there was a growing demand from the women for access to skills and information that would empower them to address local issues more effectively. It was from this basis that we developed a series of workshops addressing issues of concern. One central focus of these was women's control over their bodies and health.

Workshops on women's health

The aims of the workshops were to offer women the opportunity to gain a greater understanding and control of their lives.

Sessions were based on personal experience and on local beliefs and ideologies, using these as a foundation for further exploration and analysis of women's roles in society.

The workshops functioned on a number of different levels - intellectual and analytical,

emotional and physical - and the combination of these was vital to their success, as were the opportunities offered for self-expression, and for the gathering of new information.

We aimed to create an atmosphere of trust and openness in a women-only space in which women could live, work and sleep together over a number of days.

The following discussion will focus on the work carried out exploring women's experiences of their bodies, health and sexuality.

Storytelling

This was based on women's experiences of personal events, such as menstruation, childbirth, marriage. All members of the group would share their own story. The trust and support offered by other women often resulted in women feeling able to tell their stories in great detail or to talk of painful and distressing events in their past.

These sessions provided a wealth of information about women's life experiences and were important in relieving the fear and isolation many felt, particularly about issues such as menstrual taboos, infertility, violence and rape, most of which are not discussed with any ease or openness.

Role play

These often built on women's personal stories, providing the group with the opportunity to explore how a particular issue e.g. first menstruation, affected a woman and those around her. In acting out these situations, the women portrayed emotions, traditions and practices that had often not been touched upon during their stories and discussions. The role plays were usually videotaped and played back to the group, stimulating further analysis of women's societal roles and how they are changing.

Pictures

Images played an important role in a number of ways. For practical explanations of women's anatomy and discussion of menstruation, child birth, infertility, and vaginal discharges, simple line drawings and pictures were used. Sessions using these diagrams sparked discussions about women's understanding of their own anatomy and physiology. However, it was clear that this type of representation of the human body was at times confusing and for some, deeply embarrassing.

The physical freedom offered through dance also played a vital role in reducing inhibitions and enabled women to feel more at ease with many of the more personal discussions.

In an attempt to understand and help women express their own perceptions of their bodies more clearly, and subsequently to find ways of sharing information about women's anatomy and physiology more effectively, we asked women to draw their bodies and internal anatomy. This was then shared with the group and generated a wealth of new ideas and a clearer understanding of the concepts women had about how their bodies work, events such as menstruation and conception, and of the action of contraceptives. It also stimulated discussion about relationships with men and how women perceived and experienced them.

Dancing and body work

Mime, movement and dancing, frequently with music and song, were a vital part of all the workshops, not only to offer much needed relaxation. Traditional songs and dances, often a part of marriage ceremonies, offered a further source of material for analysis - often carried out by women through satirical reworking of the originals. The physical freedom offered through dance also played a vital role in reducing inhibitions and enabled women to feel more at ease with many of the more personal discussions.

Myths and history

A vital element of the workshops as they developed was the emphasis laid on myth and images and stories of the past. This began with many of the women using local tales to explain complex or deeply-held beliefs about women's roles and sexuality.

It expanded when Giti Thadani, an independent researcher from Delhi was able to join us. She has been working on the ancient Indian texts and temple architecture and sculpture, recording and interpreting its meaning for women. Using stories from the texts and photographs of sculptures from temples, she was able to tap a much deeper vein of experience in women's lives. Women's identification with many of the ancient stories and images was very powerful, and led to a rich exploration of women's sexuality, fertility and creativity, in exploratory, explanatory and reflective ways.

Self-examination

Reaching the point at which women felt able to deal with the idea of self examination had taken time and the building of trust, the courage to surmount the many taboos that prevent it. It offered women new insights and understanding about their bodies, and led again to further explorations of women's experience, in this case particularly at the

hands of the medical profession. It also served as a further occasion on which women were able to explore in detail their concerns about gynaecological problems, their understanding of them, and their need for reassurance or for support to seek medical advice.

Conclusion

The approaches used in the workshops, as described above, gave women many opportunities to talk about their lives and experiences, to explore emotions, to be heard with empathy and to receive support when discussing issues that raised painful and distressing memories. Within such a situation it is vital that the workshops are seen not as an end in themselves but as part of an ongoing process, a process in which continuing support and space to talk must be available to women taking part. If this is not the case, past experiences that have stirred up deep emotions may become a source of deep and continuing pain and distress.

The process may also serve to open new doors and create new avenues for talking about subjects that are regarded as shameful or taboo. For example, a woman who has been severely beaten by her husband, after sharing her story within a smaller group, felt confident enough to talk about the experience at village meetings with other women. This led to an increasing recognition of the extent of marital violence against women within the area, to women losing their sense of shame at talking about the beatings and ultimately to women organising more effectively at a community level to introduce sanctions against those men who beat their wives.

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Source: *GADU Newspank No. 14, Oxfam, United Kingdom*

Women's Alternative Media in the Caribbean

by Suzanne Francis Brown, Hilary
Nicholson and Gayatri Persaud

This overview is based on information from women involved in working with alternative media and media practitioners. While it is already comprehensive in coverage, it is still an incomplete picture of women's work on alternative media.

Two groups, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) and the Women and Development Unit (WAND), work on women's issues at the regional level.

CAFRA, based in Trinidad and Tobago, is a research-oriented organisation which produces a regular newsletter: *CAFRA News/CAFRA Novedades*, published in English and Spanish with occasional articles in French. *CAFRA News* reports on regional projects and programmes and informs members on related events in member territories. CAFRA has produced several videos on gender issues (e.g. *Women in Agriculture*).

WAND in Barbados is also research oriented and has produced a range of publications, including a newsletter *Womanspeak!* which looks at issues affecting Caribbean women; a series of Occasional Papers; an International and Regional newsclip service *New-Woman Struggle* and a continuing series of articles concerning Women and Development to stimulate discussion and debate in the Caribbean region.

New-Woman Struggle is put together with material from various journals, pamphlets, papers, monographs, newspapers, etc. on the struggles of women in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Financial constraints reduced the number of issues from six to two a year. *New-Woman Struggle* is the revised and renamed (in 1989) version of *Woman Struggle*, which first came out in 1982.

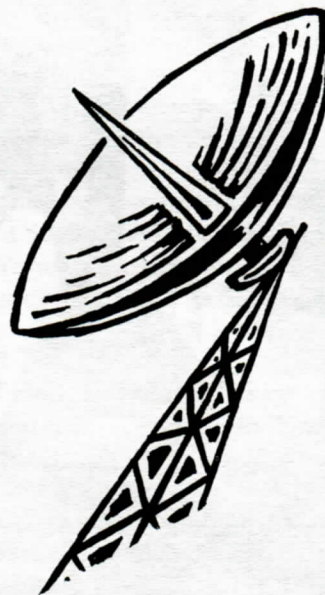
WAND was also involved in the production of a number of videos, slides, tapes and radio programmes.

Together with the Caribbean News Agency (CANA), WAND produced a radio series for women also entitled *Womanspeak!* which ran for a period of approximately eighteen months in the early 1990s. The programme was distributed to radio stations across the English-speaking Caribbean and provided a forum for women voices.

At the national level, many more women are active in alternative media.

In Barbados, the Women's Forum, initiated by some women's organisations, have done poetry readings of the works of women poets together with public analysis on a number of issues, for instance, cervical cancer, structural adjustment and domestic violence.

A few Barbadian theatre companies have from time to time put on productions aimed at highlighting the contributions of women. For example the Stage



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One Theatre Company, was responsible for *Lights*. This production, based on improvisations of real life experiences entwined with poetry and dance went to Antigua and Dominica with Stage One in 1985. Four years later it went to Trinidad in a production by WWB Productions. Stage One was also responsible for staging *For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Not Enough* - an American play depicting the lives of black women.

In Jamaica, Sistren Theatre Collective/Sistren Research is a non-profit women's collective, which uses drama as a popular education tool for analysing and exposing the situation of Jamaican (and Caribbean) women. The group was established in the 1970s. Sistren has become well known locally, regionally and internationally since then. It collaborates with a wide range of women's groups and developmental NGOs throughout the region to bring a gender perspective and strengthen the Caribbean women's movement.

Major elements of its work include: research; the production and presentation of plays on issues affecting working class women; workshops; and videos (e.g. a docu-drama on the life of two early Jamaican feminists: *Miss Amy & Miss May* and *Buss Out*, on women's lives and shelter problems, technically facilitated by Phase Three Productions; *Sweet Sugar Rage!* on women and trade unions in the sugar belt). Two docu-dramas on the lives of two outstanding Jamaican women are being produced: Louise Bennett, poet, folklorist, actress and legend, and Edna Manley, mother of the modern Jamaican art movement.

Sistren is also involved in publications (books, e.g. *Lionheart Gal*, based on experiences of its members; booklets, and *Sistren Magazine*) and income earning projects such as the production of saleable items including cards, calendars and T-shirts.

Sistren Magazine is a publication of 32 pages, produced three times a year. It has grown out of a newsletter, set up in 1979 which became a news magazine in 1984. While still focusing on Sistren members and activities, it also seeks to highlight issues of concern to women in Jamaican society. Its circulation of 1,500 copies reach, mainly through subscription, women in Jamaica, the Caribbean and beyond.

The Social Action Centre (SAC) is a community action organisation with member groups across Jamaica. It often uses video cameras as a tool for educating members and recording events. In collaboration with the Association of Caribbean Economists (ACE) it

has produced a booklet (*Hooked on Debt*) and video series - together with ADA and WAND on the national debt (*Debt Crisis: An Unnatural Disaster*) and its impact on women (*Carrying a Heavy Load*) - both technically facilitated by Phase Three Productions.

SAC also utilizes popular education techniques such as drama, song and dance to educate the people they work with, the majority of whom are women.

The Association of Development Agencies (ADA) is a grouping of Jamaican NGOs. It distributes a networking newsletter to a membership locally, in the Caribbean and to relevant organisations beyond. Gender issues are regularly dealt with in the ADA/FYI Newsletter.

ADA has been involved in hosting seminars on development issues including gender, the production of videos (together with SAC and WAND) and in the use of media by community groups. In many



instances the material generated in these seminars has become the basis for publications on development issues, designed to assist in educating groups mainly at the community level. ADA has published a booklet *Publishing for Development*, that explains the basics of writing and publishing to grass root groups.

Women's Media Watch (WMW) is a small group of women, established in 1987, concerned with the portrayal of women in mainstream media and advertising products such as calendars.

WMW monitors the media, writes letters concerning examples of unfair or stereotypical portrayal of women, and has a programme of educational activities (from workshops for the general public to lectures at the University).

WMW produced together with Phase Three Productions a video *Behind the Images* on media links to domestic violence.

Some organisations working with women participate from time to time in the production of alternative media, but are not involved on a regular basis. Examples are Woman Inc., Women's Construction Collective and Women's Centre. Others have just their own newsletter, like the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (previously Women and Development Studies) and the Association of Women's Organizations in Jamaica - an umbrella organisation.

Woman Inc. is sometimes included in media panels looking at problems facing women. It runs the Crisis Centre and a shelter for abused women. Its branch in Western Jamaica produced together with Phase Three a video

on domestic violence and incest, *Behind Closed Doors*.

Women's Construction Collective trains women (to date more than 500) for work in the Jamaican building and construction industry. The Collective has been using video very successfully as a tool in introducing itself to potential members, specially in rural areas. The video contributes to breaking down the stereotypes that militate against women working in the construction industry.

The Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the University, Mona Campus, publishes three times per year its newsletter the *Women and Development Studies (WDS) Mona Group Newsletter*. The Centre also organises regular discussions and occasional seminars on women's issues, among them women and the media.

Some of the WDS seminars are audiotaped and available from the WDS office. WDS also promotes and sells publications on gender related issues.

Women and Gender Studies has been discussing with the University of Suriname the possibility of setting up gender specific courses in Suriname.

A newsletter is put out by the Women and Development Studies at St. Augustine, the University of the West Indies campus in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Association of Women's Organizations in Jamaica (AWOJA) distributes a networking newsletter. It reappeared in 1993 after a two and half year of absence. Otherwise AWOJA is not particularly involved in media work.

Antigua

In Guyana the group Red Thread undertakes programmes focusing on employment and education. It has been involved in seminars on gender issues. Red Thread consists mostly of working class women. It has produced a series of newsletters and booklets based on women's testimonies and (especially rural) women's lives. Red Thread also makes use of popular theatre, photography and products like calendars.

In Belize the Belize Rural Women's Association (BRWA), the Belize Organization for Women and Development (BOWAND) and Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR) are the most active groups where women and development issues are concerned.

BOWAND puts out its own magazine, titled *A Woman's Turn*. Health, politics, home and garden products, sexual discrimination, women's rights, housing, and profiles of leading female personalities are some of their issues. BOWAND has worked with Great Belize Productions in the production of audiovisual material.

SPEAR is a development oriented NGO concerned with a range of issues including gender.

In Dominica, the Dominica Council of Women (DNCW) produces a bimonthly newsletter, *Intouch*. The DNCW was established in 1986 in an effort to get all women's groups under one umbrella.

The Women's Bureau in Dominica collaborates with the Movement for Cultural Awareness (MCA), which focuses on popular theatre and popular research.

Koudmen - a bimonthly newsletter - is published by the Small Projects

Assistance Team (SPAT). It deals with issues including gender and the environment. SPAT has a Women's Department. SPAT's programme supports women, small farmers, cooperatives, youth and disabled persons. Its staff are experienced in multi-media productions and gender-relations. SPAT uses popular theatre, video, booklets and pamphlets to get its message across. Its material is used by the Adult Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, which organizes training island-wide. The majority of the participants are women.

In St. Lucia, the scope of the Folk Research Centre (FRC) - created in 1973 and officially established in 1983 - is much broader than women's issues, but the latter are included in the FRC's agenda. The major objective of the FRC is to promote research into St. Lucia's culture, and to explore and clarify the role of culture in the development of people. The FRC has produced over 150 radio programmes on the folk culture of St. Lucia and publishes a newsletter.

Teyat Pep-la is the French creole name for St. Lucia's Popular Theatre group. It works directly with community residents to build awareness of issues such as rape and other community concerns. Staff and volunteers are trained community animators.

In Trinidad and Tobago the Banyan Film and Video Collective produced several videos on topics concerning women, including: *Women and Calypso* (with Rhoda Reddock and Niala Maharaj); *The Image of Women in the Media and its Relation to Violence against Women* (written and presented by Niala Maharaj); *God Give Us the Talent*, *The Hucksters of Dominica* (together with SPAT and the Economic

Belize

Grenada

Jamaica

St. Lucia

Suriname

Barbados

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean - ECLAC); *Women in Action* (part of the Caribbean Eye series) and *Triumphs*, a series of five videos on women and their achievements.

For the Rape Crisis Centre, Banyan produced *Surviving Rape* - an hour long programme of live drama sequences and discussion used on television and in small groups for sensitizing audience to the issues of rape, reactions of the police, mate and family.

The National Association for Mass Education (NAME) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has a much wider scope, but women and development issues are included. NAME was established in 1986 with the main objective of providing education opportunities for all St. Vincentians. NAME publishes on a variety of topics and has its own newsletter.

Rural people and families are the main focus of the organisation for Rural Development (ORD) also in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Over 50 per cent of its field and volunteer personnel are women. ORD produces a newsletter.

The Agency for Rural Transformation (ART), established in 1981, in Grenada aims to assist the overall development of women, youth, farmers, fisherfolk and agricultural workers. It has a resource library with information on women and social issues, among other topics.

Grenada also has its Popular Theatre Organisation (GPTO) that addresses community concerns, among which are women's issues.

Film/Video productions

The Caribbean region has many commercial video/film produc-

tion houses/organisations. Some of them link with NGOs to help production of programmes empowering communication. In Jamaica, the management of Phase Three Productions - a husband and wife team - is deeply committed to development issues, especially those dealing with women, although commercial productions form the basis of its continued operation and success.

Whenever possible, Phase Three assists NGOs with video projects in the whole range of production activities: scriptwriting, camera work and post-production. Without this assistance, a number of valuable development videos would not have been produced as professionally: Some examples are *Ease the Struggle* - a dramatic production on population control, *Jacks Hill*, *The Little Community that Could* on preservation of the environment

Banyan in Trinidad and Tobago has a similar approach. The organisation was founded by two men but the production crew between 1987 and 1991 was predominantly, and at times wholly, comprised of women. This team was responsible for photographing, directing, writing and presenting the weekly cultural magazine programme *Gayelle* between 1989 and 1991. During that period, a 26-part series for young people on AIDS called *Body Beat* was written and directed by a woman and produced by Banyan for the AIDS Education Committee in Trinidad. Banyan produced various videos on topics related to gender.

Banyan was involved in the video production, *The Hucksters of Dominica* together with SPAT and ECLAC.

Dominica

Guyana

Martinique

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Trinidad & Tobago

Recently two women and a cameraman, who worked with Banyan, formed a company called Earth TV - with a special environmental interest - which continues to work very closely with Banyan.

In Belize, Great Belize Productions started as a production house in 1982 and expanded in 1991 to become a full service broadcaster with the opening of its Channel Five. Much of its production work continues to be for NGOs, especially women's groups, says the male founder director.

Great Belize Productions produced *Folk Medicine: A Belizean Tradition*, for the BRWA. It also works regularly with the Belize Family Life Association and BOWAND.

Several female alumni of Great Belize Productions have started their own successful production companies.

Film Festivals

Female Caribbean film makers and/or women in film activities got some attention during some recent Caribbean Film Festivals.

The Martinique Film Festival was founded and organized by a woman and in one festival carried the theme of women.

At the Jamaica Film Festival 1993 the Gala Premiere showed the film *Simeon*, made by the Martinican woman film maker Euzhan Palcy. One evening in the programme was devoted to a panel discussion on Women in the Media that involved screenings of films and discussions. Several other films featured in the festival were either about women or by women producers.

One of the Festival's symposia dealt with "The use of participatory development in Jamaica." Suggestions were made by participants to form a video cooperative or an association of participatory small format video producers and the formation of an NGO that specialises in participatory video services for NGOs.

Workshops

Several workshops have been held on Women and Development Issues and Alternative Media. Most of these workshops produced reports and booklets including Caribbean People's Development Agency (CARIPEDA) based in St. Vincent and the Grenadines; 1990 workshop in Guyana for development workers across the region; Organising Women in Urban Situations (ADA/Oxfam); Caribbean Perspectives for the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women Worldwide (Caribbean Conference of Churches); and Publishing for Development (ADA/CARIPEDA).

Material for this article was supplied by: Sheila Stuart (WAND Barbados); Audrey Matura (Belize); Stewart Krohn (Belize); Diane C. Haylock (Belize); Marcia Forbes (Jamaica); Maria Protz (Jamaica); Joan Ross Frankson (Jamaica); and Christopher Laird (Trinidad and Tobago).

About the authors:

Suzanne Francis Brown is a Jamaican journalist. Hilary Nicholson was formerly a member of the Sistren Theatre Collective and Women's Media Watch in Jamaica. Gayatri Persaud (Trinidad) is currently employed in a Television Production House in Jamaica.



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

by Celilia Quiroga

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.

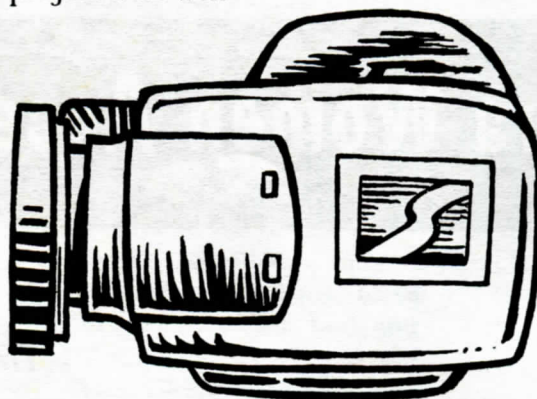
Another point raised was the importance of seeing Aymara women on television. The women stated that this was important in order to value themselves as well as their own language. They emphasized this not only in terms of better programming but also as a way of legitimizing their culture via media.

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.



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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*

Street Theater in Ecuador

*by Maria Elena Araujo
Translated by Luz Martinez*

In Ecuador the CEPAM decided to undertake "A Day in the Life of Alegria", a play on domestic violence. This particular play was one of four plays developed by CEPAM as part of their promotional activities with women's groups. The message of this play was that domestic violence is not an individual problem and that women with this problem can find support outside their homes.

Production

The play was produced by women from a working class barrio. These women have experience in live social dramas, therefore they could empathize with the characters. The entire cast of the play were adult women.

The impact of the play was undertaken with two groups, women belonging to organizations and women without specific organizations. After the play, the women were encouraged to participate in discussion groups.

One discovery in these groups was that women who stay at home are high consumers of the mass media. Their work day starts early and they are kept company by the radio as they conduct their daily chores. In the late afternoon they may watch a soap opera on



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television and at night they watch the news. As an exception, some women were found to read the newspaper in the morning or watch the news at midday.

Participants' responses

Varied responses came from the audiences. Many found interesting that the actresses were all adult women. This meant that adult women were still capable of learning and taking on new experiences.

One criticism was that women took on masculine roles in the play and the audience rejected the scenes that showed tenderness between two women, even if one was playing a male role. However, if men had played the male roles, the performing actresses would have problems with their husbands.

The original ending of the play was not satisfactory because it was too ambiguous. The message was that if you are battered, do not hide it, violence in the home is everyone's problem. This ending was too inconclusive. A

*they sought to denounce the
battering of women and
wanted to represent "machismo" as a
phenomena that affronts women*

scene was then added where the neighbors come to the wife's defense and the man is reprimanded by other men in the community.

The most interesting response from the participants was that many of the women from the working class neighborhoods maintained a distance in accepting or recognizing the problem of violence as their own. They claimed that they did not experience conflicts with their husbands that led to violence and that this type of behavior was not common in their class. They attributed these conflicts to the "lower classes" in this case, the indigenous women.

Another factor was that one of the groups that attended one of the presentations was a children's group. The question was what type of perceptions do people have towards theater or what do they understand theater to be?

Evaluation

The cast was evaluated and their intentions for undertaking this play were documented. Among their responses were that they sought to denounce the battering of women and wanted to represent "machismo" as a phenomena that affronts women. They strove to create scenes that would allow women to reflect on the issue and to raise their consciousness. In addition they wanted to show that the battered woman is not alone, that many women suffer from this problem.

The opinion of the women was divided as to how effective organizations were in helping women with this problem. Many felt that organizations cannot resolve all their problems and that even women who are part of women's organizations, can continue being abused by their husbands and living in violence.

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

CINE MUJER: Films for Women

by Amparo Parra
Translated by Luz Martinez

Cine Mujer in Colombia was formed as an institution for film production in the early 1980s. It produces films that focus on the distinct problems of women and projects different images of women. Cine Mujer has evolved itself in a parallel process to the women's movement as well as popular women's organizations.



Equipo de Trabajo Con Mujeres (Teamwork with Women), a women's collective that frequently uses films from Cine Mujer in their promotion activities, also began ten years ago. It is a group of popular educators that belong to distinct entities of promotion and carry out their tasks within a support network.

FIRST PHASE

Cine Mujer accepted the project in order to assess the role of Cine Mujer films in the development of popular education and their own evolutionary process from cinematography to video production.



Cine Mujer

The public

To carry out this evaluation Cine Mujer chose three groups located in Bogota that shared similar characteristics. These groups have collaborated with Cine Mujer either as receivers or participants in their production of films or videos.

"Fundacion de Apoyo Comunitario" (Community Support Foundation) is a group of women who 10 years ago began developing small gardens in their communities. Their coming together allowed a group of women to work on women related issues.

"Asociacion de Veredas de la Calera" is a group of peasant women from the Andes who for 10 years have developed their own production in virgin wool, raising sheep, weaving and dyeing yarn and cultivating plants for natural dyes. They meet on occasion but are active participants of *Equipo de Trabajo con Mujeres*.

The third women's group came together as a result of the catastrophe of Armero. *Equipo de Trabajo con Mujeres* worked closely with them to reconstruct their lives and what it meant to be a woman. Cine Mujer films were used extensively with this group.

Initial process

Seventy questionnaires were distributed among the three groups to find out the most common form of media consumption for these women. Women selected for the study were those who had served in leadership capacities and were familiar with women issues.

Results of the survey

The most preferred form of media was radio and television, followed by "foto novelas", newspapers, videos, films and magazines. According to the survey, radio provided useful information to improve their lives, such as recipes or information on illnesses, and on current events.

The most popular television programs were news and soap operas. News kept the women informed and attracted to the visual images. Soap operas are viewed mainly for relaxation but at the same time they portray situations of women. Television provides them entertainment, culture and general information from the variety of programs and themes but they expressed discontent that no television programs were produced especially for women.

With regard to films, the majority reported that they do not watch film. However, video offers them the possibility of watching films at home. Films they prefer are those that will elicit emotion, entertain them, help them forget their everyday problems and on some occasions allow them to identify with the characters.

With print media, women said they read it occasionally. Those who read newspapers are drawn to those that carry supplements on women that can help them with their children and their work.

SECOND PHASE

Film showing and discussion forums were scheduled.

Two films produced by Cine Mujer were chosen: "And Mother What Does She Do?" an early film that reflects the woman within her home and domestic chores and "Miriam's Look", a film that focuses on women's organizations.

Methods used

The two Cine Mujer films were shown in comparison with a commercial film, "No One Will Love You As Much As I Do." This film depicts a middle-class girl who becomes a nun, only to be raped by a delinquent. She is left pregnant so she goes out to find the father of her child, forgive him and ask him to marry her. In the end he repents for his crime and marries her.

One group of women saw only the commercial film and the other group viewed the Cine Mujer films first and the commercial film.

The responses from the group of women who saw only the commercial film were surprising. Many of the women were moved to tears from this film. In their evaluation they liked the happy ending. The surprising part was that the rape was not seen as important and they did not focus on this in their discussions. Many liked the female character who they saw as strong and decisive and applauded her desire to defend her son and to make peace with the father of the child. They responded that they would not change anything in the film.

The second group was angry at the way the woman was portrayed in the commercial film. They were disturbed at how lightly the rape was handled in the movie and the subliminal messages of motherhood and the need to sacrifice. This group did not identify at all with the

main character and rejected the idea of the woman giving up her ambition because of her pregnancy.

In response to the films of Cine Mujer, they felt that these films provided them with concrete analyses of women seeking alternatives. They claimed that films like "Miriam's Look" provide them with an image of a different woman. Many of the women considered the films from Cine Mujer as educational and non-commercial. Educational films make them think while commercial films entertain them.

Conclusion

The evaluation was useful in recognizing that for these women educational and entertainment films were on two totally different levels. They stated that films from Cine Mujer were important for educational workshops but requested that for Women's Day, only entertainment films be shown. Obviously, this was not how the producers of Cine Mujer had envisioned their films but because of this feedback they are developing proposals for the production of a melodrama.

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



Cine Mujer



Culture and Confidence in the Solomon Islands

by *Barbara Riley*

Barbara Riley worked as a CUSO volunteer in the Solomon Islands from 1987 to 1991. As the Cultural Affairs Advisor for Western Province, she, in her own words, has “been fortunate to develop and carry out a cultural preservation and education programme focused on villagers” in Western Province. She found all her work immensely enjoyable with the *Kastom Bilong Mere* (women’s traditional culture) workshops as the highlight of her four year's work. What follows is an account of one of those workshops.

Dolores pressed the “play” button, then laughed in embarrassment and pride as she heard herself singing a traditional song in her own language, Varisi. Last year 250 women in Solomon Islands’ Western Province shared Dolores’ pleasure in hearing their recorded voices during eleven *Kastom Bilong Mere* workshops organised by the province’s Cultural Affairs Office with the financial assistance of the Canada Fund.

These workshops differed from villagers’ usual experience of cultural preservation. In the past, overseas researchers determined what was recorded and, by inference, what was of value; material so collected was seldom returned to the village. More recently, Pacific islands states, conscious of their unique traditions, have established their own cultural programmes. Western Province’s Cultural Affairs Office, one example of a programme which exists for the benefit of villagers, ensures that preservation and dissemination go hand-in-hand.

Kastom Bilong Mere involved women as full participants in a unique cultural programme:

- ◆ encouraging women to preserve their oral traditions;
- ◆ emphasizing women’s knowledge and abilities and thereby bolstering their self-confidence;
- ◆ enabling women to examine social change as a precondition for thinking about their future.

These aims reflected those of the Cultural Affairs Office which encourage an appreciation of traditional culture as an affirmation of identity and pride.

Kastom Bilong Mere highlighted women, their knowledge and skills. Traditionally excluded from contact with outsiders or any public role, Solomon Islands women are still shy in front of men or “Europeans”. Because the workshops were restricted to women, and because each one was conducted entirely in the local

vernacular language, women were able to participate fully and freely. By all reports the use of vernacular language was the most important factor in making the participants feel that the workshop belonged to them. Local language ensured the participation of the *olos*, the elder women, whose knowledge of traditions made them the experts and teachers of the younger women.

Other features of the programme worked to break down shyness. Participants were paired off at the beginning and had to introduce their partners to the rest of us. At breaks we played games and did easy physical fitness exercises together. Women were invited to bring traditional objects and talk about them, and to demonstrate traditional skills. The highlight of one workshop was a graphic demonstration of customary birthing with the assistance of another woman. The shrieks of laughter must have echoed across to the next village.

*For the women,
traditional culture
affirms their identity.*

To discuss change the women divided into small groups and they reported back to each other: how was life different from when they were children? Were these changes for the better or not? Most frequently mentioned was the lack of respect now shown - by the young for the old, by women and girls for men and boys, by villagers for the chief, and by the chief for his position and responsibility to lead the community.

Another significant change was a decrease in sharing. In the past people were willing to help - in the garden, with house building, with transportation. Now they are likely to demand payment. The women had no clear answer as to whether these were negative or positive changes. Seeing advantages and disadvantages

on both sides made them realise the significance of conscious choice in determining a community's future.

The main part of the workshop - recording oral traditions - was completely in the hands of the participants. Once they had learned how to operate a cassette recorder - a hilarious exercise - each group was free to produce its own recordings. The women chose traditional songs and stories, recollections of the Second World War, customary medicines, childbirth and marriage practices, games and feats, autobiography. They also decided whether the material was restricted or could be broadcast on the twice weekly Cultural Affairs Programme.

The workshops also offered the opportunity for women to be active in front of the host community - by taking part in or organising daily church services, by performing traditional dances and games, and by singing and speech-making at the final feast and closing ceremony.

On the last morning the women evaluated the workshop. As Solomon Islanders do not easily or openly offer criticism, the questions were simply, "What was good about the workshop?", "How can we make it better next time?" Most often praised were the opportunity to learn about the past from each other, the learning of new skills (operating a cassette recorder, signing one's name - a major accomplishment for some *olos*), and the fellowship of meeting with women from different churches. Next time? Get more women involved!

Each participant was presented with a certificate at the closing ceremony - a mark of achievement and a time of recognition by the community. Tears and cries of "come back again", marked our separation, all of us enriched by the enthusiasm, learning and sharing.

Source: *Tok Blong SPPPF*, # 37, October 1991, pp. 24-25

Community-Based Materials Development in the South Pacific

by *Dianne Goodwillie*

Towards the 1980s, women in the South Pacific region called for culturally sensitive, attractive nutrition teaching aids. Through a series of planned and sometimes chaotic events, a set of thirteen nutrition education books has been produced dealing with food and diseases, food preservation, fitness, gardening, budgeting, developing training materials, and individual food needs of family members.

Using local expertise

The unusual aspect of this project was the way the books were created. A choice was made early in the project to use Pacific Island expertise to write the books even though nutritionists had no specific training in producing publications and were heavily engaged in their own day-to-day work. Another important decision was made to expand the writing group to health educators, home economics teachers, agricultural workers and community workers. Since the books were aimed at a broad cross section of community leaders, different viewpoints were needed, not just the ideas of nutritionists or dietitians.

Over 70 Pacific Islanders (mostly women) from nineteen countries were involved in

writing, illustrating and supervising the field testing of the books. The involvement of so many people in developing the materials provided an opportunity for ongoing learning to take place compared to the more usual practice of experts preparing materials.

Dietitians and nurses surprised themselves and their supervisors with the attractive and practical books they produced. Teachers, nurses, agricultural workers and nutritionists found they had different skills and insights to learn from each other which gave added dimensions to the books. For example, a curriculum specialist added short self-test to her book. A nurse who was skeptical about "boring nutrition education materials", made up a tongue-in-cheek story called "how to kill your husband" - in the story the husband is given unhealthy foods and has a poor lifestyle.



J. Uluinaceva

Materials production process

Participants also learned about producing materials. This included writing clearly without jargon, doing field testing, using illustrations and drawings that are clear to the community and the importance of attractive design. These were important new skills learned by the participants but they were not anticipated outcomes of the project.

While reviewing materials, many questions came up concerning the use in the Pacific Islands of specific English terms and definitions of nutrition terms used: for example, agreeing to a definition of overweight or whether to consider an alcoholic drink of no nutritional value when in fact it contains calories. Some of these questions result from former links with American, British and Australian programs for nutrition education. Since a baseline of information for the Pacific had never before been written, this was the first time these issues were tackled.

Very few people in the project had experience with the use of computers and in the late 1980s, desktop publishing was unknown in the Pacific Islands. Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada assisted with the design of

the publications and taught skills and shortcuts in word processing which greatly reduced the time taken for editing and re-editing manuscripts. Staff exchanges between Canada and the Pacific aided in the training and also helped bring cultural gaps; however, communication difficulties emerged between the South Pacific and Canada. Sending materials between Fiji (where the project was administered) and Vancouver, Canada created serious delays and frustrations when trying to clarify drawings or spellings or culturally sensitive information.

Benefits for the participants

Now that the books are published, the Pacific Islanders who participated in the projects have continued to be active in using and promoting the books. Because the participants were not only health professionals, different groups are using the books in unexpected ways. For example, nutrition books are used for English classes at the Tarawa Technical Institute, Kiribati. In the Cook Islands, home economics teachers are using some of the books in their classrooms. The South Pacific Regional Community Education Training Center revised their food, nutrition and community development curriculum using the nutrition books as a basic text. In Vanuatu, the books were the basis for a reference book for nonformal education centers and the Red Cross in Fiji has reproduced materials from the books on cancer and other diseases for health and first aid community education.

About the author: *Dianne Goodwillie* coordinated the South Pacific Community Nutrition Training Project and co-edited the series with Sitaleki Finau. She has worked on women's leadership and community development projects in the South Pacific for fifteen years.

Source: *Mothers & Children, Bulletin on Infant Feeding and Maternal Nutrition*, Vol. II, No. 3, 1992

Photostory of Pacific Women in Media

Monica Miller, Briar Rose Scotty, and Juliette Sumbe are just three of many Pacific women active in media communication activities. In order to hone their skills and knowledge in their craft, they have attended communications workshops on print, radio and other forms of media. Women's initiatives are making a difference in how women are portrayed in Pacific island media.



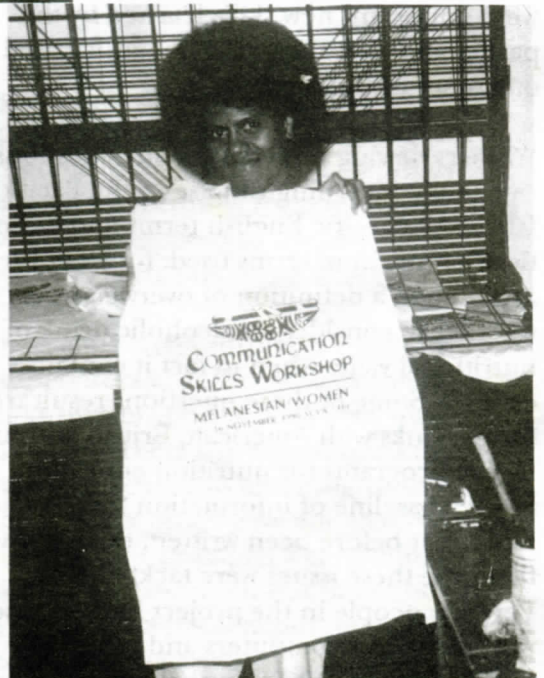
Briar Rose Scotty, Editor,
The Bulletin, Nauru



Juliette Sumbe, Women's Officer, Vanuatu



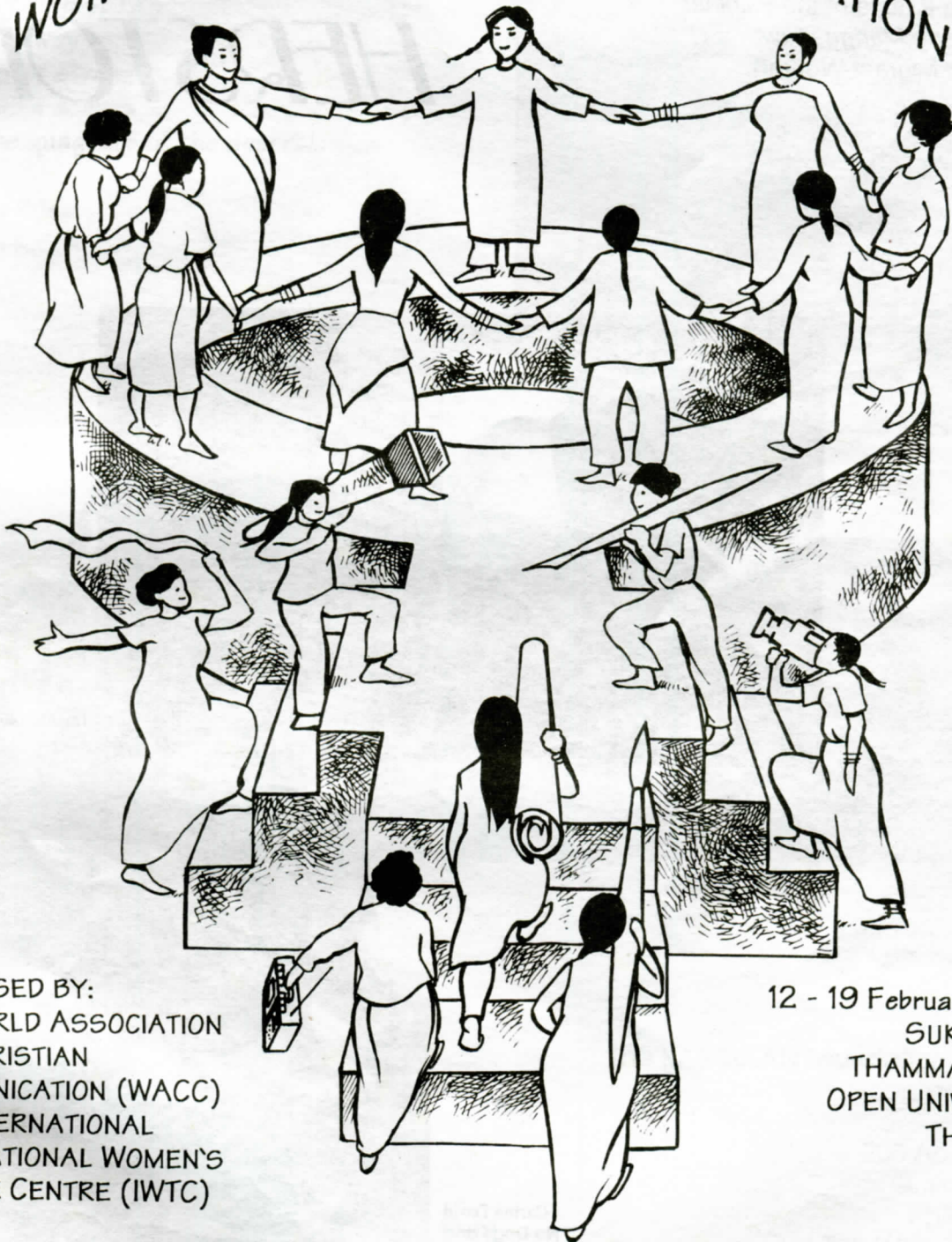
Monica Miller, President,
Pacific Islands News Association



Participant, Communication Skills Workshop, Melanesia



WOMEN EMPOWERING COMMUNICATION



Grace de Jesus-Sievert

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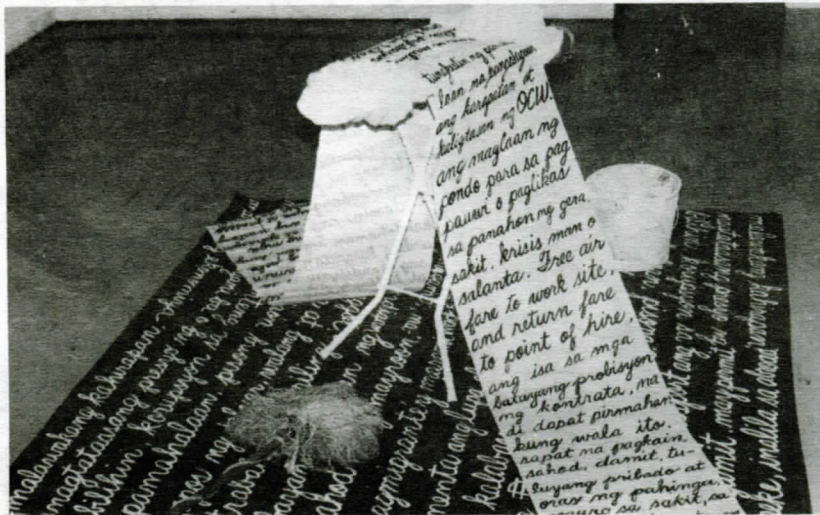
12 - 19 February 1994
SUKHOTHAI
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Art and Poetry

In an exhibition organized by the **KASIBULAN Foundation** at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila, artists expressed themselves in different media to present the problems faced by migrant workers. These works only give a taste of the *Filipina: Migranteng Manggagawa* (Filipina: Migrant Worker).

ART TELLS HERSTORY



Imelda Cajipe-Endaya
FDH



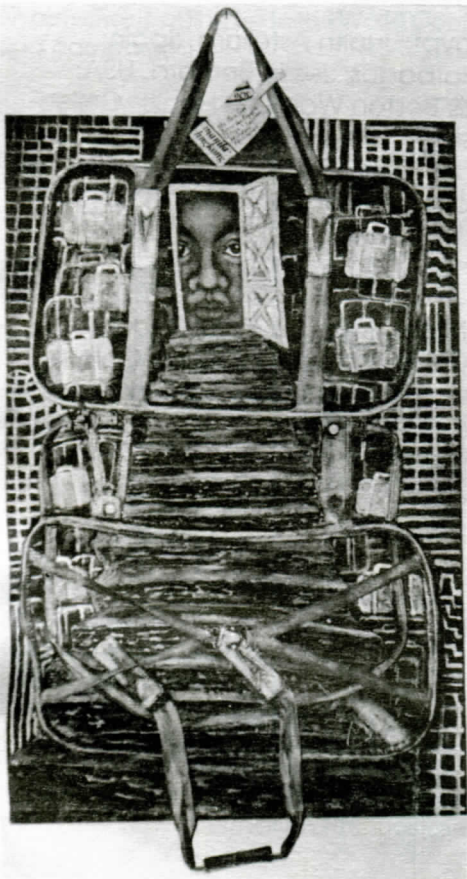
Carina David
No Dogs and
Filipinas Allowed

My tribe is lost
Eaten by the sand!

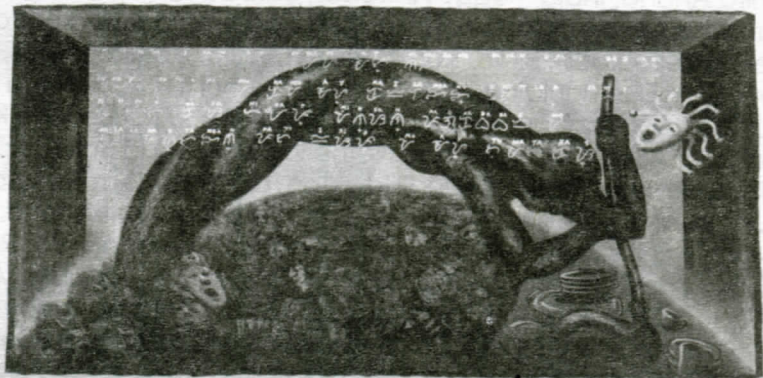
We walked the miles
With half clad spirits
Along the way
Groping for strength
Scavenging dollars
From the quagmire of the desert...

Maryam Roca
Jeddah, K.S.A.

Lilibeth Cordova-La O
Guinahalitan, Guinapigos,
Guinapa-antus



Imelda Cajipe-Endaya
Bagahe sa Refugee House



Edgar Talusan Fernandez
Mariang Migrante

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Isis International Associates:

Isis International has a group of Associates, women from different parts of the world who support our aims, give advice and collaborate in our programs.

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Isis International is an international non-governmental women's organization, founded in 1974 to promote the empowerment of women through information sharing, communication and networking. Its network reaches over 50,000 individuals and organizations in 150 countries, from grassroots groups to policy makers. Isis International's activities include resource centers and information sharing, publications and communications, health networking, advocacy of women's issues and skills sharing. It has two offices, one in Santiago, Chile and the other in Manila, Philippines.

Isis International Resource Centers

The Resource Center of each office houses a collection of documentation and information from all over the world on a wide range of development and women's issues. This information is processed by the Resource Center and Information Program of each office and incorporated into bibliographic, human resources and data bases. It is made available to all interested groups, institutions and individuals through information services and specialized publications including resource directories, bibliographic catalogues and publications on specific themes. The Resource Centers are also open to visitors.

Regular Resource Center publications include the bilingual *Base de Datos Mujer - Women's Data Base* and *Documentas*, a bibliographic bulletin in Spanish, from our office in Chile and *Resource Update*, a bibliographic bulletin and Information Packs on key issues, in English from our office in the Philippines.

Isis International Publications

The Communication Networking Program of each office publishes a quarterly magazine: *Mujeres en Accion*, in Spanish, from our office in Chile and *Women in Action*, in English, from our office in the Philippines. These publications bring together information, analyses and perspectives about and from women around the world and serve as communication channels for sharing ideas, experiences and models of organization and action. Books on key issues are published twice a year in Spanish through the Isis Internacional Ediciones de las Mujeres in Chile and on an occasional basis in English through the Isis International Book Series in the Philippines.

The *Women's Health Journal* in English is published by the Health Networking Program of our office in Chile with the collaboration of the office in the Philippines. The office in Chile also publishes the Spanish language *Revista de la Red Salud de las Mujeres Latino Americanas y del Caribe*. *Women Envision*, a monthly newsletter in English is published by the Advocacy and Campaigns Program in our office in the Philippines. It contains information on activities leading up to the World Conference and NGO Forum in China 1995 and other international meetings and campaigns.

Health Networking

The Health Networking Program of our office in Chile coordinates the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network while the office in the Philippines undertakes health networking activities in the Asia-Pacific Region. Both offices offer health information services and resource materials.

Advocacy, Campaigns and Policy

Our office in Chile coordinates the Information and Policy Program on Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Advocacy and Campaigns Program of the office in the Philippines produces Action Alerts on campaigns, actions and solidarity appeals of women's groups and networks around the world.

Networking Services

Both offices offer referral and assistance to individuals and organizations, locally and internationally in linking with others around the world.

Training

Both offices offer technical assistance and training in communication and information management and in the use of new information technologies.

Isis International acknowledges the support and the financial assistance of the following partner-donor organizations: Australian Council of Churches, CEBEMO, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Christian Aid (U.K.), Commission on Interchurch Aid of the Netherlands Reformed Church, Danish Ministry for Development Cooperation (DANIDA), Evangelisches Missionwerk (Germany), Foundation for a Compassionate Society (USA), ICCO, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (USA), Netherlands Ministry of Development Cooperation, UNIFEM (USA), Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (USA).

