

**AMARC Asociación mundial de radios comunitarias**  
**The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters**

**Identity and Historical Background**

The current President of AMARC describes the organization as an international NGO with a grassroots base that is involved in communication rights issues and oriented towards sustainable development. Its membership has grown over the years to 2,000 members and associates in 110 countries. (See Table 1)

AMARC grew out the World Conference of Community Radio Broadcasters held in 1983 in Montreal, Canada, which brought together 600 community radio enthusiasts from 36 countries. Two years later, in 1985 at the Second World Conference in Vancouver, Canada, the decision was made to establish an organization that would work towards building a community radio movement. Five years later in 1988 the founding assembly met at the Third World Conference in Managua, Nicaragua, and established the organization's headquarters in Montreal, Canada. At this World Conference, community radio was seen as part of a long term project that focused on developing "new practices of democracy and communications" (Kidd, 2003)<sup>1</sup>. At the following Conference in Dublin in 1990, which focused on the right to communicate, a group of women proposed the creation of an international network of women working in the field of community radio. As a result the International Women's Network was officially established at the Fifth World Conference held in Oaxtepec, Mexico in 1992. The Sixth and Seventh World Conferences in 1995 and 1998 respectively were thematically focused on methodological facets of community-based participation in development discussing legal (international recognition of community media), the technical (helping members to meet technological challenges) and geographical (making a breakthrough into Asia and the Arab countries) issues. The most recent Eight Conference (Nepal, 2003) was the largest gathering of community broadcasters to take place in the region, becoming a cornerstone for the

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<sup>1</sup> Carnival and Commons: the Global IMC Network Our Media III Conference Barranquilla, Colombia May, 2003 Dorothy Kidd, [http://www.ourmedianet.org/papers/om2003/Kidd\\_OM3.rtf](http://www.ourmedianet.org/papers/om2003/Kidd_OM3.rtf)

development of the community radio movement in the Asia-Pacific. AMARC's Ninth Conference is being planned for the last quarter of 2006.

### **“Community Media” as Movement Frame and Institutional Problem**

What is “community media?” Community media are typically identified in terms of three criteria: 1) they are non-commercial, 2) they are small-scale and local, and 3) they are supportive of local community involvement in programming and management. (Barlow, 1988, 81) Howley (2004, 222) defines the phenomenon concisely as “small-scale media outlets predicated on opening up the channels of communication to wider publics and dedicated to participatory self-governance.” The U.S.-based National Federation of Community Broadcasters provides a similar definition:

Despite their diversity, these stations are united by a philosophical, political and aesthetic approach to radio that emphasizes localism and community needs; radio as an activist resource for community development and social justice; creative freedom; experimentation and diversity in music, cultural and informational programming; involvement of people traditionally excluded from the mass media; and community participation through accessible station governance and extensive opportunities for public participation in all aspects of operations and programming. (NFCB, 1982, 18)

In the developed Western countries, community media’s roots are in the 60s-70s counterculture, which viewed itself as an alternative to commercialized, capitalist mass media outlets and as giving voice to “radical” political views and marginalized segments of the population. In developing countries, however, advocacy of community media is seen more as a way of promoting development, and is often linked to efforts to open up broadcasting to private operators and to liberalize what are often state-dominated media systems. In developing country contexts, one typically sees less emphasis on making internal management practices conform to anti-hierarchical norms, and more emphasis on securing governmental recognition and support.

In both developed and developing countries, unauthorized appropriation of broadcast frequencies by local groups to provide political and/or cultural alternatives to the dominant media system – sometimes known by the pejorative “pirate radio” or more recently as “free radio” (Soley, 1999) – has been perceived as a necessary and justifiable

tactic. Historically, pirate or free radio has played an important role in the reform of broadcasting, from the role of Radio Luxembourg and other commercial pirates in gaining access to the airwaves in Europe for rock music in the 1960s, to the growth of microradio alternatives leading to the Low Power FM proposals of the U.S. FCC in the late 1990s. Though not identical, free radio and community radio are complementary and related phenomena.

Community radio thus raises the following institutional issues, most of which are national in scope but some of which are transnational:

1. Liberalization of broadcast policy to permit the licensing of many new, smaller-scale, more diverse outlets
2. Reform of radio spectrum management to permit the liberalized licensing policies described above or, more radically, tolerance of free radio or expansion of unlicensed spectrum to accommodate free (or freer) radio
3. Development of mechanisms for stable financial support that somehow preserve the independence and authenticity of the media outlets as an extension of their local community. As a corollary, the need for financial support may (or may not, depending on the mechanism used) require some kind of insulation or exception from trade norms (e.g., the proposed UNESCO convention on cultural diversity)
4. Protection of community broadcasters from censorship and other forms of content-motivated repression

While highlighting the institutional prerequisites of “community media,” we wish to stress that the term is often not a neutral description of a social phenomenon or a particular way of institutionalizing mass communication. Rather, particularly in North America and Europe, it is a way of putting an appealing frame around the efforts of democratic leftist movements to establish a presence in a mass media system that they feel excludes them. Virtually without exception, community media advocates in the West favor specific causes and definitions of relevant social groups and do not include in their

definition the use of small-scale, independently-funded broadcasting by, say, religious fundamentalists, terrorists or what they would call “reactionary” political groups.

The social conflicts of the 1960s and ‘70s led to the emergence of a counter-culture with its own media outlets and publics organized around them. The current concept of “community media” has its intellectual roots in the need to reconcile that era’s critique of “capitalist” commercial media with the obvious failures of the “communist” and “public service” alternatives. In the eyes of the counter-culture, in so-called “capitalist” countries the media were driven by commercial imperatives that, at best, led to homogenized, manipulative entertainment fare and, at worst, to the subordination of public communication to the preservation and promotion of corporate interests. Public broadcasting was not perceived as much of an alternative, because it was dominated by professional elites who were insulated from real community needs, and subordinate to the interests of its elite supporters in government, foundations and corporations. Thus, even in the media environment dominated by state-funded public service broadcasters such as in Europe, community media thrived, often starting out as pirate radio stations designed to circumvent or provide alternatives to state broadcasters. Although usually leftist in political orientation, these critics also recognized that the state socialism of the East “offer[ed] even less media democracy than liberal capitalist regimes.” (Downing, 1984, 16)

Having rejected all three of the extant institutional alternatives for the organization of the mass media, the movement gravitated toward the radically egalitarian philosophies associated with anarchism and feminism, emphasizing “self-management” of media organizations and the ability of the media to promote identity politics by giving voice to, engaging and mobilizing what they viewed as disenfranchised segments of the population. (Downing, 1984) This abandonment of the state parallels (but precedes in time) the way communication rights advocates, during the 1990s, moved from working with states and intergovernmental organizations toward civil society and social movements in the pursuit of their agenda.

Insofar as it represents a challenge to any and all hierarchy in the channels of mass communication, the ideology of “community media” faces a severe problem of institutionalization. Is community media just a permanently marginalized, fringe alternative to mainstream media, constantly teetering on the brink of financial exhaustion and activist burnout? Or is it a stable, feasible set of policies for organizing mass communication in ways that improves upon both private, commercial media systems and state-dominated or state socialist alternatives? Issues of funding and financial sustainability in particular are persistent problems for this ideology, constantly threatening to lead small-scale, localized, “self-managed” media either to state funding (with all the attendant dangers of insulation, bureaucratization, and censorship) or towards commercialization (which pushes toward larger scale of organization works against the stated egalitarian ethos). Even without commercialization, solving the problem of long-term sustainability can lead to the professionalization of management, undermining the commitment to non-hierarchical, local and participatory regime.

### **AMARC and Community Media**

AMARC, backed in many cases by UNESCO money, has done more than any other groups to address these institutional questions, particularly in the context of developing countries. Moreover, it remains focused on the policy, funding and institutional issues directly related to community radio, staying away from aspects of CIP, such as intellectual property, that do not relate to those questions.

AMARC has a clear sense of priorities for the community broadcasting sector which includes:

- Recognition of community broadcasting and its right to exist and to broadcast without interference
- Allocation of frequencies in the present analogue spectrum and on future digital-broadcast channels
- Economic support for the sector through independent funding-mechanisms

The organization advocates for the above using both national campaigns for legal reform and international campaigns that are both reactive and proactive<sup>2</sup> in nature depending on the issue. Reactive campaigns are most often in defense of community and alternative-media where their right to freedom of expression is under threat such as the alliance with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) to support Indymedia, a global network of independent media organizations, whose servers were seized by the US. Proactive campaigns, on the other hand tend to be more long term and include efforts to gain political statements in support of community media at international meetings and from institutions and work towards achieving recognition of community media within international norms and standards, particularly those on media pluralism and the right to freedom of expression. AMARC's involvement in WSIS is a good example of this proactive strategy.

Clearly AMARC's focus is on community media, with a special focus on community radio. The organization's objective centers on "developing a general understanding of the concept and role of community radio as a viable alternative model for communication, a tool for development, peace, justice and solidarity," (AMARC- Statutes)<sup>3</sup>. It acts as a facilitator enabling the exchange of information between community broadcasters from around the world and defending community radio broadcasters threatened by political developments. Finally AMARC facilitates representation of its members on the international scene, or represents them if they so request. As Buckley summarizes "Communication rights is a social movement concerned with the public interest in our communications environment. We are struggling to defend and extend the creative commons in the face of the commodification of information and knowledge. We are resisting the privatization of the airwaves as radio spectrum is coming to be sold like land and real estate. We are campaigning to keep media and culture outside of the grasp of the

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<sup>2</sup> Free Media: Creating Media Alternatives to State Control and Corporate Hegemony.

<http://obsmedia.amarc.org/files/PresentationSteveBuckley.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [www.amarc.org](http://www.amarc.org)

World Trade Organization and to defend and promote cultural and linguistic diversity,” (Buckley, 2004).<sup>4</sup>

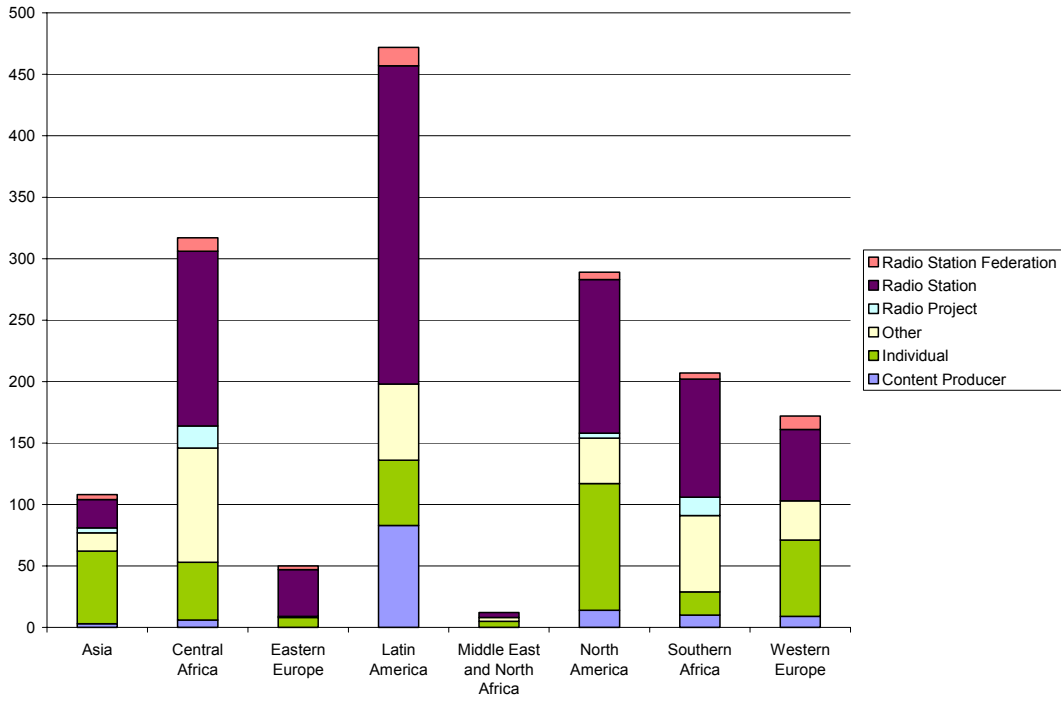
## **Organizational Structure**

AMARC has two categories of members: regular (voting members) and associate members (those who endorse AMARC’s principles but do not have any voting rights). As of 2005, AMARC maintained 1128 voting members (including community radio stations, federations and associations of community radio stations, production groups, and project groups working towards the establishment of community radio) and 525 associate members (i.e., individuals, community development associations, and groups or organisations who are in agreement with AMARC’s Principles and contribute to the Association’s objectives).

AMARC is a globally distributed organization (see Figure 1, below), although it is largely comprised of members from southern regions, with more than 60% of its members from Central and Southern Africa and Latin America. Consistent with the regional distribution of participants observed in the WSIS civil society, a relatively small number of members are based in Asia (less than 7%), the Middle East (less than 1%) and Eastern Europe (around 3%). The remaining membership is North American and Western European.

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<sup>4</sup> Free Media: Creating Media Alternatives to State Control and Corporate Hegemony. <http://obsmedia.amarc.org/files/PresentationSteveBuckley.pdf>



**Figure 1: AMARC Membership**

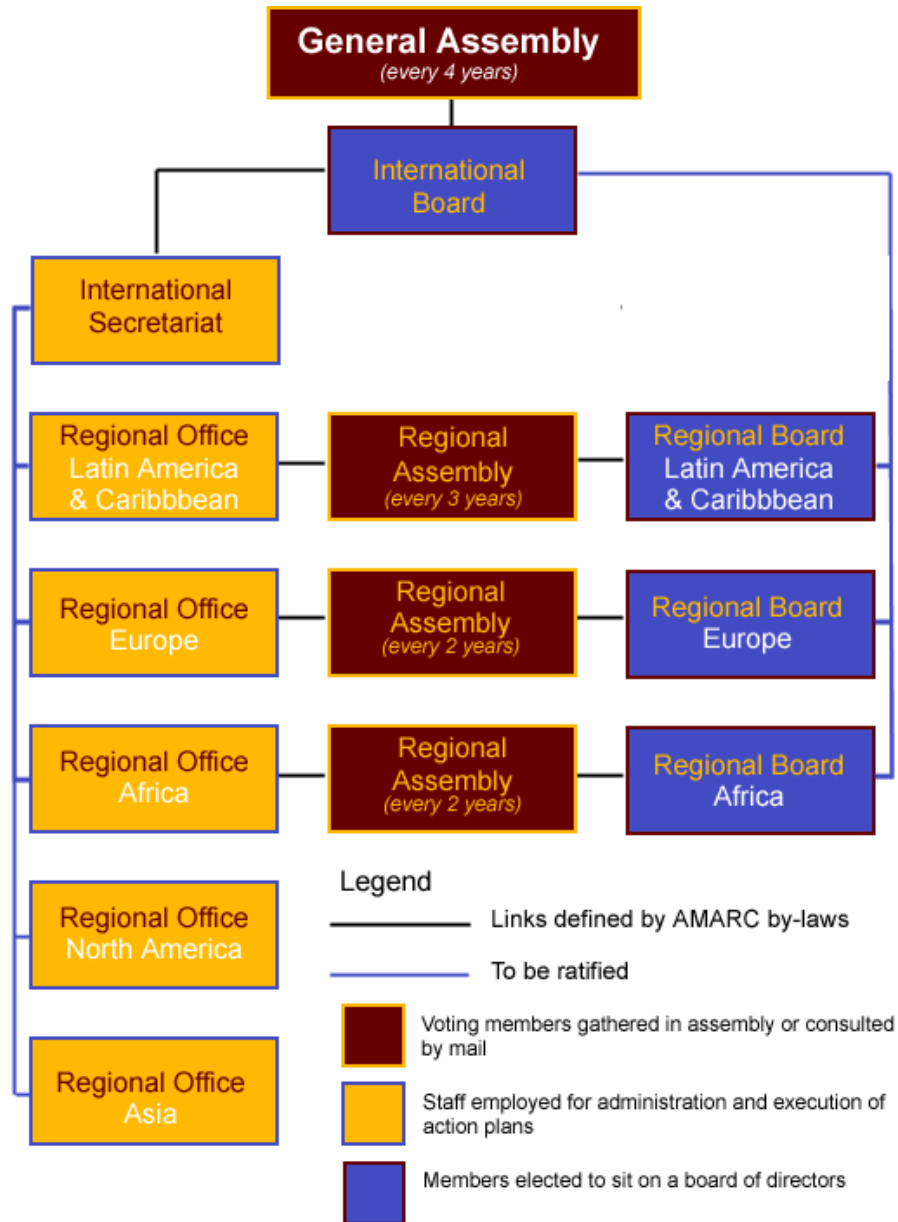
While membership is open to several types of entities, the main constituency of the organization is community radio stations; totaling 46% of the membership base (see Table 1 below). The membership dominance of actual broadcasting radio stations is particularly noteworthy in the developing regions of Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

**Table 1: AMARC Membership**

| <b>Region</b>                | <b>Content</b>  |                   |              | <b>Radio Project</b> | <b>Radio Station</b> | <b>Radio Station Federation</b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
|                              | <b>Producer</b> | <b>Individual</b> | <b>Other</b> |                      |                      |                                 |
| Asia                         | 2.8%            | 54.6%             | 13.9%        | 3.7%                 | 21.3%                | 3.7%                            |
| Central Africa               | 1.9%            | 14.8%             | 29.3%        | 5.7%                 | 44.8%                | 3.5%                            |
| Eastern Europe               | 0.0%            | 16.0%             | 2.0%         | 0.0%                 | 76.0%                | 6.0%                            |
| Latin America                | 17.6%           | 11.2%             | 13.1%        | 0.0%                 | 54.9%                | 3.2%                            |
| Middle East and North Africa | 0.0%            | 41.7%             | 25.0%        | 0.0%                 | 33.3%                | 0.0%                            |
| North America                | 4.8%            | 35.6%             | 12.8%        | 1.4%                 | 43.3%                | 2.1%                            |
| Southern Africa              | 4.8%            | 9.2%              | 30.0%        | 7.2%                 | 46.4%                | 2.4%                            |
| Western Europe               | 5.2%            | 36.0%             | 18.6%        | 0.0%                 | 33.7%                | 6.4%                            |
| All Regions                  | 7.7%            | 21.9%             | 18.7%        | 2.5%                 | 45.8%                | 3.4%                            |

Even with AMARC’s large and diverse member base, its revenue from dues, which varies based on membership type, organizational type and region of origin, is nominal. Membership is obtained by submitting an application in writing to the International Board who reviews the application and decides on awarding membership. This decision is then ratified by the General Assembly. The General Assembly which is the supreme authority of AMARC comprises regular and associate members and meets every four years. The Assembly defines and establishes the general policies of AMARC, develops common positions and strategies for the representation of community radio broadcasters before international organizations and elects members of the Executive Committee of the International Board, i.e. the President, Deputy-President and Treasurer. The International Board which implements the policies and the decisions made by the General Assembly also includes nine vice-presidents, one of whom is selected from the Women’s International Network and one each are appointed by AMARC’s regional centers (Latin America & Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America). The remaining vice-presidents are elected by the General Assembly. The International Board meets once annually where decisions are made by consensus whenever possible or by a two-thirds majority of the members present. It approves the financial reports, reviews the budgets, and approves the hiring of new personnel and personnel evaluation policies. The Regional Offices are legally autonomous and elect their own personnel.

AMARC’s financial resources comprise membership dues, income generated by the association (in the form of publications, training programmes), grants from local, national and international organizations (Ford Foundation, UNESCO, DFID, CIDA, FES, Swedish International Development Agency) and contributions from the private sector.



## AMARC at WSIS

The Eighth World Conference of Community Broadcasters which took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, 2003 provides a clear picture of what community media means to AMARC. They see community media, particularly community radio, as having given communities the means of cultural expression, news, information and local dialogue. At the meeting the General Assembly of AMARC declared that it was committed to the realization of the Right to Communicate in its broadest, most inclusive sense and was committed to protecting against infringements of this right. The two important stated objectives of the 8<sup>th</sup> conference, which might also explain AMARC's reasons for joining the WSIS Media caucus, are:

- “To strengthen the international community broadcasting movement as a progressive force for social change and as a crucial mean of democratic empowerment through peoples access to mass communications
- To build a grassroots, South-centered platform for participation in global strategies for the information society,” (AMARC, 8<sup>th</sup> World Conference)<sup>5</sup>

AMARC sees WSIS as an important forum where some of these objectives could be realized. “We consider the WSIS that is taking place in Geneva Switzerland in December 2003 and in Tunis, Tunisia in 2005 to be an important venue for highlighting the role of community media in the overall struggle for social justice and people's empowerment,” (AMARC, 8<sup>th</sup> World Conference). At the core of their belief is the notion that a just and equitable information society must be people-centered and inclusive. Since community-based communications media are non-profit, local in content, ownership and management, and focused on social development, they have a crucial role to play in enabling participation and strengthening cultural diversity, in a world where “the communication needs of poor people are compromised at the highest levels by a vastly unequal access to the global communications environment and by the absence of

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<sup>5</sup> Media Rights Monitor *March 2003* [http://www.internews.org/mra/mrm/mar03/mar03\\_story16.htm](http://www.internews.org/mra/mrm/mar03/mar03_story16.htm)

structural measures and commitments to redress past imbalances,” (Community Media Statement, 2003)<sup>6</sup>.

Social network analysis reveals that AMARC’s membership is well connected to each other and other advocates, but is somewhat isolated organizationally. This may reflect the early conflict of the WSIS, as organizations struggled to define the issue agenda and secure a leading role in the process.

AMARC was cited by nine of the 53 subjects mapped as an organization with which they work most frequently. Within the interpersonal network, fifteen individuals were determined to be members of AMARC.<sup>7</sup> Members are fairly distributed regionally and dispersed throughout the interpersonal network with one member (A.67) in the top ten central actors. However, this actor’s structural position is more likely due to his leadership role with the CRIS Campaign. Statistical tests indicate that members were more connected with each other and with non-AMARC advocates than would be expected under a random distribution of ties between nodes (see Appendix 1).

Figure 2 (below) shows organizational relationships based on individual affiliation, nodes are sized by betweenness, and indicator of being a liaison between different organizations, and links are weighted and colored to indicate more than three individuals. AMARC does not maintain a prominent position among other advocacy organizations. This perhaps coincides with their grassroots and largely developing country focus, and the domestic nature of spectrum rights, which concentrates its efforts on domestic regulatory reform. AMARC has many weak ties to other organizations through individuals, including the CRIS Campaign<sup>8</sup>; however, it maintains strong individual affiliation ties with only three organizations. These include the Association for Progressive Communications, the World Association of Christian Communications

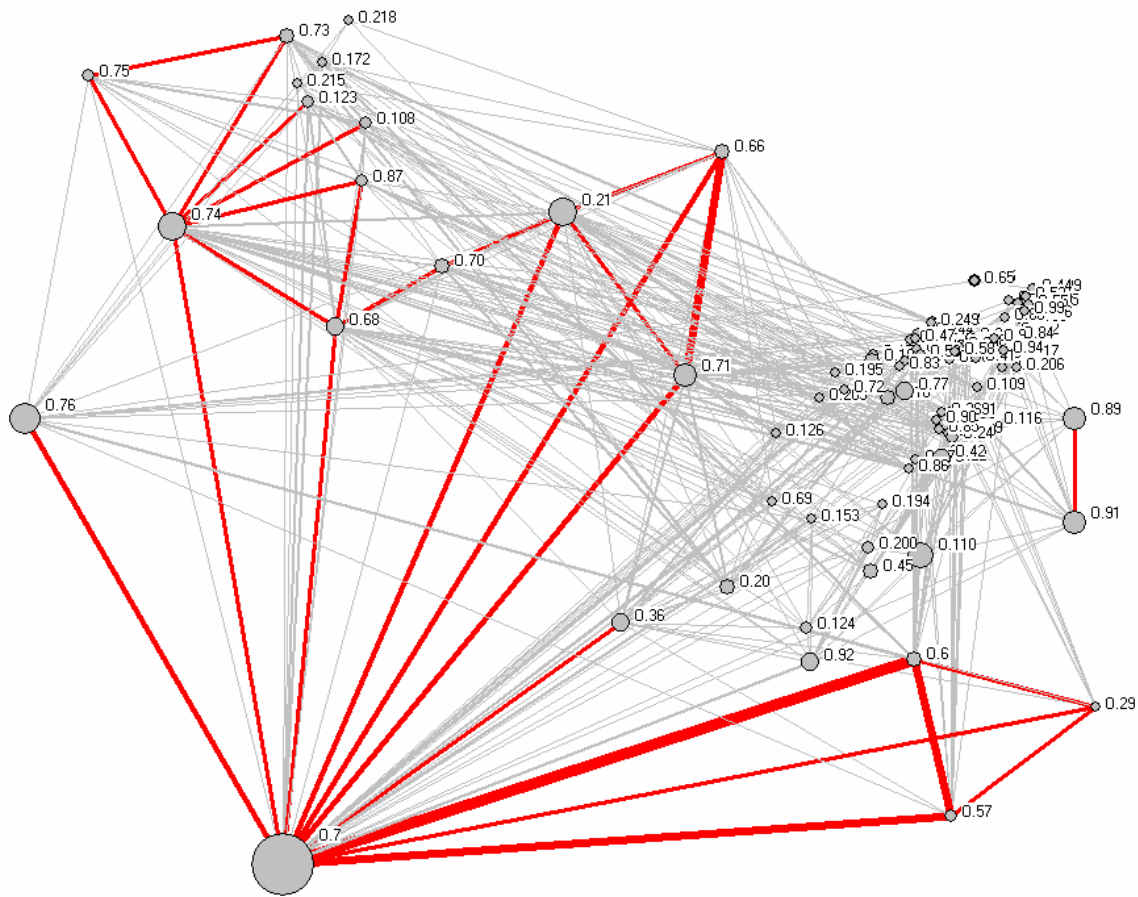
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<sup>6</sup> Community Media and the Information Society Statement on the draft Declaration and Action Plan (WSIS Precom 3, Geneva 15-26 September 2003)  
<http://mailman.greennet.org.uk/public/plenary/2003-September/000449.html>

<sup>7</sup> This was achieved by cross-referencing the interpersonal network data against the current AMARC membership list.

<sup>8</sup> Two individuals in the network (A.309 and A.67) mentioned both AMARC and the CRIS Campaign.

(WACC), and Free Press, a US-based media advocacy organization which has recently pursued some of the same spectrum licensing reforms advocated by AMARC.



**Figure 2: Organization's Individual Affiliations**

AMARC’s involvement in WSIS began in early 2001 as part of the group of like-minded organizations that called themselves Platform for Communication Rights who felt that there was a need for an open activist based campaign around WSIS so as to broaden the agenda being proposed at the Summit. The existing group was renamed CRIS, a name Buckley says was deliberately chosen as a counterpoint to WSIS. During the early meetings at WSIS there was almost a “backlash” against CRIS as some organizations felt that it was dominating the agenda. As a result organizations stopped using the CRIS branding and went back to wearing their institutional hats. However all was not lost. The process had helped build good working relations between some key actors and while CRIS appeared to “go quietly” people who had been involved with the campaign were at the heart of the WSIS process – from heading caucuses to writing and drafting the texts.

AMARC initially joined the Media Caucus to push for issues that it felt were central but absent at WSIS, i.e. putting people first. AMARC argues that the poor do not exist in mainstream media. They are unable to participate actively in the public sphere as mainstream media does not reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of people. In addition the organization strongly believes that communication and not technology should be the core of any information society. From this perspective WSIS needed to give equal importance to traditional media in general and community media in particular. However, there were disagreements within the Media Caucus about the status and importance of community media. The Community Media Caucus was formed after a split in Media Caucus at PrepCom 3 in September 2003, over the inclusion of community media in WSIS texts. As AMARC discovered, lobbying for the inclusion of community media in the texts was neither an easy nor a straight forward task. They began by lobbying governments whom they thought might be sympathetic to their position and with good success. At least 20 governments including Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, South Africa, Bali, Senegal, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands and Ireland to name a few spoke in favor of including community media in the texts of the WSIS declarations. In a sense AMARC was able to create a network of “governmental friends” that publicly supported community media. Resistance came not from authoritarian governments, except China who opposed widening the scope of media rights. It was certain Latin American private broadcasters in the region that systematically blocked the inclusion of community media. They argued that community media is not required in Latin America as they fulfill this function. The new Community Media Caucus was formed by interested parties within the Media Caucus and convened by AMARC to lobby for explicit references to community media in the official documents. Towards this end their success has been limited. For instance, El Salvador delegation has routinely, according to Buckley opposed the mention of community media. For him this comes as no surprise as “The main leaders of (El Salvador’s) private broadcasting organizations are very close to the current ruling party,” (Buckley, 2003)<sup>9</sup>. According to Buckley, El Salvador’s leading television broadcaster has

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<sup>9</sup> **The Community Media Forum at the WSIS (Geneva, Dec. 12th, 2003)**  
By Christoph Dietz and Petra Stammen, CAMECO  
<http://www.cameco.org/english/wsis-summary.pdf>

about a 90 percent share of the TV audience, while one commercial group owns 38 of about 150 radio stations. Despite the fact that about 50 states were willing to recognize the growing importance of community media by mentioning them explicitly in the official documents as tools for poverty reduction and strengthening democratic values, three states – Mexico, El Salvador and China consistently vetoed any reference to Community Media in the Declaration of Principles as well as in the Action Plan (Dietz & Stammen, 2003).<sup>10</sup>

AMARC sees the WSIS documents as a setback to the involvement of the poorest communities in the information society. They feel that the Summit gives undue importance to infrastructure for connectivity and new technologies to the exclusion of traditional media and in doing so favors the media elite with little encouragement for community driven approaches to communications. The low profile of traditional communications media in the draft documents goes against the premise of the Summit as the world's poorest communities face the danger of being left out by a vastly unequal access to the global communications environment. Criticizing the Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-centered WSIS approach, Buckley stresses "the Summit's emphasis on ICTs and 'estrategies' is mainly adequate for elite economies, (Buckley, 2003)<sup>11</sup>". Throughout, AMARC has expressed concern that the WSIS draft declaration contains phrases that weaken the right to freedom of expression. For instance, they point out that while upholding freedom of expression the documents in the same breath state that this right should be in accordance with the legal system in each country. "Where freedom of expression is referred to it is often with a corollary about ensuring that it's in conformity with national laws, which is really quite extraordinary in a UN document to see that sort of thing. We know that in many countries national laws themselves do not conform well to human rights, (Buckley, 2003)<sup>12</sup>." The business interests that control private commercial media operations, according to Buckley, have particularly targeted community broadcasters. Thus for the community media caucus the

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<sup>10</sup> ibid

<sup>11</sup> ibid

<sup>12</sup> Community media demand real "access for all" Geneva, 9 December 2003  
[http://www.choike.org/nuevo\\_eng/informes/1471.html](http://www.choike.org/nuevo_eng/informes/1471.html)

access for all slogan does not ring true and legitimates their refusal to endorse to official WSIS governmental Declaration and Action Plan. “That we were suppressed from the official WSIS documents shows the lack of real commitment to civil society by governments at the WSIS,” according to Buckley. “We have been creating local content, promoting human rights, building gender equality, and supporting sustainable development. Community and alternative media have many success stories showing another information society is possible,” (Buckley, 2003).<sup>13</sup>

The disappointment is intense especially in the light of the Ninth United Nations Roundtable on Communication for Development, which took place in September 2004 to discuss and assess current trends in Communication for Development activities and to set priorities for future directions in the field. The Roundtable makes a special mention of community media – “National governments should implement a legal and supportive framework favoring the right to free expression and the emergence of free and pluralistic information systems including recognition of the specific and crucial role of community media in providing access to communication for isolated and marginalized groups,”(Buckley, 2004)<sup>14</sup>. For Buckley “this is an important statement from the United Nations agencies in support of community media and one which we applaud. It builds on growing recognition within the United Nations system of the role which community media can play in achieving international development goals and providing access to information in addition to giving them a voice,” (Buckley,2004)<sup>15</sup>.

AMARC’s recommendations to changes in the WSIS Draft declaration and action plan center on the following:

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<sup>13</sup> ibid

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.isiswomen.org/onsite/wsis/amarc-un.html>

<sup>15</sup> ibid

### **Recognizing the vital role of community media in bridging the digital divide**

“Community, independent and mass media are important means of providing access to public information, fostering public involvement and promoting societal development and cohesion,” (June 2003)<sup>16</sup>.

“Public service broadcasting and community media have specific and crucial roles to play in ensuring the participation of all in the information society,” (September 2003)<sup>17</sup>

### **Acknowledging the importance of traditional media**

“Give recognition and support to media based in local communities and support projects combining the use of traditional media and new technologies...and encourage investment in regional and community based media content as well as new technologies,” (September 2003).

- The Kothmale Seminar (Sri Lanka, 22-27 January 2001) was the turning point in the cooperation for development in that regard.<sup>18</sup> The mid-1990s’ Multipurpose Community Telecentres (MCTs), mainly focusing on Internet and telephone services, started being redesigned as Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs), integrating community radio projects and ICT services in rural/remote and disadvantaged areas.<sup>19</sup> It is not clear what the AMARC participation in that inaugural seminar was, though there were participants from the practitioner communities in Latin America, Africa, Asia, etc. But AMARC did participate in subsequent CMC seminars like the latest symposium in Dakar, June 2003. Though the seminar was organized within the framework of the Global Knowledge Partnership Action Plan, it was driven by a bottom-up innovation that was the Kothmale Internet Project of Kothmale Community Radio.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.itu.int/dms\\_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsispc3/c/S03-WSISPC3-C-0107!!PDF-E.pdf](http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsispc3/c/S03-WSISPC3-C-0107!!PDF-E.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Community Media and the Information Society Statement on the draft Declaration and Action Plan (WSIS Precom 3, Geneva 15-26 September 2003)

<http://mailman.greennet.org.uk/public/plenary/2003-September/000449.html>

<sup>18</sup> ([http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=5496&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5496&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html))

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/cmc>

Another player within the CMC environment is OneWorld, based in Lusaka, Zambia<sup>20</sup> OneWorld may appear to be the AMARC counterpart for the CMCs. OneWorld won the contract to implement/represent CATIA (Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa funded by the DFID, UK) at continental level. UNESCO has closely associated OneWorld to the CMC activities, at least from the Dakar Symposium. Some observers got the impression that OneWorld was going to be a major partner in the CMC movement, but its current status is unclear.

### **Spectrum management**

“The radio-frequency spectrum should be managed in the public interest through independent and transparent regulatory frameworks to enable equitable allocation of frequencies among a plurality of media including community media... The action Plan... should recognize radio-frequency spectrum as a natural resource belonging to all humanity... WSIS should set specific targets for the reservation of spectrum to enable community broadcasting in every community by 2010 (September 2003)<sup>21</sup>. In addition “Orbital paths should be recognized as a global resource belonging to all humanity and should be allocated to benefit the public interest through transparent and accountable regulatory frameworks,” (September 2003)<sup>22</sup>.

Despite governments that are often hostile to community radio broadcasters and refuse to allocate or license spectrum, AMARC seems to actively encourage liberalization in the sector and regulatory certainty, rather than formally support unlicensed broadcasting. However, in some statements, mostly by AMARCs leaders and in particular forums (e.g., European Social Forum), AMARC takes on the rhetorical arguments of the "spectrum commons" - e.g., "We are struggling to defend and extend the creative commons in the face of the commodification of information and knowledge. We are resisting the privatisation of the airwaves as radio spectrum is coming to be sold like land and real estate."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.oneworld.net>

<sup>21</sup> ibid

<sup>22</sup> ibid

<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.obsmedia.amarc.org/files/PresentationSteveBuckley.pdf>

Therefore, AMARC has followed a two pronged strategy, in some cases advocating "pirate" broadcasting. However, in order to achieve sustainability, AMARC pursues institutional change in national regimes, securing spectrum for low power broadcasting serving individual communities. The following statement by Steve Buckley, in his address to the European Social Forum highlights this:

AMARC has a clear sense of the political priorities for the community broadcasting sector. We want to see recognition of community broadcasting and its right to exist and to broadcast without interference. We want to see allocation of frequencies in the present analogue spectrum and on future digital broadcast channels. We want to see economic support for the sector through independent funding mechanisms.

There are a number of political strategies that can be deployed to achieve these objectives. The first, and the traditional means, has been direct intervention and appropriation of the airwaves. In certain times and countries this has been a highly effective approach particularly where there is a legal or regulatory loophole or a political vacuum. On the other hand radio broadcasting is as easy to close down as it is to set up. A more stable existence requires some level of legal and political support. National campaigns for legal reform and the recognition of community broadcasting have therefore sprung up based on public interest demands and the right to freedom of expression. Increasingly these are now supplemented by international strategies for the defence and extension of the space for community and alternative media.<sup>24</sup>

### **Removing country level legislative barriers**

“WSIS should set specific targets for the opening up of broadcast licensing to allow for the operation of community broadcasting services in every community by 2010 and to ensure that all of the worlds population can access community broadcasting services by 2015,” (September 2003).<sup>25</sup>

The process of institutionalizing community radio is repeated again and again in seminars that AMARC holds in different regions of the world. For instance:

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<sup>24</sup> See <http://www.obsmedia.amarc.org/files/PresentationSteveBuckley.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

In August 2001, the Asian Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), UNESCO and Radio Nepal organized a two days long seminar on Community Radio Broadcasting in Asia. The participants took on the design of strategies for the development of Community Radio in Asia as a whole. The objectives of the seminar included the drafting of a blueprint of legal provisions which would set aside a different category for the regulation of community broadcasting, for frequency allocation, for license procedures and fees for community broadcasting. (5)<sup>26</sup>

AMARC is very cognizant of the national context (legal, social, political) in which they develop community radio stations and pursue a strategy which will ensure their long term sustainability.

### **Setting up of a community media fund**

“The Action Plan should include a commitment to establish a Community Media Fund by 2006. The Fund would support new community radio development and community media content including projects that make provision for the poorest communities for cultural and linguistic diversity and for the equal participation of women and girls. The Fund should also support community projects that combine the use of traditional media and new communication technologies. The Fund should be established through a donor-civil society partnership involving leading community media organizations and civil society organizations working in the field,” (September 2003)<sup>27</sup>.

These recommendations included in the ‘Civil Society Declaration’ recognize that the community media “play a special role in enabling access and participation to all information societies, particularly the poorest and most underprivileged ones, (September, 2003)<sup>28</sup>. The recommendations were formulated at the Marrakesh Conference, a Roundtable on Community Media for Sustainable Development held in November 2004, in Marrakech, Morocco. The purpose of the Roundtable was to facilitate an open dialogue among key stakeholders in the communications and development sectors concerning the achievement and monitoring of the Millennium Development

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<sup>26</sup> See

[http://wiki.amarc.org/?topic=asiapacific\\_left\\_menu&lang=EN&style=asiapacific\\_menu&linkstyle=asiapacific#](http://wiki.amarc.org/?topic=asiapacific_left_menu&lang=EN&style=asiapacific_menu&linkstyle=asiapacific#)

<sup>27</sup> ibid

<sup>28</sup> ibid

Goals. The Roundtable also served as a preparation meeting for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to be held on November 2005, in Tunisia. The Government of Morocco, International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication (ORBICOM), organized the Conference with the support of UNESCO, the United Nations Department of Public Information and the Swiss Federal Office of Communications (CRIS,2004)<sup>29</sup>.

Ultimately, the WSIS documents that evolved over the first phase were largely in step with AMARC's recommendations developed in Marrakech (e.g., calling for domestic spectrum allocation reform, regulatory transparency, community media fund, etc.). However, they were broadened to include "mass media [as an] important means of providing access to public information" and "public service broadcasting...[which has a] specific and crucial roles to play in ensuring the participation of all in the information society."<sup>30</sup> By playing an active role in the Media Caucus at WSIS, AMARC facilitated the drafting of wider civil society texts advocating a common position across a large number of organizations. This was possible according to Buckley because of AMARC's pro-poor sustainable development agenda which enabled them to help civil society craft a "sophisticated balance between human rights principles and sustainable development priorities which are sometimes seen as being two different sets of languages in the NGO sector."

### **AMARC and UNESCO**

Community media in general and AMARC in particular have strong ties to UNESCO. UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the one lasting product of the controversial MacBride Commission, has focused most of its attention and funding on community radio projects. AMARC's policy agenda is also tied to the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity. Its interest in cultural diversity is limited to its implications for community media in general and community broadcasting in particular. And so their interests are the same as some of the big public broadcasters

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<sup>29</sup> CRIS <http://www.crisinfo.org/content/view/full/429/>

<sup>30</sup> Draft of WSIS Plan of Action, September 2003

also interested in cultural diversity convention; i.e., to protect against media concentration and to ensure that preferential arrangements and public/national subsidies for the community media sector are not deemed as unfair competition. Like the public broadcasters AMARC supports public policy intervention to ensure that media pluralism implies not just a plurality of commercial players but a plurality in broadcast forms as well. They feel that the convention should support cultural and media diversity *inside* countries and not only between them. Focusing on the latter will only serve the interests of national media companies against the biggest transnationals, rather than true, bottom-up media diversity.

In addition, AMARC sees the cultural diversity project as a counter-balance to the WTO, if not as an equivalent in legal status, at least as a way to push the issue into the WTO when the issue comes up for debate so as to ensure that in the face of impending liberalization there will be continued exemptions that will explicitly allow for preferential public policy support and legitimate public investment in public and community broadcasting. Thus AMARC has a focused interest in this convention. Although at the Conventions meeting in Paris (2004) it also addressed intellectual property rights issues, this was because it was the only CRIS member with consultative status with UNESCO and was able to get accredited to attend the convention. AMARC's president does not see intellectual property issues as something that the organization will be involved with. He does admit that while WIPO is not really an organization that AMARC lobbies, they did send a statement regarding WIPO's proposed convention on copyright protection for broadcasters. AMARC's position was that at this time they were not calling for additional copyright protection for broadcasters.

# Appendix 1

## CATEGORICAL AUTOCORRELATION: JOIN-COUNT STATISTICS

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This is test of network data similar to a Pearson Chi-square test of independence, it tests to determine if there is a group effect present (i.e., a departure from what would be observed under a random distribution of ties between advocates in the network).

Adjacency dataset: C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\My Documents\My Academic Stuff\Ford Foundation\Phase Two\Working Documents\Final Report\lmode\_actors  
Attribute: lmode\_actors\_attributes col 1  
# of Permutations: 10000  
Random seed: 16492

Warning: Row Attribute vector has been recoded.  
Here is a translation table:

| Old Code |    | New Code                   |
|----------|----|----------------------------|
| 0        | => | 1 (non-AMARC advocates)    |
| 1        | => | 2 (AMARC member advocates) |

Number of iterations = 10000

|       | 1        | 2        | 3         | 4         | 5         |
|-------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|       | Expected | Observed | Differenc | P >= Diff | P <= Diff |
| 1 1-1 | 545.506  | 510.000  | -35.506   | 0.974     | 0.029     |
| 2 1-2 | 39.818   | 65.000   | 25.182    | 0.067     | 0.939     |
| 3 2-2 | 0.677    | 11.000   | 10.323    | 0.000     | 1.000     |

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Running time: 00:00:03  
Output generated: 19 Oct 05 15:27:04  
Copyright (c) 1999-2005 Analytic Technologies

The first row ("1-1"), tells us that, under the null hypothesis that ties are randomly distributed across all actors in the CIP network (i.e., being part of a specific group makes no difference), we would expect 545 ties to be present in the non CRIS block of advocates. We actually observe fewer ties, 35 less to be precise. A negative difference this large essentially never occurred in graphs where the ties were randomly distributed. Based on this, we can say that the non AMARC member advocate network exhibits fewer ties between actors than would be expected under a random distribution.

The second row ("1-2"), shows a 25 tie difference between the number of ties observed between the non AMARC advocates and AMARC member advocates groups and what would be expected by chance under a null hypothesis of no effect of shared group membership on tie density. AMARC member advocates have significantly more (p<.01) ties to the rest of the CIP advocate network than expected.

The third row ("2-2") indicates that the observed amount of ties between AMARC member advocates (11) is much greater than expected by chance. The difference would almost never be observed if the null hypothesis of no group effect on the probability of ties were true.