



A Passion for Radio
Radio Waves and Community
www.comunica.org/passion/

Preface – A Network of International Exchange

Michel Delorme

Many groups and individuals around the world have discovered that radio allows them to gain control of a genuine communication tool that encourages creativity and allows popular access. Daily, from one end of the planet to the other, communication enthusiasts manage to make radio a collective enterprise devoted to development.

This is not a utopia, or the dream of a few marginalised people – it is a phenomenon taking place on every continent. People are coming together to make the airwaves a real public place. The most widespread medium in many countries, and easily accessible following a minimal training period, community radio restores radio's vocation as an instrument of two-way communication.

Community radio goes by many names. It is called popular or educational radio in Latin America, rural or local radio in Africa, public radio in Australia and free or associative radio in Europe. All these names describe the same phenomenon: that of gaining a voice and democratising communication on a community scale.

Community radio, although taking on diverse forms depending on its surroundings, remains a type of radio made to serve people; radio that encourages expression and participation and that values local culture. Its purpose is to give a voice to those without voices, to marginalised groups and to communities far from large urban centres, where the population is too small to attract commercial or large-scale State radio.

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC, is an international non-governmental organisation serving the community radio movement and uniting community radio workers from the five continents.

2 / A Passion for Radio - Preface

A network of exchange and solidarity, AMARC is also an association for consultation, coordination, cooperation and promotion of community radio. Through the association, new links are created, allowing everyone to learn of each others practices and experiences. Much like neurons forming a circuit, each unit is a centre which can freely communicate with the other units: acting locally, we are thinking globally. Community broadcasters form an open network in constant transformation.

The spirit which drives AMARC is geared toward encouraging direct exchange between the groups who use radio in their communities, as much in the North as in the South. We are convinced that communication is at the heart of the process of self-development of communities and that radio can amplify efforts at local, national and international levels, in order for those concerned to take control of development.

Community radio is dedicated to advancement. It must become a counterbalance to the concentration of media power in the hands of a few and the homogenisation of cultural content. Community radio broadcasting offers an alternative for internal development. Speaking out is a synonym for taking control, and this is what, with passion, radio lovers are contributing to all over the world!

* * *

Michel Delorme
President of AMARC
1992