IAWRT Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue Number 4

January 2011

Notes from the President

ANOTHER BUSY YEAR FOR IAWRT

The beginning of a New Year is a time to pause and reflect on what we’ve done and where we’ve been, both professionally and personally. I for one, am still eternally grateful to be part of this amazing network of media women and to have you as friends and colleagues. IAWRT as an organization has grown and prospered in 2010, thanks to the hard work of your International Board, our Chapters and Members around the world. We now have 10 Chapters - in Cameroon, India, Kenya, Nepal, Moldova, Norway, Philippines, South Africa and Tanzania, with a brand new one in the USA, freshly installed at our most recent Board Meeting and Regional Conference in Cameroon.

I would like to congratulate all our Chapters - members and the leadership teams - for your commitment and hard work on behalf of IAWRT, in your country. You make our network strong and through you we remain visible and viable, as an international organization for women in the electronic media.

There is a lot to mention and not enough space in this newsletter to do it justice, so I will just re-cap the highlights - starting with the Elections of a new International Board at our Biennial Conference in Cambodia in 2009 - we welcomed to the Board Supattra Limpabanidhu from Thailand and Alina Radu as Secretary, from Moldova. We also co-opted Gerd Inger Polden (Norway), who most of you will know by her other alias, as the coordinator of our very successful Awards for Excellence in TV and Radio production. The new Board Members added great energy to our already experienced team and together with myself, Racheal Naitare (Vice President), Elizabeth Roxas

IAWRT Regional Meeting in Cameroon

By Madeleine Memb

The Cameroon chapter hosted the IAWRT regional meeting from 26-28 November 2010 in Yaoundé — the nation’s Capital. The theme centered on Media and Violence Against Women.

Gender Based Violence constitutes not only a gross violation of human rights but also has enormous social and economic costs that undercut the contribution of women to development, peace and security. Violence against women equally poses a serious threat to the achievement of internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Considered a pandemic because of its widespread nature, even though it is most of the time sanctioned by some traditions and reinforced by societal institutions, violence against women is covered by media with some sort of superficial and trivial interest. According to some reports, violence against women gets far less media coverage than other human rights violations due to the following reasons:

- Domestic violence and other forms of violence against women remain largely hidden;
- Stories on violence against women tend to be reported as summaries in crime round-ups, not as features;
- Women still tend to be portrayed as victims;
- Women are continually represented as passive and in need of protection;
- Journalists rarely follow up on cases of violence against women.

Discussions during the conclave centered on strategies for the media to stand in the gap and denounce all forms of violence against women and effectively engage in the promotion and protection of women’s rights.

Peculiar to this meeting was the inadvertent timing to coincide with the 16 Days of Activism to end Violence Against Women (25 November to 10 December every year). This provided the opportunity for IAWRT members to take part in the official launch of activities by the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family and also participate in a televised show on the Cameroon national television network. Those were exciting moments that were also spiced by a visit by the international board to the General Manager of CRTV who promised to collaborate closely with IAWRT.

Continued on page 3
The Southern African Development Community (SADC) elected the Head of IAWRT Tanzania Chapter, Rose Haji Mwalimu to a 2-year post as Chair of the Gender and Media Southern Africa Network (GEMSA) after its 4th Gender and Media Summit in Johannesburg on 13-15 October 2010.

Coinciding with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG+10) and Beijing +15 Reviews and the launch of the Decade of the African Woman on 15 October, the summit was also a build up to the 20th anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration on Media Freedom in Africa having a backdrop of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that calls for gender parity within the media, as well as equal voice and fair treatment of women and men in editorial content by 2015.

During the summit countries reported on progress towards achieving greater gender sensitivity and balance in the media following the Gender and Media Baseline Study in 2002 that showed that women comprise 17 percent of news sources in Southern Africa, and are often portrayed in limited roles, such as sex symbols or victims of violence.

The summit also showcased a range of concrete steps that have been taken at policy level, in media practice and training, and as part of advocacy initiatives by NGOs to balance the scales.

Secretary of the IAWRT Board, Alina Radu, was awarded 1st Prize for personal dedication to the promotion and rigorous monitoring of human rights in Moldova in the public interest, including promoting and protecting human rights of women and gender equality. In her newsroom www.zdg.md Radu established an editorial policy that has continuously shown through investigative journalism, abuse of the judiciary and law enforcement, but also gave an example of how media can support human rights, including in particular women’s rights, despite intimidation and harassment by state authorities.

As a result of her work on human trafficking, she was threatened with prosecution, but continued to enlighten the situation of dozens of victims of human trafficking and to spot on traffickers actions, asking authorities for legal actions for protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers.

Tatiana Etco, a 2010 Short Documentary Production Awardee of Moldova Chapter, extended her five-minute documentary production in Moldova public TV, which resulted in a 20-minute program that stimulated public debate on Family Violence.
**Notes from the President**

(Treasurer), Liz Miller and Madeleine Memb, we have an extremely diverse and dedicated team working on your behalf and in your interest to make IAWRT shine - and they have done a terrific job last year, if I may say so myself.

Another highlight has been the setting up of our Secretariat - it has been a long and winding road - but we are now up and running and from your feedback, I know we have done the right thing in having a one-stop-shop coordination and support unit for not only our members but also outside bodies and organizations who want to know about us and work with us.

In partnership with FOKUS, we staged a very successful side event at CSW54 on "Mapping Women's Empowerment through Targeted Media" and on the back of that tremendous success, where we were the only media NGO exclusively working on women’s issue, we will be doing it again this year - IAWRT has secured space on February 24th. We are working closely with our new USA Chapter and our wider network of partners and supporters, FOKUS included.

In 2010, we also awarded five Scholarships and nine short documentary grants to members. In partnership with WITNESS, we organized a two-day Video Advocacy workshop for our grantees. It was a success beyond our expectations and equipped our nine grantees with valuable professional skills and experiences, which will stay with them for a long time.

I couldn’t end this reflection without mentioning our three major projects - the Half Widows project in Kashmir; the Anti-Trafficking in India and FGM in Cameroon - Ifiat, Ananya and Madeleine respectively, have been working extremely hard to finalize the first stages of the three year projects and the results are truly amazing. In Cameroon, we saw some early footage to be included and I must say, the long term effects and reality of this crippling so called 'cultural' practice brought the entire room of professional media people, advocates and aid workers - both male and female - to tears of horror. Those who saw Ifiat’s and Ananya's presentations of the progress of their work at our last Biennial conference will understand this effect and know how crucial it is for us to continue with this important work, to use the medium we have at our disposal, to shine a light on the plight of women and the fight for their human rights, where ever they may be.

Our partners FOKUS highlighted this very well in the latest and first English language version of their magazine which features our work and can be seen through the publications section of our website <www.iawrt.org>. And so it only remains for me to thank all our members and supporters for their contribution, participation, their thoughts and feedback throughout 2010 — we always look forward to hearing from you. So, as you raise a glass to farewell the old year and bring in the new one, let’s try to look beyond the disasters lurking around the corner, let’s remember the love of our family and friends and let’s all look forward to a safe and rewarding 2011!

Happy New Year,
Impressions from the FGM Project Visit

By Kirsten Brathen

The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Project site is in Kousséri—located far North and one of the 10 semi-autonomous regions in Cameroon.

The project trip to Kousséri was not an everyday trip, far from it. It is impossible to take the bus or the train for some hours and be there. The standard of the road, you would not believe it is possible to have a road like this, the speed was never above 55 kmph. Road banditry has long hampered transport along the eastern and western borders to Chad and Nigeria, exactly where we were driving after having flown to Maroua, about half way to Kousséri.

It should be safe to drive during daylight, but after dark, it is another story. Due to two punctures and even a flat extra tire, we could definitely wave good by to reach Kousséri before dark. Not only the bandits use to shoot before asking questions on this road, also the special army force to protect transport, are known as fast shooters. For us, they turned out to be the heroes of the night. Thanks to their help we reached Kousséri in their car, armored with machine guns and we could finally get a meal from the market before midnight.

The project has “slept” for three (3) years after 2006. That was when we got money from FOKUS for this project. This year and the two coming years, the support is within the budget of FOKUS-IAWRT. The project had a happy start again, thanks to Madeleine and Olivia’s good relationship with the right people in Kousseri.

Ms. Hadja Djidde Djibrine Omar is a local woman who has started literacy courses for women through the local NGO, AIBEFEC. Hadja has confidence among the local women. Through Hadja it is possible to reach the practitioners of FGM in the villages.

The local radio journalist, Said Abdelkarim is crucial to spread information. He has worked against FGM since 1995. The new man in the local Ministry of Empowering Women and Families in Logone and Chari, the Departmental Delegate Mahamat Alhadji, has understood how important it is to abandon FGM and to have the women do other kind of income generating work. They need mills or water pumps for agricultural production and hopes that IAWRT can help with this. The FGM-project is a door opener in the area. So far women in 13 villages have stopped the practice. The local women have learnt what FGM does to young girls and women. Mahamat speaks the local language and can talk directly to the women.

Another important person is the traditional leader of this area, Isseini Darkadre, the Blama. He joined last year and is head of 22 villages. If the 57 villages left in the area will join, they can act locally, abandon FGM locally and form a letter to the Parliamentarians for a national law against FGM! No less!

At the Local Government Office, we met the 32 women who have put down the knife to do other kind of work for the community. It is a challenge to have a sustainable income for these women. If not, they might go back to their former traditional work.

We met two women who have declared in the media that they will abstain from this practice, one of them in Madeleine’s film and one in the film that was shown on national television on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (25th November).

The actors who will perform a play on 8th March next year were also present. They are already practicing twice a week. The play will be in the local language and will be touring the area.

After having seen the actors in Yaounde taking part in the official opening of the week of actions against Violence against Women, we are very excited about what “our” theatre group will do!

Thanks to Madeleine and Olivia for what they are doing for the local women and for us in IAWRT and FOKUS to eradicate FGM in the area!
Beauty of the Unknown  
By Racheal Nakitare

The FGM project under the implementation of Madeleine and Olivia in Cameroon is one of the project IAWRT’s board and Fokus can close their eyes and passionately discuss in its entirety. When I was nominated by the board to accompany the Fokus evaluation team to Kousseri on the heels of the regional conference held in Younde in November 2010, I quietly envisaged a short holiday in the countryside. To say the very least, it was my Christmas treat come a little early.

Kirsten, Wenche, Solveig (Norway), Madeleine, Olivia (Cameroon) and I (Kenya) set off at 7am for Yaounde/Nsimalen airport in time for the 9.00am flight. We arrived in Garoua at 11am having sojourned to drop off some passengers. “That was swift” I thought to myself as we made our way to the waiting cars. My assumption was that Kousseri was within vicinity of maroua. We set of for Kousseri at 2pm after a sumptuous lunch at the most prestigious hotel in town. If I have traveled on roads with potholes, then I had the opportunity to sample the manholes. The roads are in bad shape but at his point, the anxiety and excitement of the smell of fresh countryside were motivating. I decided that the only way I could possibly ignore the high speed is by taking a nap. Not for long. Our vehicle had a puncture and when the driver (Ahmed) changed the tire, he realized that the spare wheel did not have pressure. It had an even bigger puncture. He rode on a motorcycle to the nearest shopping centre, which was 40kms away. By the time we were ready to go, we had lost three hours let alone the driver’s sky blue kanzu that had acquired a brown color. I could tell, from his speed, that the driver was determined to arrived before darkness set in. I took refuge in my nap once more. I wish something else woke me up this time, but alas! It was another tire bust. We had a better spare wheel this time but unfortunately, it was getting dark. Ahmed had stopped worrying about his light blue agbada suit and was flat on the ground within no time. No sooner had he pulled out the jerk than a land rover full of armed security arrived.

After short interaction with Madeleine, we were bundled on top of the landrover with all our belongings. We hurried ourselves at the centre while the police patrol (BIIR) stood on alert with arms pointed outwards. I did not understand a single Arabic word but one thing was for sure. They were on security alert. Nothing really went through my mind even as Solveig murmured something about how dangerous it was to hang on an open landraver at night. Madeleine and Olivia said nothing to explain the speedy actions. It was only after we safely arrived at the hotel that they narrated the frightening tales of banditry in the area. My mind quickly ran back home to the north eastern part of Kenya where we hear about the horrific tales of banditry and pirates along the Indian ocean. I could not help but wonder what could have happened if the patrol team did not arrive when they did. That is where my appreciation for Madeleine and Olivia’s work started. When I asked them why they had to put their lives on the line, they narrated even more scary incidences and longer trips they had made using the railway line all the time they visited the project area.

Soon all the fears and worries were relegated to the back when we met the happy and lively faces of over 100 women and girls who have sworn to end FGM. Speaking through interpreters, the jovial faces lit with determination and optimism for the future of the women in this remote part of the Cameroon. Madeleine and Olivia use different interventions which include Madrassa classes, theatre and drama by and for the youth, religious leadership as well as provincial administration to sensitize the community on the ill effects of FGM and the necessity to stop it” said Madeline." The practice of FGM in the Arab Choa community has been of concern for a long time, because of the attendant health hazards and human rights infringement involved.” IAWRT organized a series of sensitization workshops in Kousseri and its environs since 2006 and continue to collaborate with like-minded organizations and partners in eradicating the practice.
www.iawrt.org

By Mimi Ricamunda

The last day (November 28) of the Cameroon Meeting was a workshop on organizational matters including a brief training on the use of IAWRT website—www.iawrt.org. Mimi Ricamunda, the Program and Communication Officer of the IAWRT Secretariat facilitated this training and were participated by Chapter Heads and some members of the Cameroon and Norway Chapters.

Aside from navigating through the contents and features that are available on the website and training on how it can be maximized as an information sharing and networking tool, it was also intended to generate support from members in keeping the website updated and alive, particularly the Chapter and Member sections.

The following were plans for immediate implementation by the Secretariat along with other suggestions raised during the workshop:

- Issuance of new access codes that will enable members to access the database and other resources on the web
- Regular email alert to members each time there’s a new posting, having a link to the article that will trigger visit to the website
- Updating of Members’ Database and Profile
- Posting of an application form with corresponding guidelines
- Coming out of a website protocol that will set guidelines and standards on postings on the web
- Conceptualizing on creating a good organizational image on the web that will be attractive enough for the prospective donors
- Installing facility for video streaming, particularly the IAWRT productions

Mimi had to schedule individual hands-on sessions during breaks with some Chapter Heads, as there is so much to discuss at a very limited time.

Master-level – Study in Mass Communication & Journalism Fuels Efficiency

I am fortunate to be awarded scholarship from IAWRT for my master degree in Mass Communication and Journalism in 2008. I have recently completed my two-year master course from Kantipur City College, Kathmandu. As soon as I joined the Master class, my approach towards my media-work began to change in a very positive way. The importance of my job towards the society, citizens, humans and the Nation became clearer in vision and realistic in practice. I entered the MA class as a woman engaged in a Television station in Kathmandu and I came out of it as a media person professionally skilled and dedicated to the cause of television journalism in the country. I could gradually feel the significant difference that emerged in my performance through the MA - study.

During my study, I got many opportunities of workshops and trainings abroad, not just because of my experience or as a woman candidate but also as a student of Mass Communication and Journalism. After my MA study, I was given added professional responsibility with due recognition - In charge of Image News Fm 103.6, the only 24-hour News Station in the country besides my job as executive producer in Image Channel Television. Both responsibilities are rare for women in Nepal. I acquired the much-coveted certificate of appreciation for my excellent performance in my job. I got proposals to teach in colleges of media including the one where I studied and did teach in WLC College. In fact, I believe the MA study in MAMCI has given me a professional vision and journalistic tools to practice as a responsible media person dedicated to the cause of TV journalism. Thanks to IAWRT!

ANNOUNCEMENT!

By Anupa Shrestha

ANNOUNCEMENT!
The following summarizes the **2010 Year-end Reports** of the current IAWRT Chapters

Including the challenges that confront them and their recommendations to the Board:

Full reports are available on the chapter section of the web [http://www.iawrt.org/regionalchapters](http://www.iawrt.org/regionalchapters).

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<th>Chapter</th>
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<th>Chapter Head</th>
<th>Challenges/Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cameroon (10 members)</strong></td>
<td>10 members</td>
<td>Olivia Tumanjong</td>
<td>Cameroon has gone through government registration and organizational setting-up. The challenges confronting the Chapter are sustaining and strengthening its established partnership with CRTV, Media Women for Peace and UN System in Cameroon; membership recruitment and production information materials for awareness and education of issues at the local level.</td>
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<td><strong>India (59)</strong></td>
<td>59 members</td>
<td>Jai Chandiram</td>
<td>India Chapter constituted the biggest membership in Asia. It is now busy with its preparations for the coming 7th IAWRT Asian Women’s Festival on March 7-8, 2011 in India. It is challenged to raise funds to support the activities of the chapter and would like to initiate debates on topics relevant to IAWRT among members on the website.</td>
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<td><strong>Kenya (55)</strong></td>
<td>55 members</td>
<td>Racheal Nakitare</td>
<td>Kenya Chapter comprised the biggest membership in Africa. M. Wambria and M. Onyango availed of the 2010 IAWRT Scholarship to pursue their studies in media. Documentary production grants has been awarded to J. Wareta and Company (vidéo) and T. Nabusoba (radio). The biggest challenge facing the chapter is the lack of office space, which would lend credibility to the organization especially when approaching partners for support. There is also a need for continuous engagement of members through activities, which has not been forth coming due to lack of funds.</td>
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<td><strong>Moldova (12)</strong></td>
<td>12 members</td>
<td>Alina Radu</td>
<td>A member of the Moldova Chapter has been selected to produce a short documentary film, “To kill or to be killed”. As a young chapter, its challenge is on membership recruitment and financial sustainability. Sourcing funds to support the bright project ideas of the Chapter. Another challenge confronting the Chapter is political instability in Moldova.</td>
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<td><strong>Nepal (22)</strong></td>
<td>22 members</td>
<td>Bandana Rana</td>
<td>At the local level, Nepal Chapter is making impact with decision makers in TV stations in Nepal while it is creating significant participation in global meetings, i.e., CSW Annual Meetings. Its challenges are to have its own office space as it is currently lodged at SAATHI, collection of membership dues and updating of membership records.</td>
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<td><strong>Norway (35)</strong></td>
<td>35 members</td>
<td>Gerd Inger Polden</td>
<td>Norway is among the well established and organized chapter endowed with funding from Fokus and support from NRK by providing office, access to facilities and travel funds to current NRK employees who are members of IAWRT. The Norwegian Chapter plays important role in liaising with Fokus pertaining to IAWRT project, “Support to Media Women in the South”. The only challenge is organizing more activities that will create more visibility for the Chapter.</td>
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<td><strong>Philippines (15)</strong></td>
<td>15 members</td>
<td>Elizabeth Roxas</td>
<td>The Philippines Chapter has undergone organizational complexities and has been on for reviving its membership. Having a new set of elected Board, it is challenged to beef up its membership with regional representation rather than focusing the recruitment in Manila. The Chapter Members are welcome to use the IAWRT Secretariat office and use of its facilities for IAWRT related activities. Successfully co-hosted/ organized the Regional Meeting and Advocacy Workshop in Manila.</td>
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<td><strong>South Africa (18)</strong></td>
<td>18 members</td>
<td>Linda Daniels</td>
<td>Women’s voices in all aspects of story telling and creating the spaces for women storytellers to have access to training considering that the film industry in SA remains male dominated and expensive. It is also challenged in provoking debates and discussions around the themes in the films that they produce.</td>
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<td><strong>Tanzania (12)</strong></td>
<td>12 members</td>
<td>Rose Haji Mwalimu</td>
<td>Installed in November 2009, Tanzania Chapter is still struggling with having the Chapter registered with own bank account necessary in raising funds. It has no office and is temporarily housed by the MISA-TAN providing its overhead without any official arrangements. Current programs and activities are implemented through partnerships and joint ventures with other organizations. Current challenge is to set up and maintain adequate administrative arrangements.</td>
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Let's Hear from 2010 IAWRT Scholars

Thanks to IAWRT for giving me a chance to fulfill one of my biggest dreams – pursue my education in Journalism.

With the $3,000 dollar grant, I would be able to start my journey in New Year. A New Year, a new beginning! Thank you so much for making my dream to come true sooner than I expected.

- Rebecca T. Hunde (Ethiopia)

The scholarship has enabled me to study a MA Communications degree at The University of Nairobi – a capacity building that will enable me to contribute more to IAWRT. At my workplace, the master studies would elevate me to a higher grade.

- Maximilla Onyango (Kenya)

May I take this opportunity to thank IAWRT for the scholarship that enables me to enroll in Doctor of Philosophy in Communication Studies. I am covering the following units for the First Semester: Advanced Research Methods; Communication, Law and Society; Theories and Practice of Communication; Communication and Conflict Resolution; Communication and Public Relations; Gender and Communication.

- Mary Wambaria (Kenya)

Thanks for the scholarship. Finally, we shall begin school sometime this January.

- Becky Bissong (Cameroon)

I am very grateful for the scholarship. This scholarship has enabled me to become very creative in producing effective, informative and interactive programs. This will contribute a lot to empowering our communities more effectively through information sharing. I will organize a seminar for MAMA FM producers and presenters as well as UMWA members to train them in creative ways of writing and informing people.

- Sarah Nakibuuka (Uganda)

Editorial Committee
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M. Wambaria; B. Bissong
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Mimi Ricamunda
Layout & Design
Mimi Ricamunda

Feedback Corner

Looks fantastic!!! Thank you for the great job with the newsletter!!!!
- Virginia Mampre, Texas, U.S.A.

What a fabulous newsletter! Best ever. Congratulations to all.
- Frieda Werden, Canada

Congrats! Very nice piece of work.
- Jai Chandiram, India

The IAWRT newsletter is looking lovely, well done to the Secretariat!
- Linda Daniels, South Africa

Watch out . . .

for another exciting media event that IAWRT is mounting for the 55th Annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-55) Meeting!

Engendering Technologies—Women Take Charge

24 February 2011, Thursday, 4:00-5:30 pm
10th Floor Room, Church Center United Nations Building
777 UN Plaza (corner of 44th St. and 1st Ave.), New York
In collaboration with the IAWRT USA Chapter

WELCOME TO IAWRT FOLD

Congrats to the recently approved members and chapter during the November 28, 2010 Board Meeting in Cameroon!!!

Chad: Achtta Saleh Damane; Finland: Kristina Tuura; Malaysia: Monica Phang; Philippines: Estrellita Catarata, Rosa Maria, Feliciano, Lynda Catindig-Garcia, Jola Diones-Mamangun, Olivia Celeste Villafuerte, Solita Virtudazo;
Uganda: Iren Mugisha Birungi, Agness Nantambi, Eunice Nankwangwa, Aisha Nakawooya, Rose Namale, Prossy Nandudu, Stella Teta, Florence Nabukena, Joyce Regala; and

USA Chapter with Arshiya Ahsan as the Head