



People's Communications for Development

Isis International – Manila with
Aalochana Centre for Documentation and Research on Women, India
Civil Media Development Institute, Thailand
FemLINK Pacific: Media Initiatives for Women , Fiji
HELP Resources, Inc., Papua New Guinea



How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools for Grassroots Women's Empowerment



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ABOUT THE COVER

The People's Communications for Development framework values all forms of communication for their specific uses to particular audiences. As such, we chose to represent the images on the cover in three ways: as a digitized new-communication tool, as a photograph, and as a hand-drawn picture. In doing so, we aim to demonstrate the diverse forms of media that constitute "people's communications." Their representation in various combinations, but always side by side, shows their integrated, non-hierarchical positioning amongst one another.

Image on the back cover courtesy of the documentary *Making a Difference*, directed by Reena Mohan and produced by Aalochana Centre for Documentation and Research on Women.



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Isis International–Manila reserves the right to edit materials for clarity and brevity to suit the style, design and audience of this book.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-----|--|
| i | Acknowledgments |
| iv | Foreword |
| vi | Preface |
| vii | About the Research Team: Isis & Its Country Partners |
| xi | Asia-Pacific Map |

| | |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 01 | Chapter 1 Introduction |
|----|-------------------------------|

INDIA

Building on Local Forms of Communication

Country map of intermediary groups

| | |
|----|------------------|
| 25 | Chapter 2 |
|----|------------------|

The ICT Environment and Infrastructure

| | |
|----|------------------|
| 53 | Chapter 3 |
|----|------------------|

How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools
for Grassroots Women's Empowerment

| | |
|----|------------------|
| 79 | Chapter 4 |
|----|------------------|

How Intermediary Groups View Empowerment and
Communication Tools

| | |
|-----|------------------|
| 105 | Chapter 5 |
|-----|------------------|

How Grassroots Women View Communication Tools
& Empowerment

| | |
|-----|------------------|
| 115 | Chapter 6 |
|-----|------------------|

India Syntheses

PHILIPPINES

Communication Tools as Social Binders in Public and Private Spheres

Country map of intermediary groups

125 **Chapter 7**

The ICT Environment and Infrastructure

151 **Chapter 8**

How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools
for Grassroots Women's Empowerment

181 **Chapter 9**

How Intermediary Groups View Empowerment and
Communication Tools

207 **Chapter 10**

How Grassroots Women View Communication Tools
and Empowerment

219 **Chapter 11**

Philippines Syntheses

THAILAND

Working for a Voice in the Communications Landscape

Country map of intermediary groups

229 **Chapter 12**

The ICT Environment and Infrastructure

225 **Chapter 13**

How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools
for Grassroots Women's Empowerment

273 **Chapter 14**

How Intermediary Groups View Empowerment and
Communication Tools

297 **Chapter 15**

How Grassroots Women View Communication Tools
and Empowerment

- 307 **Chapter 16**
Thailand Syntheses

FIJI

- Empowering Information In Everyday Lives**
Country map of intermediary groups
- 317 **Chapter 17**
The ICT Environment and Infrastructure
- 347 **Chapter 18**
How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools
for Grassroots Women's Empowerment
- 357 **Chapter 19**
How Intermediary Groups View Empowerment and
Communication Tools
- 398 **Chapter 20**
How Grassroots Women View Communication Tools
and Empowerment
- 405 **Chapter 21**
Fiji Syntheses

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

- Creating Solidarity Among Distant Communities**
Country map of intermediary groups
- 413 **Chapter 22**
The ICT Environment and Infrastructure
- 441 **Chapter 23**
How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools
for Grassroots Women's Empowerment
- 459 **Chapter 24**
How Intermediary Groups View Empowerment and
Communication Tools

| | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 475 | Chapter 25 |
| | Papua New Guinea Syntheses |

COMPARISONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Across Country Comparative Data

| | |
|-----|---|
| 483 | Chapter 26A |
| | The ICT Environment and Infrastructure in 5 Asia-Pacific Countries |
| 492 | Chapter 26B |
| | How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools for Grassroots Women's Empowerment in 5 Asia-Pacific Countries |
| 530 | Chapter 26C |
| | How Intermediary Groups View Empowerment and Communication Tools in 5 Asia-Pacific Countries |
| 556 | Chapter 26D |
| | How Grassroots Women View Communication Tools and Empowerment in 4 Asia-Pacific Countries |
| 560 | Chapter 27 |
| | Conclusion |
| | A. Summary of Findings |
| | B. Implications on Policies, Programmes and Practices |
| | C. Recommendations |
| | D. The People's Communications for Development (PC4D) Agenda |

APPENDICES

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 575 | A. RRL Outline |
| 576 | B. KII Guide |
| 578 | C. KII Coding Guide |
| 580 | D. FGD Guide |
| 582 | E. Directory of Intermediary Groups |
| 603 | F. Women's Voice transcript |

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INDIA

1. Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (Aali)
2. Allaripu
3. Bailanjo Sad
4. Charkha
5. Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA)
6. Kriti
7. Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghata
8. Majlis
9. Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)
10. Nirantar
11. North East Network
12. Olakh
13. Sakhi
14. Sampark
15. Sanhita
16. Swayam
17. Stree Mukti Sanghatana
18. Vacha
19. Vishakha
20. *Women's Voice*
21. *Tathapi Pune*

PHILIPPINES

1. Antique Development Foundation (ADF)
2. Al-mujadilah Development Foundation
3. Alternative Systems for Community Development Foundation (ASCODE)
4. Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw (Balaod Mindanaw)

- 5.Center for Women's Resources (CWR)
- 6.Forum of Women Advocates for Reforms and Development (FORWARD)
- 7.General Assembly of Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action (GABRIELA)
- 8.Ilocana Development Foundation (IDF)
- 9.Igorota Foundation
- 10.Inang Makababaying Aksyon (IMA) Foundation
- 11.Kanlungan Center Foundation Inc.
- 12.Lihok Pilipina
- 13.Lingap Para Sa Kalusugan Ng Sambayanan (LIKAS)
- 14.Lumah Ma Dilaut (LMD)
- 15.PATAMABA (Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas) or National Network of Informal Workers
- 16.Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA)
- 17.Participatory, Research, Organization of Communities and Education towards Struggle for Self-Reliance (PROCESS) Bohol
- 18.Saligan-Mindanao
- 19.Tagum Cooperative
- 20.Talikala
21. KABALAKA
22. Uswag Development Foundations

THAILAND

- 1.Ammatcharoen Women's Friend Centre
- 2.Centre for Girls
- 3.Centre for Labor Information Service and Training (CLIST)
- 4.Community Theater Project
- 5.Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities
- 6.Empower Foundation
- 7.Fai-In-See Villagers Group
- 8.Friends of Women Foundation
- 9.Foundation For Women
- 10.Northeastern Women's Network
- 11.Operation for the Community and City for Better Living in the Southern Region
Project of the Thai Community Foundation
- 12.Payao Province Woman Network (PWSC)
- 13.Promotion of Women Status Club
- 14.Resource Management for the Southern Coastline Project
- 15.Sunflower Group
- 16.Woman's Studies Center
- 17.Women's Health Advocacy Foundation

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FIJI

1. Ba Senior Citizen Centre (BSCC)
2. Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF)
3. Catholic Women's League (CWL)
4. Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECREA)
5. Fiji Disabled Peoples Association (FDPA)
6. Fiji Human Rights Commission (FHRC)
7. Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprise and Development (FRIEND)
8. Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)
9. Interfaith Search Fiji (IFS)
10. National Council of Women Fiji (NCWF)
11. Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF)
12. Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO)
13. Poor Relief Society (PRS)
14. Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT)
15. Women's Action for Change (WAC)
16. Women's Information Network (WINET)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1. Baua Baua Popular Theatre
2. Community Development Initiative Foundation
3. HELP Resources
4. Kup Women for Peace (KWP)
5. Lae Catholic Family Life
6. Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA)
7. Meri I Kirap Sapotim (MIKS)
8. National Catholic Family Life Apostolate (NCFLA)
9. Women and Children's Support Centre

Our apologies to the people and organisations that we may have failed to mention, but who, in one way or another, have contributed to the completion of this research.

Finally, we acknowledge the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). IDRC not only provided financial assistance but valuable insights as well throughout the three year period of this study.

FOREWORD

People's Communications for Development is a groundbreaking study that challenges the notion that access to new information and communication technologies (ICTs) will lead to the empowerment of women. This notion is axiomatic in the international development community, which subscribes to the idea that ICTs will enhance the pace of development and even lead to the empowerment of the poor and the marginalised. It has been pointed out time and again that there is a wide gender gap in the access to these ICTs. Much attention has therefore been given to bridging this "gender digital divide." Women are organising on many different levels, in their own organizations and within development communication organisations, to ensure that women have access to and benefit from ICTs.

Isis International is one of the organisations that have played a significant role in promoting the use of ICTs among women's and other social movement organisations, especially among those working with grassroots and marginalised people. It contributes to this task in many ways, from participation in policy discussions, to critical analysis of corporate control of ICTs, to capacity building and training for grassroots and intermediary organisations in the use of communication technologies.

At the same time, Isis International is also questioning the primacy of ICTs as the best medium, always and everywhere, of communication for development. This critical stance follows Isis International's solid tradition of questioning the unquestionable in the realm of development and communications, whether it is the concept of "integrating women in development" or "mainstreaming gender" or basic assumptions about development media and communications.

This study on People's Communications for Development (PC4D) builds on much previous work of Isis International. As early as 1985, the editors of the Isis International publication *Women and Media, Analysis, Alternatives and Action*, Bina Agarwal and Kamla Bhasin, admonished us not to lose sight of the fact that people, not technology, are the main medium of communication. And in 1986, Isis International brought together,

in the book *Powerful Images*, articles and resources from women worldwide, including women from the grassroots, in creating our own alternative communication media for empowerment. The Women Empowering Communication Conference (WEC), co-sponsored by Isis International, the International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC) and the World Association for Christian Communication (WAAC), held in Bangkok in 1994, brought together over 400 women from communication organisations to share their views and experiences not only on how communication can empower women, but also on how women are empowering communication. At this conference, women also examined how mainstream media are used as tools by those in power. Since then, Isis International-Manila has deepened its critical analysis of corporatised media and ICTs, particularly at the World Social Forums.

This publication represents a new and major step by Isis International in the exploration and critical analysis of issues relating to women, communication and ICTs. It is the culmination of a three-year, five-country collaborative study conducted by Isis International-Manila with Aalochana Centre for Documentation and Research on Women of India, Civil Media Development Institute (CMDI) of Thailand, the FemLINK Pacific: Media Initiatives for Women (FemLINK Pacific) of Fiji, and Health, Education, sustainable Livelihood and Participation for all (HELP Resource, Inc.) of Papua New Guinea. It examines how intermediary groups use new ICTs and traditional communication tools for grassroots women's empowerment, how grassroots women understand empowerment, as well as their views of the effectiveness of different communications tools.

As a result of this study, the five collaborating groups are proposing a People's Communications for Development (PC4D) agenda. Isis International will contribute to carrying forward this agenda in the future, including through popularising these research results and organizing a People's Communication for Development Conference.

As one of the founders of Isis International in 1974, I express my gratitude and admiration for the new generation of Isis women who are forging new pathways and creating new knowledge as they continue to promote women's communication and empowerment.

Marilee Karl
Co-founder
Isis International - Manila

November 2007

PREFACE

PC4D ~ *People's Communications for Development* is an important outcome of the three-year study surfaced through participatory research amongst 81 organised groups from the Asia-Pacific region.

PC4D expresses the right to communicate both as an essential element in the consolidation of democracy and as an indispensable aspect of citizen participation in public life. At the same time, the PC4D overall framework interrogates both why and how we engage in development.

In the context of democratisation, the current study ***“People's Communications for Development ~ PC4D: How intermediary groups use communication tools for grassroots women's empowerment”*** documents feminist contributions to media and pluralism discourses. It has contributed to redefining how communication is practised and conveyed by development organisations and practitioners working with marginalised communities as well as to the surfacing of excluded voices.

The PC4D addresses this need by providing data and statistics from key informant interviews with intermediary groups regarding effective communication tools used, as well as by offering anecdotal evidence that allows for an exploration of the particular ways in which these tools of communications are used for development and women's empowerment.

In the context of development, PC4D redefines and challenges the notion of ICT4D ~ ICT for Development. In contrast to the ICT4D approach, the PC4D approach involves moving from a tool-centric focus on development to one that acknowledges the centrality of citizenship in matters relating to the media and communication, and takes into account the different ways in which citizens, especially women, receive and make meaning from media messages.

Working on the belief that innovative communication processes are critical to the development of poor and marginalised communities, this five-country research study provides alternative ways of bridging the gap between activists and grassroots communities that they work with.

The PC4D framework is at once both simple and complex. Its power lies in that fact that it is simultaneously ordinary and revolutionary. On the one hand, it is common sense to declare the centrality of the people in the process of development, and on the other hand, it represents the radical transformative potential of development and equality. In addition, placing communication and citizenship at the center of our analysis acknowledges the changing economic and political context characterised by the re-shaping of national boundaries, and the increased integration and formation of economic blocs, such as the EU, ASEAN, and Pacific Islands Forum.

We at Isis, together with our research partners, hope that this book will contribute to strengthening the capacity of communication specialists, development workers, aid agencies, non-profit organisations and grassroots communities to use PC4D concepts in order to improve the lives of those who have long been excluded.

In solidarity,

Raijeli Nicole
Executive Director
Isis International-Manila

October 2007

ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM: ISIS & ITS COUNTRY PARTNERS

ISIS INTERNATIONAL-MANILA

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Isis International-Manila is a thirty three-year old feminist development communication organisation, that believes in the importance of women's access and control of information and communication tools as both a strategy and measure for empowerment. Over the last few years, the organisation began the process of critiquing the communication tools and strategies used by intermediary groups, and the development community in general. This process was directed towards a better understanding of the most effective means for popularising and promoting individual and collective agency for engendered social change.

In the year 2000 – 2001, Isis-Manila embarked on a research project that looked at women-oriented intermediary groups' use of new ICTs. This study revealed that new ICTs were basically used for administrative purposes rather than as direct vehicles for advocacy. In addition, new ICTs were found to be limited in scope and reach, catering primarily to urban communities, and generally exclusionary in character rather than being socially inclusive. It was from these premises that this study entitled People's Communications for Development (PC4D) was born.

AALOCHANA CENTRE FOR DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH ON WOMEN

PUNE, INDIA

Aalochana means critical review. The organisation is Pune's premier women's documentation and research centre. It was founded by a group of five feminists who are very

active in women's movements. The Centre creates a women's information hub by providing a variety of resources and information at one place. Aalochana's vision is to work towards the creation of a gendered, just and democratic society, based on equality and freedom for all castes and classes. For achieving this, Aalochana has committed to the creation of awareness amongst women about their rights and what they can do to change their lives. The organisation's goals include systematically collecting and providing information on issues related to social, economic, political, legal as well as personal aspects of women's lives, disseminating the results of research and documentation through pamphlets, booklets, films, slides, lectures, seminars and workshops, and providing a congenial forum where activists, researchers, students, journalists and others can meet and discuss matters of common concern.

CIVIL MEDIA DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (CMDI)

BANGKOK, THAILAND

CMDI is one of the three institutes under Civicnet Thailand Foundation, which was established in 1997 with the main purpose of promoting civil society in Thailand through training and a variety of interactive activities, including media of various kinds and levels as well as social movements. Civicnet Thailand Foundation strongly believes in democratic dialogue and the significance of "public space," both physical and via radio waves, for promoting civil spirit and involvement, civil interactions and participation in public issues. Most of all, Civicnet aims to strengthen civil politics in order to balance the representative political system. CMDI runs capacity-building activities on community radio, promotes broadcasting and media reform, conducts research on community self-management, and engages in media monitoring and media literacy.

FEMLINK PACIFIC: MEDIA INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN

SUVA, FIJI

FemLINK is a Fiji-based women's non-profit community media organisation that exists to empower women and communities by giving them a voice to fully participate in decision-making spaces for equality, development and peace. Strategies employed by the organisation are two-fold. Direct interventions employed for its beneficiaries (all women in Fiji, with a particular emphasis on young women, women with disabilities, and women who are 'under-served') include the development, production and distribution of appropriate media and communication materials. FemLINK also works in collaboration with civil society organisations, mainstream media, and relevant government agencies under its policy advocacy component where it lobbies for gender policies and planning.

FemLINK Pacific was born out of the Peace Vigil, following the civil coup in May 2000,

and was formally established in September 2000. The focus of FemLINK Pacific's range of community media initiatives is "women speaking to women for peace." It was inspired by the women who have led the way in Fiji's women's movement and motivated by Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action (Women and Media) and was further strengthened by the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, titled Women, Peace and Security.

HELP RESOURCES, INC.

WEWAK, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HELP stands for Health, Education, sustainable Livelihood and Participation for all. HELP Resources is a non-government development organisation delivering information, communication and training services. The group works with individuals, organisations and networks to support mass education, promote equal participation and self-reliance to support empowerment of communities, providing priority to women and rural people. Their goals are to strengthen networks, build capacity, and increase opportunities of women and men working for social and economic development especially in the areas of Gender and Human Rights, Sexual Health, Citizens' Education for Good Governance, Food Security, Sustainable Livelihood and Community Mobilisation and Management.

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Pretchie Obja-an

Janice Lopez

Mayang Taldo

Elizabeth Conlan

Mari Santiago



A map of South and Southeast Asia. A thick black line with tick marks runs diagonally from the top left (India) to the bottom right (Thailand). Two callout boxes are connected to this line by black lines. The first callout box points to a black dot on the western coast of India. The second callout box points to a black dot in central Thailand. A third black dot is visible on the eastern coast of Thailand, but it is not connected to a callout box.

INDIA

1. Aali
2. Allaripu
3. Bailanjo Sad
4. Charkha
5. CREA
6. Kriti
7. Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghtana

8. Majlis
9. Masum
10. Nirantar
11. North East Network
12. Olakh
13. Sakhi
14. Sampark
15. Sanhita

16. Swayam
17. Stree Mukti Sanghatana
18. Vacha
19. Vishakha

THAILAND

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6. Empower Foundation
7. Fai-In-See Villagers Group
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10. Northeastern Women's Network

11. Operation for the Community and City for Better Living in the Southern Region Project of the Thai Community Foundation
12. Payao Province Woman Network
13. Promotion of Women Status Club
14. Resource Management for the Southern Coastline Project
15. Sunflower Group
16. Woman's Studies Center
17. Women's Health Advocacy Foundation

PHILIPPINES

1. Antique Development Foundation
2. Al-mujadilah Development Foundation
3. ASCODE
4. Balaod Mindanaw
5. Center for Women's Resources
6. FORWARD
7. GABRIELA
8. Ilocana Development Foundation
9. Igorota Foundation
10. Inang Makababaying Aksyon Foundation
11. Kanlungan Center Foundation Inc
12. Lihok Pilipina LIKAS
13. Lumah Ma Dilaut
14. PATAMABA
15. PETA
16. PROCESS-Bohol
17. Saligan-Mindanaw
18. Tagum Cooperative
19. Talikala

FIJI

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3. Catholic Women's League
4. Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy
5. Fiji Disabled Peoples Association
6. Fiji Human Rights Commission
7. Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprise and Development
8. Fiji Women's Rights Movement
9. Interfaith Search Fiji
10. National Council of Women Fiji
11. Partners in Community Development Fiji
12. Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
13. Poor Relief Society
14. Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team
15. Women's Action for Change
16. Women's Information Network

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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2. Community Development Initiative Foundation
3. HELP Resources
4. Kup Women for Peace
5. Lae Catholic Family Life
6. Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency
7. Meri I Kirap Sapotim
8. National Catholic Family Life Apostolate
9. Women and Children's Support Centre

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The introduction of new information and communication technologies, or “new ICTs,” into the gender and development framework is based on the notion that access and effective use of these technologies will lead to women’s empowerment and development for all. Though this new ICT-centric framework of development has been the subject of debates and discussions, many ICT-focused development projects have already been implemented on the ground. Despite lack of data to support the above claim, these project interventions privilege new ICTs over traditional communication tools long used by intermediary groups in effecting change with grassroots communities. It is in the context of interrogating the ICT-centric development framework that **Isis International-Manila** proposed a study to determine the most effective communication tools used by intermediary groups in reaching grassroots women.

With the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Isis International Manila conducted a three-year study in collaboration with Aalochana Centre for Documentation and Research on Women (**AALOCHANA**) of India, The Civil Media Development Institute (**CMDI**) of Thailand, FemLINK Pacific: Media Initiatives for Women (**FemLINK Pacific**) of Fiji, and Health, Education, sustainable Livelihood and Participation for all, (**HELP Resources, Inc.**) of Papua New Guinea. Isis and its partner organisations examined how intermediary groups use new ICTs and traditional communication tools for grassroots women’s empowerment in five Asia-Pacific countries: India, Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea. Using an applied qualitative research framework, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with intermediary groups was the primary data-gathering

method utilised. This was supplemented by a Review of Related Literature (RRL) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with grassroots women.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In 2001, Isis International-Manila together with its Asian Women's Resource Exchange (AWORC) partners, conducted a research project entitled, "An Exploratory Study on the Use of ICTs by Women's Organisations in Asia". This study was subsequently published in a book entitled, "NGO_Women@asia.net" in 2002. The research objectives were twofold: first, to generate a set of baseline data in order to contextualise the environment surrounding women's access and utilisation of ICTs; and second, to collect data from a sample survey of women's organisations on their use of ICTs in an office setting. The research outcome highlighted several important findings on the level of ICT use among women's groups in seven countries in Asia, namely India, Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia, and a glimpse of how these new technologies will be further utilised in the future. First, the study revealed the urban bias of the nature of ICT access and use, catering mostly to urban-based women's groups. Second, it was also discovered that there appears to be limited access and under-utilisation of the technology due to inadequate technical skills. Third, results also showed that a large number of groups have been excluded because of their non-usage of the English language and their lack of resources to maintain the technology.

Three years after the initial research project was completed, Isis International-Manila recognised that these findings represent only a fraction of women's information and communication concerns in relation to new ICTs in the context of the global South. Furthermore, the research could not conclude that access and utilisation of new ICTs leads to women's empowerment. Since then, more fundamental issues on the ICT framework for development have emerged in various fora; among them, the NGO Gender Strategies Working Group (NGO GSWG) Meetings and Gender Caucuses (GC) leading to the WSIS or the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in 2003; parallel meetings by Isis and its partners during the UN CSW or Commission on the Status of Women Meeting in New York in 2003; the Empowerment of Women in the Global South through Information and Communication Conference and Workshops in Vienna in 2003; and, the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2003. In these discussions, the analysis on the Gender and ICT framework was not limited to women's effective use and access of new technology. It also examined the macro level issues of globalised corporate ownership, control, and monopoly of new ICTs and the political economy of ICT systems and structures. These discussions brought in new perspectives into the gender and ICT debate.

On the ground, new ICTs were being introduced into the development process both as a tool and as a benchmark of women's development in many countries in the global South. The assumption is that access to new ICTs will accelerate development through women's integration into the global market economy. This assumption fuelled many development projects aimed at equipping women and girls with the information, skills, and technology needed to ensure their full participation in the emerging "information society".

Isis and other feminist information and communication organisations have pinpointed that many of these ICT project interventions have been operationalised despite lack of evidence to support the claim that new ICTs lead to development. Data establishing the need for and relevance of community-based ICT projects for women in general and grassroots women in particular are lacking. As such, there remains a critical gap regarding information on the impact of new technologies on changing social relations, particularly on how new ICTs empower grassroots women. To address this gap, this research project looks at how intermediary groups view new ICTs and how they have utilised new technologies for grassroots women's empowerment. In addition, this study asks grassroots women themselves how they view empowerment and new ICTs and how the work of intermediary groups have made an impact in their lives.

As we examine the use of new ICTs in development work, we acknowledge the use of traditional communication tools as well. Before the advent of new ICTs, intermediary groups have long been utilising traditional communication tools for effecting change in grassroots communities. Popular theatre, print media, radio, TV, film, and oral communication have been among the tools through which information for grassroots women's empowerment has been transmitted. Has the emergence of new ICTs affected the way in which intermediary groups use these traditional communication tools in reaching grassroots women? Are new ICTs perceived as more effective and more empowering compared to traditional communication tools?

Many intermediary groups, including non-government organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), and people's organisations (POs) find new ICTs effective for their international, regional and national advocacy and networking activities. However, the utility of new ICTs in interacting with communities particularly grassroots women is a question. Many intermediary groups continue to rely on traditional communication tools such as theatre, film, and radio to reach grassroots women. As such, traditional communication tools appear to be the vehicles of grassroots women's empowerment in the development work of intermediary groups. To address questions on the effectiveness and empowering potential of new ICTs vis-à-vis traditional communication tools, this research project examines how intermediary groups use communication tools in general. Hence, this study attempts to determine the most effective and most empowering communication tools used by intermediary groups for interacting with grassroots women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to know how intermediary groups use new ICTs and traditional communication tools in interacting with grassroots women. In addition, this study aims to determine the most effective communication tools for grassroots women's empowerment in 5 Asia-Pacific countries, namely, India, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea.

The study has four specific objectives:

1. To generate updated information on the communication tools environment and infrastructure in each of the 5 countries, including economic, political, and social/cultural factors related to the use of new ICTs and traditional communication tools by intermediary groups;
2. To derive data on the usage, accessibility, and effectiveness of new ICTs and traditional communication tools in the work of intermediary groups interacting with grassroots women in each of the 5 countries;
3. To determine the meaning of empowerment, empowering information, and empowering communication tools for intermediary groups in each of the 5 countries; and,
4. To know the experiences and views of grassroots women on how selected intermediary groups use communication tools for women's empowerment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This applied qualitative research used the Key Informant Interview or KII as the primary data-gathering method for determining how intermediary groups use new ICTs and traditional communication tools in interacting with grassroots women. A total of 81 intermediary groups from the five Asia-Pacific countries, namely India, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea, were purposively selected and interviewed. Content analysis and thematic analysis were conducted on the interview transcripts. To supplement the KII, A Review of Related Literature or RRL was also carried out to situate the KII results within the larger country context.

Finally, one intermediary group was selected among the organisations interviewed in each country. A Focus Group Discussion or FGD was then conducted with a group of grassroots women from the selected intermediary group's constituency or target communities. A total of four FGDs were done to validate and complement the KIIs; one in India, one in the Philippines, one in Thailand, and one in Fiji.

For presentation purposes, the research methodology will be outlined in the following order: [1] the Research Work Plan from 2005 to 2007; [2] conducting the Review of Related

Literature; [3] conducting the Key Informant Interviews; and, [4] conducting the Focus Group Discussion. The discussion for each data-gathering method includes the sampling or selection process, the actual procedure, and the data analysis.

THE RESEARCH WORK PLAN 2005-2007

This three-year project commenced in January 2005 with the organising of the Isis research team and negotiations with the country partner organisations. HELP of Papua New Guinea and FemLINK Pacific of Fiji joined the project in January; Aalochana of India entered the project in February; and, CMDI of Thailand in May. Each country partner organisation was represented by its focal point persons: Simrita Gopal Singh for Aalochana, Uajit Virojtrairatt for CMDI, Sharon Bhagwan Rolls for FemLINK Pacific, and Elizabeth Cox for HELP. Isis served as the focal point for the Philippines. The Isis research team from January 2005 to July 2006 was headed by Dr. Lourdes Muldong-Portus.

October 2004 to July 2006. After preparatory work from October 2004 to April 2005, the Isis research team and the country partner organisations came together for the first time in a framework and planning meeting in May 2005. This meeting established the methodology for the study, systems of working, and the research work plan. Isis and the country partners agreed to each conduct an RRL, KIIs with 20 intermediary groups, a case study of one intermediary group, and an FGD with the different intermediary groups interviewed.

An RRL outline and RRL guidelines was prepared by Dr. Portus and the Isis research team. Subsequently, Isis and the country partners conducted secondary data analysis for the RRL and a Country Profile from June 2005 to June 2006. A set of KII instruments which included a KII guide, an organisational profile form, a personal information sheet, and KII guidelines, were also developed by Dr. Portus and the Isis research team. Isis and the country partners conducted the KIIs across the 5 countries from June 2005 to December 2006.

May to December 2006. A mid-term assessment and planning meeting between the Isis research team and the country partner organisations took place in May 2006. Around this time, the entire Isis research team changed in composition. In August 2006, Dr. Mira Alexis P. Ofreneo took over the position of head researcher and subsequently directed the new Isis research team from August 2006 to November 2007. The mid-term assessment together with the change in composition of the Isis research team resulted in a revised research work plan. Among the major changes in the project design and methodology was the revision of the RRL outline, the integration of the case study and the FGD into one method, and the inclusion of grassroots women as the FGD participants.

Consequently, the new Isis research team took on the task of conducting an additional search of literature in accordance with the revised RRL outline and consolidating this with the preliminary RRL from August until December 2006. At this time, the country partners continued with running the KIIs until the end of 2006. The Isis research team also took on the task of analysing the KII data for all 5 countries to facilitate the systematic analysis of the data. Data analysis progressed from November 2006 to October 2007.

January to November 2007. While analysing the KII data, the Isis research team developed the protocol for conducting the FGD with grassroots women. Using the constructed FGD guide, Isis conducted the pilot FGD with the Philippines in March 2007. After a successful pilot, the video documentation and FGD transcript was sent to the country partners for replication. Aalochana, CMDI, and FemLINK conducted their FGDs in April 2007. The Isis research team did the story narrative of the FGDs in June and July 2007.

To arrive at a coherent and cohesive research report, the Isis team took on the research writing process from August to October 2007. After the analyses of the KII data were completed by October 2007, the draft research results were sent for validation to all country partners. The KII, RRL and FGD results were then consolidated and synthesised. The Isis team discussed the implications of the research results and drafted the conclusions and recommendations. Isis and the country partners then met for a final validation and project end meeting in November 2007. The syntheses of the results and the initial draft of implications were discussed. At the end, Isis and the country partners evolved a final set of recommendations and a proposed agenda for action from the research findings.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The RRL was a supplementary method to the KII with intermediary groups. The RRL answered the first research objective.

Research Objective 1. To generate updated information on the communication tools environment and infrastructure in each of the 5 countries, including economic, political, and social/cultural factors related to the use of new ICTs and traditional communication tools by intermediary groups.

Procedure. Using the RRL outline and RRL guidelines prepared by Dr. Portus, Isis and the country partners did a preliminary RRL and a country profile from December 2005 to June 2006. These preliminary RRLs and country profiles were then submitted to Dr. Portus for consolidation. The RRL outline was subsequently revised in August 2006. Using the final RRL outline developed by Dr. Ofreneo, the Isis research team conducted further secondary research and undertook the writing of the RRL based on the preliminary RRL from the country partners and the additional survey of literature. This was done from August to December 2006. The RRL for each country underwent a series of validation

with each country partner and was further revised, refined, and updated from January to November 2007. The RRL was discussed with the country partners at the project end in November 2007. The RRL appears as the first chapter of each country section in this book “**The ICT Environment and Infrastructure**”. The syntheses of the RRL across the 5 countries is presented in Chapter 26.

RRL Outline. The final RRL outline was developed by Dr. Ofreneo and the Isis research team. The RRL was divided into three general sections: [1] access/usage, control/participation, and gender-specific data on each communication tool (see list below); [2] economic, political, and social/cultural factors affecting the access and control of communication tools; and, [3] the use of communication tools by social movements or civil society organisations. For the complete **RRL Outline**, see Appendix A.

Communication tools referred to traditional communication tools and new ICTs. Traditional communication tools included publications, audiovisuals, performing arts and popular theatre, telecommunication, other print materials, radio, television, and indigenous and traditional channels. New ICTs included computers, cellular phones, internet technology, and digital technology.

Limitations. As a major limitation of this study, it should be noted that the literature cited in the RRL dates from year 2005 and as such may not cover recent events and changes in the country contexts. In addition, the major revisions made in the RRL outline together with the changes in the work plan and the composition of the Isis research team made the consolidation of the RRL extremely difficult. These limitations will be elaborated in the section on “Scope and Limitations”. Despite these, efforts were made to further update the RRL by including literature from 2006 and 2007. As a supplementary method, it should be noted that the RRL aims to give a general background of the country context and not an exhaustive account of all information related to or that may affect communication tools, intermediary groups, and grassroots women’s empowerment in each country.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

The KII with intermediary groups was the primary data-gathering method of this study. The KII corresponded to the second and third research objectives.

Research Objective 2. To derive data on the usage, accessibility, and effectiveness of new ICTs and traditional communication tools in the work of intermediary groups interacting with grassroots women in each of the 5 countries.

Research Objective 3. To determine the meaning of empowerment, empowering information, and empowering communication tools for intermediary groups in each of the 5 countries.

Procedure. The KII procedure involved the following steps: [1] development of the KII guide and the criteria for selecting intermediary groups by the Isis research team; [2]

the actual selection of intermediary groups by Isis and the country partners; [3] the actual conduct of interviews with the intermediary groups by Isis and the country partners; and [4] the analysis of the interview transcripts by the Isis research team.

The Isis research team headed by Dr. Portus developed a set of KII instruments including a KII guide, an organisational profile form, a personal information sheet, and guidelines on conducting the KII. The criteria for selecting intermediary groups for the KIIs were as follows: [1] preferably activist-feminist organisations broadly positioned in the anti-globalisation struggle; [2] preferably women and info-com (information and communication) activists and alternative media groups and networks; [3] organisations with substantial info-com work targeting grassroots women as reflected in the organisation's vision and mission statement (may be, but not necessarily, grassroots-based organisations); and, [4] organisations that respond to issues of poverty, education, health, human rights, and other social justice issues. The last two criteria must be met. As such, for intermediary groups to be included in the KIIs, they must include grassroots women among their target groups or communities and they must respond to social issues or be part of the broader social movement or civil society. Twenty (20) intermediary groups were targeted for each country for a total of 100 across the five countries.

Given the qualitative nature of the study and the disparity in the social movement contexts in the five countries, flexibility was adopted in the target quota of 20 intermediary groups. In addition, Isis and the country partners incorporated their own specific criteria for inclusion to the prerequisites above. Isis and the country partners tried to ensure geographical representation as much as possible. The location of the intermediary groups in each country is mapped in the succeeding section on "Scope and Limitations".

Given the large number of women's groups in India, Aalochana decided to focus on women's groups who work specifically with grassroots women. All five regions (Central, North, West, East, and South India) were covered. The country partner purposively included as many women's information and resource centres as possible who cater to grassroots community-based organisations and grassroots women. In areas where women's groups could not be covered, Aalochana decided that info-com groups in Delhi which work in areas like Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Punjab, Haryana, Jammu, and Kashmir and some of the North Eastern states would be chosen. Aalochana interviewed a total of 21 intermediary groups in India. Most of the KIIs were conducted in English with some interspersed with a little of the local language. Two interviews were in Hindi and one in Marathi. The interview utilised the language the interviewee was most comfortable in. The following 19 Indian intermediary groups were included in the final analysis:

1. Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (Aali)
2. Allaripu

3. Bailanjo Sad
4. Charkha
5. Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA)
6. Kriti
7. Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghtana
8. Majlis
9. Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)
10. Nirantar
11. North East Network
12. Olakh
13. Sakhi
14. Sampark
15. Sanhita
16. Swayam
17. Stree Mukti Sanghatana
18. Vacha
19. Vishakha

Women's Voice was interviewed for India, but the interview was not tape-recorded. As such, the group was unfortunately not included in the final analysis. However, we are including the notes based on the interview with **Women's Voice** as Appendix F. Tathapi Pune was also interviewed but was not included in the analysis because of transcription problems.

Geographical representation was the primary criterion incorporated by Isis in its selection of intermediary groups for interview in the Philippines. A total of 22 intermediary groups were interviewed. Out of the 22, 5 are based in the National Capital Region, 5 in Luzon, 5 in Visayas, and 7 in Mindanao. As such, the three major islands were represented. In terms of target sectors, 3 organisations were composed of and served women, 7 targeted women primarily, and 11 were mixed organisations with gender or women's programs. Isis further ensured that women's resource centres as infocom-identified organisations were included. Isis also selected more organisations in Mindanao or the Southern part of the Philippines where issues on peace and security as well as indigenous peoples' concerns are central. Interviews were conducted in a mixture of conversational English and Filipino, which was the language the interviewees were most comfortable in. The following 20 intermediary groups were included in the final analysis:

1. Antique Development Foundation (ADF)
2. Al-mujadilah Development Foundation

3. Alternative Systems for Community Development Foundation (ASCODE)
4. Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw (Balaod Mindanaw)
5. Center for Women's Resources (CWR)
6. Forum of Women Advocates for Reforms and Development (FORWARD)
7. General Assembly of Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action (GABRIELA)
8. Ilocana Development Foundation (IDF)
9. Igorota Foundation
10. Inang Makababaying Aksyon (IMA) Foundation
11. Kanlungan Center Foundation Inc.
12. Lihok Pilipina
13. Lingap Para Sa Kalusugan Ng Sambayanan (LIKAS)
14. Lumah Ma Dilaut (LMD)
15. PATAMABA (Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas) or National Network of Informal Workers
16. Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA)
17. Participatory, Research, Organization of Communities and Education towards Struggle for Self-Reliance (PROCESS) Bohol
18. Saligan-Mindanaw
19. Tagum Cooperative
20. Talikala

KABALAKA and Us汪 Development Foundation were interviewed for the Philippines but were not included in the final analysis because of failure to validate the transcripts.

For Thailand, CMDI ensured geographical representation in selecting intermediary groups apart from the selection criteria. Five organisations were targeted per region: Central, Northern, Northeastern and Southern Thailand. CMDI purposively sampled intermediary groups who are "outstanding" women's NGOs, that is have a good track record working with women. The interviews were conducted in Thai as this was the language the interviewees were comfortable in. CMDI interviewed a total of 17 intermediary groups in Thailand as follows:

1. Ammatcharoen Women's Friend Centre
2. Centre for Girls
3. Centre for Labor Information Service and Training (CLIST)
4. Community Theater Project
5. Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities

6. Empower Foundation
7. Fai-In-See Villagers Group
8. Friends of Women Foundation
9. Foundation For Women
10. Northeastern Women's Network
11. Operation for the Community and City for Better Living in the Southern Region
Project of the Thai Community Foundation
12. Payao Province Woman Network (PWSC)
13. Promotion of Women Status Club
14. Resource Management for the Southern Coastline Project
15. Sunflower Group
16. Woman's Studies Center
17. Women's Health Advocacy Foundation

FemLINK Pacific interviewed 16 intermediary groups in Fiji. For women's groups, FemLINK used the network of two national women's organisations. They also incorporated two women's human rights groups, an "empowerment"-based group, a rural organisation with severe infocom limitations because of its rural status, and a group working with persons with disability, which has "special" infocom needs. Due to constraints and the location of majority of organisations and networks in the capital, FemLINK decided to interview majority of the Suva-based groups. Note though that these Suva-based groups reach outlying areas and islands. As English is the lingua franca of Fiji particularly among NGOs, the interviews were all conducted in English. Some interviews had to be repeated due to unsatisfactory responses and other problems. The 16 intermediary groups interviewed in Fiji are the following:

1. Ba Senior Citizen Centre (BSCC)
2. Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF)
3. Catholic Women's League (CWL)
4. Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECREA)
5. Fiji Disabled Peoples Association (FDPA)
6. Fiji Human Rights Commission (FHRC)
7. Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprise and Development (FRIEND)
8. Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)
9. Interfaith Search Fiji (IFS)
10. National Council of Women Fiji (NCWF)
11. Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF)
12. Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO)
13. Poor Relief Society (PRS)

14. Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT)
15. Women's Action for Change (WAC)
16. Women's Information Network (WINET)

For Papua New Guinea, HELP selected organisations it has worked with as well as organisations who are known for having done excellent work in their respective fields. Despite security concerns and difficulties in transport to the Highlands, Bougainville, and West Papua, HELP ensured that women's organisations from these areas were included. Because of technical difficulties and other problems encountered, HELP had to repeat interviews. The interviews were conducted either in English or Tok Pisin, whichever language was preferred by the respondent organisation. A total of 9 intermediary groups were included for PNG:

1. Baua Baua Popular Theatre
2. Community Development Initiative Foundation
3. HELP Resources
4. Kup Women for Peace (KWP)
5. Lae Catholic Family Life
6. Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA)
7. Meri I Kirap Sapotim (MIKS)
8. National Catholic Family Life Apostolate (NCFLA)
9. Women and Children's Support Centre

The KIIs were conducted according to the interview guide developed by Dr. Portus and the Isis research team. All the interviews were then tape-recorded and transcribed using a standardised template. The interview transcript was then presented either face-to-face or via email for validation with the intermediary groups. Interviews and parts of interviews that were in the local language were translated into English. The complete English translations of the validated interview transcripts were used in the final analysis.

The actual conduct of KIIs across the 5 countries, from selection to translation, took place from June 2005 to December 2006.

Using the interview guide and a pilot set of interviews, the Isis research team, headed by Dr. Ofreneo, constructed a coding guide for analysis. The coding guide enumerated the interview questions and the categories of responses for each question. A code was created for each response category. Each interview transcript was then carefully coded. Coding involved selecting the particular text from the interview transcript that refers to a specific category of responses. After all the interview transcripts for each country were coded, they were consolidated into one file for sorting. Sorting clustered the interview responses

for each response category, allowing for a frequency count of the number of intermediary groups with the same response. Content analysis was then performed using the sorted file. For the **KII Coding Guide**, refer to Appendix C.

Content analysis was used to answer the second research objective. Frequencies and percentages were derived to measure the levels of usage, accessibility, and effectiveness of the different communications tools. These frequencies and percentages were used to rank responses in terms of highest to lowest frequency. Tables and graphs were used to present the statistical data. The results of the content analysis of the key informant interviews appear as the second chapter of each country section in this book “**How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools for Grassroots Women’s Empowerment**”.

Thematic analysis was utilised to respond to the third research objective. The themes on the meaning of empowerment from each interview transcript were first identified. After identifying the themes for all interview transcripts in each country, similar themes were further clustered into major or overarching themes. The same procedure was done for the meaning of empowering information and empowering communication tools. The results of the thematic analysis of the key informant interviews appear as the third chapter of each country section in this book “**How Intermediary Groups View Empowerment and Communication Tools**”.

The Isis research team conducted content analysis and thematic analysis on the KII data from December 2006 to October 2007. The KII analyses were sent to each country partner for validation in October 2007 and were discussed at the end of project meeting with the country partners in November 2007. For the final analysis of the KII data, syntheses of the results across the 5 countries were put together in Chapter 26, section A.

KII Guide: The KII Guide was developed by Dr. Portus and the Isis research team. The interview guide had four major sections: [1] on the intermediary organisation; [2] on communication tools; [3] on notions of empowerment; and, [4] on the impact of communication tools. The interview guide was semi-structured and consisted of open-ended questions. Questions on communication tools included usage for empowering grassroots women, accessibility to grassroots women, and effectiveness in empowering grassroots women. The reasons for accessibility and inaccessibility as well as for effectiveness and ineffectiveness were also solicited. The notions of empowerment included questions on the intermediary group’s notion of empowerment and empowering information. How specific communication tools can be empowering was also enquired. For the complete **KII Guide**, refer to Appendix B.

Communication tools referred to traditional communication tools and new ICTs. Traditional communication tools included publications, audiovisuals, performing arts and popular theatre, telecommunication, other print materials, radio, television, and indigenous and traditional channels. New ICTs included computers, cellular phones,

internet technology, and digital technology.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The FGD was a supplementary method to the KII with intermediary groups. The purpose of the FGD was to select an intermediary group as a country case among the organisations interviewed. But instead of running an FGD with the intermediary group, an FGD was conducted with the group's target community or constituency of grassroots women. This was to confirm whether the intermediary groups' views on the use of communication tools for empowering grassroots women are reflective of grassroots women's own views and experiences. The FGD answered the fourth research objective.

Research Objective 4. To know the experiences and views of grassroots women on how selected intermediary groups use communication tools for women's empowerment.

Procedure. The Isis research team headed by Dr. Ofreneo first developed the criteria for selecting the group of grassroots women to be sampled from each country. A group of grassroots women who are part of an intermediary group's target community or constituency was purposively selected based on the following criteria: [1] must be organised; [2] must have been in contact with the intermediary group for at least 1 year; [3] must have extensive experience with or exposure to the intermediary group's use of a particular communication tool; [4] preferably, exposed to a communication tool most frequently used in the country according to the RRL; and, [5] preferably, exposed to a communication tool most effective in the country according to the KII. The first criterion "must be organised" was dropped and other considerations by the country partners were incorporated in the criteria for selection.

A target group of grassroots women of the following intermediary groups were selected:

1. NEN or North East Network, India
2. PATAMABA (Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas) or National Network of Informal Workers, Philippines
3. FFW or Foundation for Women, Thailand
4. CWL or Catholic Women's League, Fiji

The Isis research team developed an FGD guide which was used for facilitating the discussion with grassroots women in India, the Philippines, Thailand, and Fiji. Isis conducted a pilot FGD with PATAMABA in the Philippines in March 2007. After a successful pilot run, the video documentation subtitled in English and the FGD transcript translated in English were sent to the country partners to allow for easier replication. Aalochana, CMDI, and FemLINK conducted their FGDs in April 2007. After which, the country partners produced a photo and video documentation and the FGD transcript

translated in English in May and June 2007. The Isis research team did the story narrative of all the FGDs in June and July 2007. The FGD appears as the fourth and last chapter in the country section of India, the Philippines, Thailand, and Fiji [**“How Grassroots Women View Communication Tools and Empowerment”**]. The syntheses of the FGD for each and across the 4 countries are presented in the synthesis chapters of each section and in Chapter 26, section D.

FGD Guide: The FGD Guide was developed by Dr. Ofreneo and the Isis research team. The FGD guide had four areas of enquiry: [1] information-sharing or communication between the intermediary group and grassroots women; [2] impact of a project of the intermediary group on grassroots women; [3] grassroots women’s views on the communication tools used by the intermediary group; and, [4] grassroots women’s notions of empowerment. The FGD guide was semi-structured and consisted of open-ended questions. The set of questions on the communication process focused on how the intermediary group communicates with or sends information to the grassroots women in general and vice-versa. Questions on the communication tools used by the intermediary group centred on what tools the grassroots women liked best, liked least, found most effective, most accessible, and most empowering. For the complete **FGD guide**, refer to Appendix D.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study was broad in vision and scope. In seeking to know “How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools for Grassroots Women’s Empowerment”, all-encompassing definitions of terms were used. The selection of intermediary groups was as inclusive as possible, not limiting the scope to women or grassroots women’s organisations. The range of communication tools was comprehensive, not limiting the scope to new ICTs or a few tools but covering the variety of communication tools available. As such, the study was an extensive exploration of the diversity of uses of communication tools and the multiplicity of meanings of their empowering potential.

DEFINING INTERMEDIARY GROUPS, TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND NEW ICTS, AND GRASSROOTS WOMEN

An **intermediary group** in the study was any organisation that targeted grassroots women and responded to social issues. An intermediary group is part of the larger “social movement” or “civil society”, terms that refer to non-government organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), and people’s organisations (POs) that are engaged in social justice issues such as poverty, health, human rights, and education. As such, an intermediary group as defined in this study is not necessarily a women’s organisation or a grassroots women’s organisation. It also need not be a grassroots-based organisation or

a community-based organisation. It must however include grassroots women in its target community, constituency, or beneficiary.

A **communication tool** was defined as a medium for information and communication. Two major categories of communication tools were used in this study: [1] traditional communication tools, and [2] new information and communication technologies or new ICTs.

Traditional communication tools were comprised of the following:

1. theatre and other performing arts (music/song, drama, puppetry, dance, street theatre)
2. print media
 - i. publications (newsletters, books, magazines, pamphlets, leaflets, comic strips)
 - ii. other print materials (photographs, posters, stickers, letters, flags, streamers, placards)
3. film/video (audiovisual media)
4. television
5. radio
6. telecommunication (telegram, telefax, telephone)
7. indigenous and traditional channels (oral tradition or story-telling)

Oral communication or direct face-to-face interaction that is not mediated by any of the above tools is considered traditional communication.

New ICTs were comprised of the following:

1. computers
2. cellular phones
3. internet technology
4. digital technology

Grassroots women were defined as economically marginalised women or poor women, but not exclusively. Grassroots women may also be politically, socially, and/or culturally disempowered and as such, may experience multiple types and levels of discrimination. Grassroots women may be marginalised not only because they are economically disadvantaged but also because they come from rural areas and as such have little political voice or political power.

5 ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES IN FOCUS

The study covers 5 countries in the Asia-Pacific region: **India** in South Asia, the **Philippines** and **Thailand** in South East Asia, and **Fiji** and **Papua New Guinea** in the Pacific.

The 5 countries were selected on the basis of the following considerations:

1. the use of new ICTs in these countries have significantly gained momentum over the past 10 years since the UNDP 2003 report, and the trend toward the saturation of these new ICTs are nearly doubling each year;
2. development initiatives funded by bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and other funding institutions have information, education, and communication (IEC) strategies central in their development agendas in these countries, and these strategies as used by NGOs and POs in grassroots/community development work have utilised new ICTs in information dissemination, awareness building, mobilisation, and organisational and project management; and,
3. the presence of active media or information and communication (infocom) intermediary groups (NGOs, CSOs, POs) that are involved in advocacy work and are utilising a wide range of communication tools in these countries, many of which are partners and network organisations of Isis International-Manila.

Though the research findings are directly applicable to the 5 countries, other countries can learn from the experience of the intermediary groups in India, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea, and how these countries have used communication tools for grassroots women's empowerment. The applicability of the findings to intermediary groups in other countries must take into consideration which aspects are common or similar across countries and which are unique to a certain country. For instance, the accessibility of specific communication tools are determined largely by the communication tool infrastructure and environment in a country and as such may be context-specific. On the other hand, human communication processes and how training, education, or communication in general takes place between groups of people may be relatively shared across cultures or are relatively "universal" phenomena. As such, the results of the study have culture-specific as well as universal components.

THE INTERVIEW AS A QUALITATIVE METHOD

This applied qualitative research used the interview as its principal data-gathering method. The main purpose of the study is to know how intermediary groups use new ICTs and traditional communication tools in interacting with grassroots women. The intent of the study was not only to measure the level of usage, accessibility, and effectiveness of communication tools but to gain in-depth information on how tools are used, why they are accessible or inaccessible, and why they are effective or ineffective. In addition, the study wanted to gain insight into the meanings of empowerment, empowering information,

and empowering tools. Hence, the interview as a qualitative method was deemed most appropriate for the research objective.

The goal of the study was to describe the process of communication between two groups – the intermediary group and grassroots women – and how this leads to empowerment. This interest in describing a process necessitates a method that gives primacy to quality over quantity. Consequently, only a small sample size was required in order to capture the process and gain in-depth information as to how the intermediary groups' use of specific communication tools becomes empowering for grassroots women. This is in contrast to the goal of describing the population of intermediary groups in 5 countries in terms of how they use communication tools for empowering grassroots women. For this, a large number of respondents would have been needed in order to generalise from sample to population.

Nevertheless, the data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative analysis was necessary for determining levels of usage, accessibility, and effectiveness of the different communication tools. Given the open-ended nature of the questions in the interview, coding was necessary to produce comparable data. Qualitative analysis was utilised for identifying themes on the meanings of empowerment, empowering information, and empowering communication tools.

SAMPLING ISSUES AND EXTERNAL VALIDITY

Though generalisability or external validity is not a primary concern of qualitative research, issues of sampling or selection of participants are noted. Among the sampling issues to consider in understanding the research results are as follows: [1] the non-representative sample of intermediary groups, [2] the nature of the intermediary groups sampled, and [3] the geographical location of the intermediary groups sampled.

The sample of intermediary groups in each country is not a representative sample of the population of intermediary groups. Given the main criterion for inclusion necessitating that the intermediary group must at least target grassroots women, the results may only be applicable to organisations working with grassroots women. In addition, Isis and each country partner had their unique set of criteria. For instance, Aalochana purposively selected women's information and resource centres or infocom groups. Isis included many mixed organisations that are not women-specific. CMDI chose outstanding women's organisations whereas FemLINK and HELP had many mixed organisations. Given these diverse criteria for selecting intermediary groups in the 5 countries, the research findings in each country may only be representative of intermediary groups that share the same characteristics. The results are not to be interpreted as reflective of all intermediary groups in each country.

The research results must take into consideration the nature of the intermediary groups sampled in terms of target beneficiaries, mission or thrust, and strategies, among others. These characteristics are indicated in all the country studies and consolidated in the synthesis across the 5 countries. In addition, a brief description of each of the 81 intermediary groups is included in the directory for reference [see the **Directory of Intermediary Groups** in Appendix E. Findings are most applicable to intermediary groups who share the same characteristics. For example, roughly a quarter of all the intermediary groups specifically target grassroots women, a quarter target grassroots communities in general, a quarter target women in general, and a quarter have other target communities. Majority of the groups do training as their main thrust and strategy which may have a direct influence in the type of communication tool they use as well as their other responses. The reader is advised to consider the nature of the intermediary groups sampled in interpreting the results as well as to note that the differences in responses across countries may be reflective of the different types and combinations of intermediary groups sampled in the 5 countries.

Isis and the country partners exerted much effort to ensure the geographical representation of the intermediary groups as noted in the selection process for each country. As such, there is a relatively balanced distribution of intermediary groups in the different regions of the country. For reference, the location of each intermediary group interviewed is mapped in all the country studies. The location of the organisation may be linked to its mission and thrust, strategies, target communities or beneficiaries, and consequently its use of communication tools. [Refer to **country maps of intermediary groups** in the country sections.]

As a benchmark, 20 intermediary groups were targeted for each country. The final analysis included 19 from India, 20 from the Philippines, 17 from Thailand, and 16 from Fiji. The sample of 9 intermediary groups from Papua New Guinea is relatively small compared to the other countries. This poses as a limitation of the study as frequencies and percentages were based on a sample of 9 groups. However, PNG faced the most difficulty in conducting the KIIs as it encountered major technical problems, transport problems, and communication problems, among others. Its unique country context including its geographical characteristics made the research process most difficult. Despite this, the small sample size is still proportionate to the number of intermediary groups in PNG considering that the other countries have a greater number of civil society organisations. Given time and resource constraints, the limitation of having only 9 intermediary groups in PNG is acknowledged.

To reiterate, qualitative research seeks to understand processes and not populations. As such, the sample of intermediary groups was not intended to represent the population of all intermediary groups. Rather, the sample represented the underlying processes and ways

of communication between intermediary groups and grassroots women. Whether we can generalise these processes across all types of intermediary groups, all types of grassroots women, across different objectives, and across diverse cultures may be dependent on whether that aspect of communication appears to be highly context-dependent or is relatively universal.

Despite limitations due to sampling, the research results are indicative of what communication tools are effective and empowering for grassroots women especially when responses are shared or common across the 5 countries. The similarities in responses across the 5 countries reflect the shared processes of human communication that may be moderated by contextual factors but not determined by them. As such there is reason to believe that the findings of the study hold external validity in terms of shared human communication processes.

INSTRUMENTATION ISSUES AND INTERNAL VALIDITY

The final set of limitations deals with how the research was carried out and as such pertains to internal validity concerns. The limitations concern the following: [1] the KII guide, [2] how the KII was conducted, and [3] how the RRL was accomplished.

One limitation of the KII guide was that it was entirely made up of open-ended questions. Though most questions necessitated an open-ended format, there were some questions that would have benefited from having a fixed set of choices. Questions on which communication tools do intermediary groups use, find most accessible, find least accessible, find most effective, find least effective, among other questions, did not enumerate the communication tools. As such, the intermediary groups did not consider all the communication tools available to choose from in their responses. An alternative would have been to ask them to rank the tools in terms of frequency of usage, accessibility, and effectiveness, so that all tools will be considered and data will be more comparable and more reliable. The advantage of the open-ended format however is that the responses are only what were salient or relevant to the intermediary groups interviewed. Not being presented the list of communication tools meant that intermediary groups answered top-of-mind or "whatever came to mind" which is often considered the authentic or real answer. As such, it removed the possibility of artificial responses based on having to choose or rank communication tools that one may not really find applicable to one's experience.

Another limitation is the lack of standardisation in how the KIIs were administered. Some interviews were very methodical and thorough whereas others were not as systematic and not as in-depth. Though part of the depth of responses can be attributed to the intermediary groups themselves, the process by which the different interviewers conducted the interviews was critical to the outcome. Notably, the care by which questions were asked, the extent by which answers were probed, and the effort by which questions

were repeated or rephrased to arrive at more meaningful responses differed across the interviews. Among the points of differences is whether the interviewer chooses to enumerate all the communication tools, to ask about a specific tool and not another, and to elaborate on certain parts and not others. This poses as a limitation to the comparability of data.

The above limitations meant that for the content analysis, each question had a different sample size (n). The number of intermediary groups who responded differed per question. As such, frequency counts across questions are not directly comparable due to differences in sample sizes. In addition, some questions had very small sample sizes (n's) because only a few intermediary groups answered the question or only a few interviewers asked the question. As such, caution must be exercised in interpreting the frequencies and percentages in relation to the number of intermediary groups who responded and in relation to the total number of intermediary groups sampled.

The final limitation of the study is its inability to provide an exhaustive review of related literature on the infrastructure and environment of all communication tools, on the economic, political and social/cultural context, and on how intermediary groups have used communication tools for advocacy of social issues in general and grassroots women's empowerment in particular. What the study did produce was a general background on the communication tools environment and infrastructure in each country. This was largely due to the major revision made in the RRL outline after the country partners had undertaken a comprehensive country profile and after the Isis research team changed in composition. The decision to narrow the focus of the RRL and to subsequently produce a general backgrounder that can contextualise the results of the KII meant that the RRL could not be as detailed as may have been desired. Despite this limitation, the RRL aims to give a general sense of the macro environment wherein intermediary groups' use of communication tools to empower grassroots women is situated.