PC4D

Comparisons, Conclusions, and Recommendations

THE ICT ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
IN 5 ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES

ACCESS/USAGE

Radio is the most effective form of communication across all countries except Thailand. The reasons for its success appear to be fairly consistent across most countries:

- Ability to reach rural areas
- Linguistic flexibility (multiple languages)
- Ability to overcome illiteracy among the population
- Low costs

For Thailand, television is the most popular medium. Its widespread availability is due in part to lower prices of TVs in the 1980s. In addition, Thailand is more linguistically homogenous as compared to other countries, thus possibly contributing to the popularity of television in this country. On the other hand, other countries with greater linguistic diversity appear to prefer the radio as compared to television.

For all countries, new ICTs such as the Internet and computers were the least accessible. This is largely due to lack of infrastructure and high costs, as well as low levels of technological literacy among the population.

CONTROL/OWNERSHIP

Much of the major media and communication tools in the five countries are privately owned, though the nature of this ownership varies from case to case. For instance, PNG's state-owned Telikom, the country's only IT provider, was corporatised in 1996. This is one example across countries in which the lines between public and private and between community and commercial are blurred.

For example, state ownership is often in conjunction with commercial operations. Doordarshan, India's state-owned television network, provides a case in point. While the station is purported to be a 'nation-building' enterprise, some argue that state ownership is merely a way for state capitalists to protect their financial interests. Likewise, radio stations in Thailand are owned by the government, but are leased to private businesses and operate on a commercial basis. In the Philippines, the close ties between the media conglomerates that control the majority of media mechanisms and corrupt politicians results in biased coverage of political affairs.

Similar to the tenuous state-private sector divide, distinctions between "community" and "commercial" radio also appear to be shaky in India, where local stations operate commercially. Likewise, though media ownership is private in the Philippines, the government utilises violence to censor the media, with extrajudicial killings of approximately 800 political activists and journalists since 2001.

Local and international ownership is also a factor. For example, local ownership is mandated by law for all media establishments in the Philippines, though industries maneuver to circumvent these laws in order access foreign funds. Furthermore, locally owned industries do not translate to locally produced programming. For instance, foreign media contribute major portions of the media landscapes in Fiji and the Philippines and appear to be behind the growing popularity of dubbed foreign films in Thailand and India.

This influence of foreign media affects countries in different ways. In Thailand, for instance, foreign popular culture led to a fear of westernisation that proved more complex than public sentiment had originally anticipated as studies demonstrated that the actual content of western media was small in terms of percentage, and that furthermore, lack of identification with foreign narratives and characters led to relatively little identification with western values in Thai culture. In the Philippines, foreign content from both the west and regional countries such as Korea and Japan both occupies local screen time, while also influencing the format of locally produced programming.

GENDER PARTICIPATION

In all five countries, women are participants within media and ICT industries, though their roles in decision-making positions appear to be lacking. Likewise, the access of women to new ICTs and media depends on their class and income. In countries such as Fiji, where the "feminisation of poverty" is a documented factor, this poverty leads to an inability to access ICTs.

In terms of representation, some positive representations exist, such as women as independent career women in Thailand; however, they still exist within certain parameters. In other places, women are also confined to traditional roles, with female reporters staying within 'soft' news and advertisements portraying women within the domestic sphere.

FACTORS AFFECTING ACCESS, CONTROL, AND GENDER PARTICIPATION

ECONOMIC

The economic situations in all five countries contribute to limited access to new ICTs, particularly those requiring a high level of infrastructure. In addition, the massive divide between urban and rural populations in all five countries contributes to an equally significant digital divide. Even in a country like India, where certain reports paint a picture of a booming economy, a growing middle class, and new developments in new ICT technologies, other reports accounting for both urban and rural populations paints a much different image.

POLITICAL

All five countries speak of claims to having the "freest press" in all of Asia, while quickly demonstrating the irony of this phrase through accounts of corruption and authoritarian influence.

While political instability led to violence against media practitioners, as in Fiji's coup, PM Indira Gandhi's muzzling of the press in India, and assassination of Ninoy Aquino in the Philippines, there are also accounts of how these violent events provided challenging scenarios to media practitioners in these three countries. For instance, in Fiji, the coup established a challenging situation for investigative reporting. Likewise, these violent events also led to the development of regional language presses in India and to the expansion of new opportunities for women journalists and alternative presses in the Philippines.

SOCIAL

One of the major consistencies among all these countries appears to be the failure of media to effectively unify or 'nation-build' within the national borders encompassing diverse cultures and languages.

Additionally, the lack of literacy presents a persistent problem in all five countries. For instance, fluency in English exerts a major impact on the accessibility of new ICTs, which primarily exist in this language.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS USING NEW ICTS

The Reviews of Related Literature did not report any distinct differences in ICT use by social movements in general or for gender-related purposes. Intermediary groups that catered specifically to gender used similar strategies as those working outside the gender sphere. One could hypothesise that any use of ICTs, particularly by female constituencies, would be quite different from male or mixed populations, given the consisten reports of discrepancies between male and female ICT production skills.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN TERMS OF:

	INDIA	THAILAND	PHILIPPINES	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
ACCESS/USAGE	Though India has over 60,000 papers, the highest in the world, the reach of the printed press is fairly limited, with concentration at only 57% in urban and 24% rural areas. In addition, despite only a small percentage of those who speak English, this small segment is perceived to exercise control over areas that have professional prestige. While Hindi is most widely used, English comes in second, with bilingual papers coming in third. Radio is the most widespread. However, the local stations operate commercially, defeating the idea of "community radio." While the use of computers rose 37% in 2003, the overall use is low at 1.34 per 100 people. India ranks only at 63rd in the Technology Achievement Index. Hindi cinema appeals to a broad audience nationwide. These films account for 40% of the movies shown in the country.	In 1999, there was at least one TV in 94% of households, whereas only 69% had a radio receiver and the circulation was at only 7.2 per 100 people. Television has a 90% coverage area and has reached 89.3% of the people. 71.8% has access to radio. Compared to places like Indonesia and the Philippines, Thailand is better off in terms of Internet usage at 11.25 users per 100 inhabitants, which still appears small compared to other countries. This has to do with the lack of phone service (which allows dial-up connection) in much of the country. In addition, the availability of content in the English language makes access difficult.	The Philippines is the world's third largest English speaking country. The majority of local content available on the Internet is in English. Aside from radio, television has the widest reach. In Metro-Manila, 96% of the population owns a TV. In the rest of the country, TV ownership is common as well, with ownership between 60-73%. Additionally, the Philippines is known as the SMS capital of the world. In 2003, there were 22 million mobile phone subscribers.	Radio is the most accessible form of communication in the Pacific, and this stands for Fiji as well. This is due to the medium's ability to reach the rural areas, as well as its linguistic flexibility. CFL has developed a network of eleven transmitter stations that provide coverage of all the major islands of the Fiji group. Two of the FBCL stations broadcast in the three major languages: Fijian, Hindustani, and English. Newspaper readership is generally falling. Fiji boasts 100% TV coverage, but radio is still cited as the most widely used media form. Fiji One TV broadcasts mainly in English, with some Fijian and Hindustani content. The other channels are pay television channels. Cinemas are concentrated on the main island of Viti Levu and play mostly English and Hindi films. New ICTs, while used by big businesses, were largely outside the realm of comprehension for the grassroots.	Radio is the most accessible medium for the largest number of people, particularly given PNG's high illiteracy rate, as well as cost. In addition, the country has over 850 languages, and radio allows for linguistic flexibility. Geography plays a part as well, with radio able to reach the widely-scattered, isolated settlements. Conversely, though television should theoretically reach many places nationally, service is unavailable, with coverage estimated at only 45%. Funding problems and delinquent payments of power bills, however, have taken some regional radios off the air. ICTs are extremely limited, while access to mobile phones, though improved, is also lacking. Because of its rough terrains, developing infrastructures in PNG is very costly. Newspapers are primarily urban.
	INDIA	THAILAND	PHILIPPINES	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA

CONTROL/OWNERSHIP				
The majority of radio and print are privately owned. However, television is owned by the state through Doordarshan. Some argue that this television-as-nation-building defense is mainly promoted to cover up the actuality of state capitalists who seek to keep control over revenue-earning ventures.	All newspapers are privately owned, with foreigners banned from ownership. Radio stations are owned by the government, but operate on a commercial basis through private businesses. The mobile phone market is a duopoly between Shin Corporation and UCOM, another powerful telecom operator, with these two corporations controlling 97% of the market. The 1990s was a period when the government changed its telecommunications policy to allow the private sector to participate in the development of the telecom infrastructure. This prompted a move from state monopoly to deregulation and liberalisation.	The press, deemed "the freest in Asia," is under control of the government. Many politicians gain unfair access to media exposure through connections to television station-owners and managers. All mass media establishments are 100% Filipino owned; however, media companies have maneuvered to circumvent this in order to access foreign money. Native and Spanish mestizo elites own newspapers, alongside Chinese-Filipino entrepreneurs, who own many media conglomerates. All media forms are affected by the concentration of media ownership. News is veering towards 'infotainment.' U.S. films dominate the industry as foreign produced films account for over half of those shown in theatres.	Much of Fijian media is privately owned, though the state controls the Fiji Broadcasting Commission, which consists of two Public Service Broadcasting systems, as well as four commercial systems. The State used to control the The Daily Post, but sold the paper to indigenous Fijian interests in 2003. The majority of the Pacific Island governments maintain outmoded legislative and regulatory frameworks in regard to broadcasting and telecommunication, so these communication tools could easily fall into the hands of the private sector. The Broadcasting Bill of 2004 would account for distinctions between commercial and community media, providing one step to remedy this situation. There are many international interests with stakes in Fijian media. Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation owns The Fiji Times, while SKY Pacific, which includes international programming, was launched in 2006. Fiji has ten privately owned movie theatres. Six Cinema complex is jointly owned by companies from Fiji, Australia and New Zealand. Lack of funds creates a shortage in locally produced television thereby making American-made soaps and sitcoms the most popular programmes in Fiji.	Countries with governments who recognise the importance of a progressive ICT and Telecommunications Industry and support such initiatives tend to fare better in the said sphere than those who don't. Papua New Guinea is said to have such support. Thus, the ICT progress in Papua New Guinea is swift. PNG is considered as one of the only three countries which have a choice of ISPs in the Pacific Islands. Papua New Guinea has seven major ICT businesses providing equipment, services and maintenance.

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER				
In terms of labour, women occupy 20% of highly skilled jobs such as software programmers and computer analysts. However, the situation of female journalists is very different across the country, with areas that frown on women occupying higher positions. Broadcasting allows women to work as anchors, though senior positions are held by men. In terms of audience and users, a 1990 study in Karnataka revealed that only 15% of women reported reading the paper, while over half listened to the radio, and just under a third watched television, regardless of ownership. As of 2004, few women use the Internet.	Women are the main target of the drama serials that dominate primetime television. The gender gap in Internet usage is narrowing, with the share of women users increasing from 35% in 1999 to 49% in 2000. Women in films are often portrayed as young, single, middle class, employed and independent. However, they are still depicted as inferior to men.	In the 1980s, men greatly outnumbered women in boardrooms and editorial ranks. In 1986, Aquino's assassination and the rise of the alternative press allowed more access to women writers. 40% of the IT workforce is women, the highest in Southeast Asia. Though there are many women in mass communications and because they don't hold positions of power, gender-sensitve reporting is lacking. Consumer culture perpetuates gender stereotypes.	In terms of labour, men hold the majority of the decision-making positions in the FBC, as well as in journalism. Fiji Limited (CFL) has ten departments, six of which are headed by women. However, this appears to be the exception rather than the rule. As audiences and users, the women with access to communication tools are those in positions of affluence. Grassroots women have little access to communication tools outside radio. The feminisation of poverty affects women's use of communication tools as well—$1/7^{th}$ of Fijian homes are women-headed. For representation, women are rarely shown outside domestic routines. Little attention is given to sports, while the Film Control Board does little to curb the representation of domestic violence on screen. Furthermore, exclusion of women leads to a lack of awareness about women's roles—for example, regarding women's roles during and after the coup.	Women are increasing being employed in journalist positions; however, this is largely due to economic factors. Like younger hires, they tend to accept lower pay. In addition, they are often assigned to cover "soft" stories. Women television hosts are subject to violence, and therefore, it has been difficult to find women to occupy these positions. Media also reinforce high levels of aggression and machismo seen in issues of tribal fighting and gang-violence.

FACTORS AFFECTING ACCESS, CONTROL, AND GENDER PARTICIPATION:

|	INDIA	PHILIPPINES	THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
ECONOMIC	Because of India's growing economy, the country is viewed as a large potential market. However, the divides between the urban and the rural have grown dramatically. Though the country is the fastest-growing ICT market, the communication tools reach is limited. India still has a 71.5% rural population as of 2004.	The rising economy and the lack of constraints on media resulted in expanded advertising and new media outlets, which led to increased sensationalism and competition.	Compared to some of its Southeast Asian neighbors like Singapore and Malaysia, Thailand is relatively low-income. 68% of Thais live in rural areas, while 32% live in urban areas. In the 1980s, the economic profile shifted from agricultural to industrialised. ICT and other media serve as crucial infrastructures for regional economic development. Thailand lacks human resources, funding, and technology expertise, which makes it difficult for the country to assimilate the Internet from Western countries.	Fiji falls in the medium access group of the International Telecommunication Union's Digital Access Index. It ranks well in terms of knowledge and affordability because of high literacy and a flat rate local call price for dial-up Internet. However, it does less well for infrastructure, usage, and quality. Infrastructure is a major barrier, particularly in rural areas. Teledensity in urban areas is 20-60 per 100 people, which is low globally but high for the Pacific. Poverty also results in advertising and popularity-driven media, as well as poorly-trained and underpaid journalists.	Approximately 85% of the population makes their living as farmers. 37% live in poverty. Given the standard of living and average incomes, connectivity fees are among the highest in the world. Lack of government services makes it very difficult for the rural population to benefit.
POLITICAL	The "Emergency Period" wherein Prime Minister Indira Gandhi lost the 1977 general election and tried to muzzle the press, led to the development of regional language presses. India maintains one of the freest presses in the world due to its struggle for independence. The post-Independence state has accepted criticism. However, free market means that there is a necessity for advertising.	Likewise, because the financial base of newspapers is thin, they are vulnerable to pressure from advertising, business, and government. Since the restoration of 'democracy,' more than 80 media practitioners have been killed, without a single conviction.	Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been colonised by the West. The Thai press is one of the freest, as when a 15-year-old gagging law was lifted in 1991. Freedom of speech was further guaranteed by the 1997 Constitution. However, the abolition of the 1997 Constitution by the Council of National Security run by the military, which overthrew the Thaksin administration in 2006, threatens this freedom.	Political factors are important in that they affect the economy, which in turn affects access to media and ICT production. Pacific Plan's Digital Strategy was a 2005 regional plan coordinated by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. It hasn't been open to civil society. Conflict between Indians and Fijians has led to two military coups. The 2000 coup saw growth for Fijian media by providing a challenging scenario for investigative and interpretive reporting. However, although the media's dedication to bring the news to the public was commendable, the form was sensationalised and unbalanced. Furthermore, during the coups, journalists and media organisations were under threat of verbal and physical violence. Though Fiji is considered to have one of the "freest presses" in the Pacific, authoritarianism penetrates all levels, with politicians critiquing the media and calling for censorship or propaganda.	There is still a little sense of shared identity in PNG. Allegiance to tribes, clans, and sub-clans is more important than nation or citizenship. Politics is cultic, while anti-organisational political culture makes organising around any issue difficult (media or otherwise).

SOCIAL				
Adult illiteracy is still high, in spite of the fact that the country has the world's seventh highest number of scientists and engineers.	Filipinos' fluency in English makes the country a desirable market for foreign cable companies and international call centres.	Thai literacy is 92.6%, but economic inequalities are prevalent. Furthermore, in an IT world dominated by English, Thailand appears to have a disadvantage. Culturally, the Thai population is unitary in identity and religion (95% Buddhist).	The multicultural, multilingual Fiji Islands society leads to multiple languages in media forms. Social cultural factors also affect the use of and access to communication tools. Widespread illiteracy has caused a rapidly changing social environment, with its attendant influx of media imagery, without a corresponding rise in media literacy. Tradition is extremely important. The culture of "ratuism," which gives ultimate respect to elders and focuses on the collective, guide the Fiji Island media, economy, culture, and politics. Punishment is collective. The media council uses public shaming to reprimand those who fail to follow regulations.	PNG is one of the most ethnolinguistically diverse in the world. Its population is largely fragmented. Such diversity greatly affects the media landscape. Furthermore, PNG's population has tripled since the 1970s. Tradition is sacrosanct. Analysts theorise that PNG's history of undisturbed democracy is a result of its acceptance of corruption.

HOW INTERMEDIARY GROUPS USE COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT
IN 5 ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES

A TOTAL of 81 organisations from five different countries (India, Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea) were interviewed for this study. Figure 1 shows the pie chart of the number of intermediary groups per country. There were 20 (25%) participants from the Philippines, 19 (23%) from India, 17 (21%) from Thailand, 16 (20%) from Fiji, and only 9 (11%) from Papua New Guinea. The responses of the key informants were sorted and content analysed. A cross country synthesis is described in this report. For a complete breakdown of the statistics per category, please see the annex.

FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF INTERMEDIARY GROUPS PER COUNTRY (N=81)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PHILIPPINES

INDIA

THAILAND

FIJI
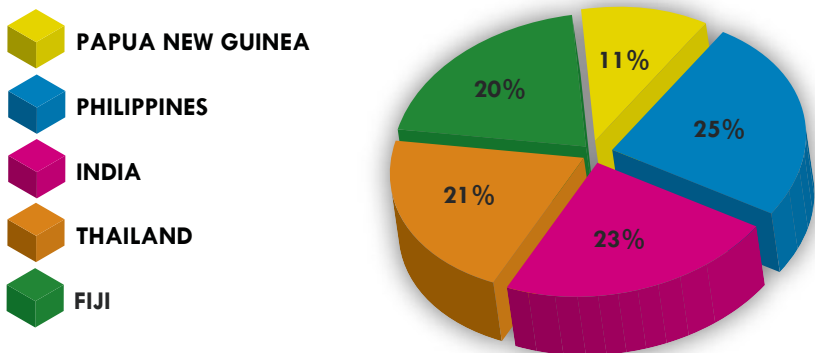
TYPE OF INTERMEDIARY GROUP

Based on the collected interviews of the five countries, three types of beneficiary groups emerged as equal in number. Different intermediary groups reported that they catered primarily to grassroots in general (26%), others focused on grassroots women specifically (26%), and others have broader services and take on different issues and concerns not necessarily among grassroots women (26%). Also, 17 groups (23%) reported that they focused on women in general. It should be noted that only 74 groups responded to this question. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of groups in terms of beneficiaries.

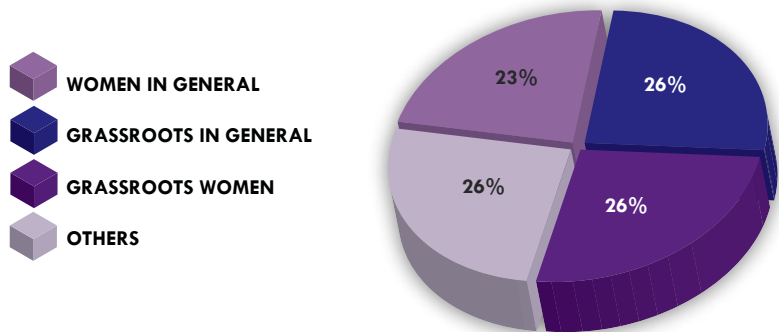**FIGURE 2.** TYPE OF ORGANISATION (BASED ON BENEFICIARIES) (N=74)

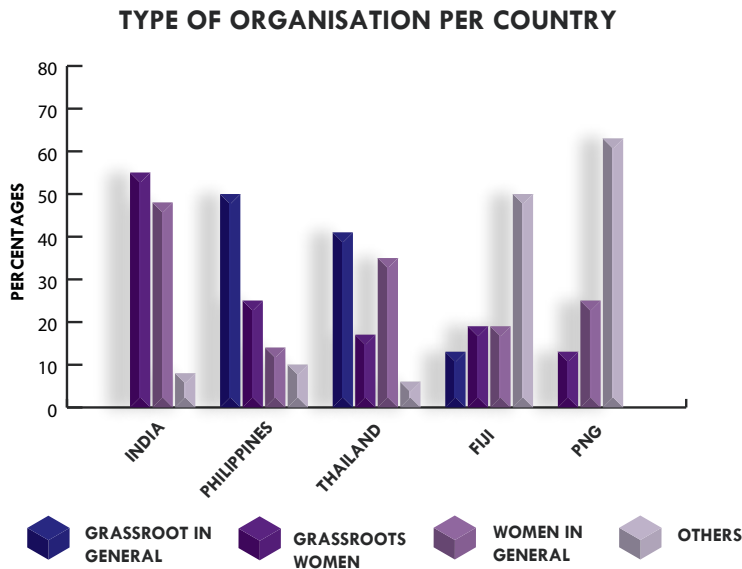**FIGURE 3.** TYPE OF ORGANISATION PER COUNTRY

Figure 3 shows the breakdown of groups in terms of beneficiaries per country. Most organisations interviewed from India (54%) cater to grassroots women while most organisations from the Philippines (50%) and Thailand (41%) cater to the grassroots in general. Most of the organisations from the Pacific (Fiji, 50% and Papua New Guinea, 63%) provide broader services and take on different issues and concerns not necessarily among grassroots women.

MISSION/ THRUST OF THE ORGANISATION

All of the interviewed organisations have multiple thrusts and missions. Majority of the organisations (75%) reported conducting training on different issues. More than half of the organisations responded that they undertake education and information building (62%), provide services (58%), advocate different issues (53%), and build networks (51%). Organising and community building (29%), economic empowerment (24%), governance (9%), other thrusts (9%), and gender mainstreaming (4%) were also mentioned by these organisations as their mission or thrust. See Figure 4 for the breakdown according to the mission and thrust of the organisation.

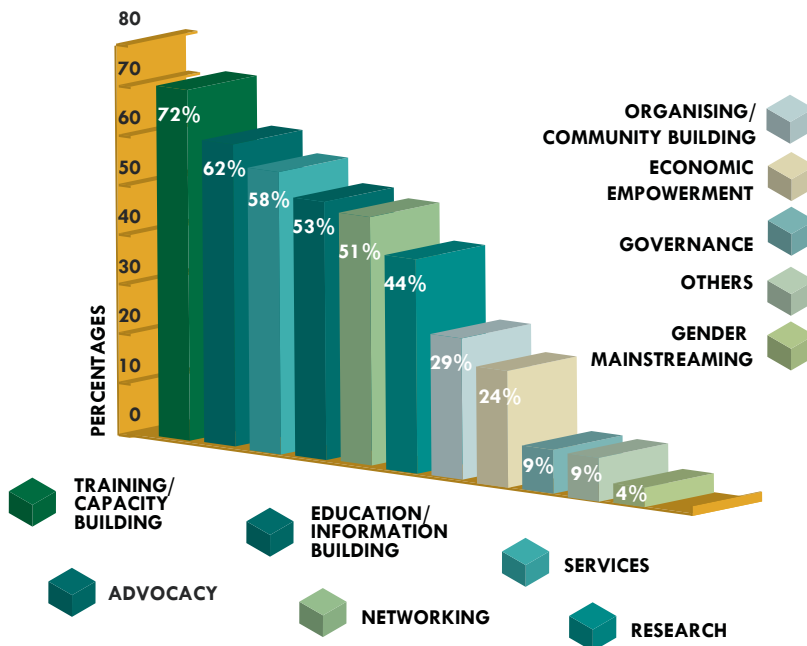**FIGURE 4.** MISSION/THRUST OF ORGANISATION (N=78)

Table 4b in the annex shows the frequency of mission/ thrust of organisation per country. Most intermediary groups in four countries (India, 79%; Philippines 90%; Fiji, 69%; Papua New Guinea, 63%) are into training and capacity building as their mission or thrust. Training and capacity building and building networks in Thailand are the second (65%) top mission of its intermediary groups while education and information building (88%) obtained the highest spot. Unlike in Thailand, education and information building was the second top mission of intermediary groups in three countries (Philippines, 80%; Fiji, 63%; Papua New Guinea, 53%). The second top mission of intermediary groups in India is research (71%).

STRATEGY IN COMMUNICATING WITH GRASSROOTS WOMEN

The strategies used by intermediary groups in communicating with grassroots women were consistent with their mission. The top two strategies employed are training and capacity building (65%) and education including consciousness raising (58%). These strategies were followed by building networks and linkages (43%), delivering services (36%), advocacy and mobilisation (25%), organising and community building (23%), and research and documentation (14%). Few of the organisations employed economic empowerment (9%) and other strategies (5%). Figure 5 shows the breakdown of strategy in communicating with grassroots women.

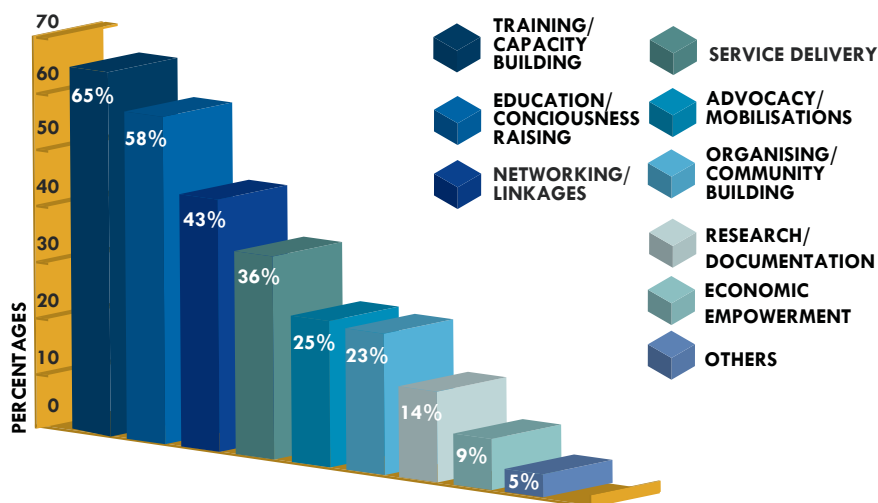**FIGURE 5.** STRATEGY IN COMMUNICATING WITH GRASSROOTS WOMEN (N=77)

Table 5b in the annex shows the frequency of strategies used to communicate with grassroots women per country. Most intermediary groups employed education and consciousness-raising as their top strategy (Philippines, 65%; Thailand, 64%; Fiji, 67%). In India (53%) and Papua New Guinea (33%), education and consciousness-raising obtained the second spot. Training and capacity building is employed mostly by intermediary groups from India (89%) and Papua New Guinea (78%). In the Philippines, training and capacity building (60%) is closely preceded by education and consciousness-raising. Service delivery (71%) in Thailand, building networks and linkages (60%) in Fiji, and networking (33%) and advocacy (33%) in Papua New Guinea ranked as the second top strategy used to communicate with grassroots women in these countries.

USES OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Communication tools are used in education (76%) and training (70%). This is not a surprise since their mission and their strategies in communicating to grassroots women are based on training and education. Also, half of the intermediary groups (53%) used these tools in advocating different issues. Some also reported that they used these tools for announcements (40%) and administrative purposes (38%). Less than 20 groups mentioned research (20%), networking (18%), other uses (15%), organising (11%), services (8%), governance (6%), gender mainstreaming (4%), and economic empowerment (1%) as uses of these tools. Figure 6 shows the percentages for each use.

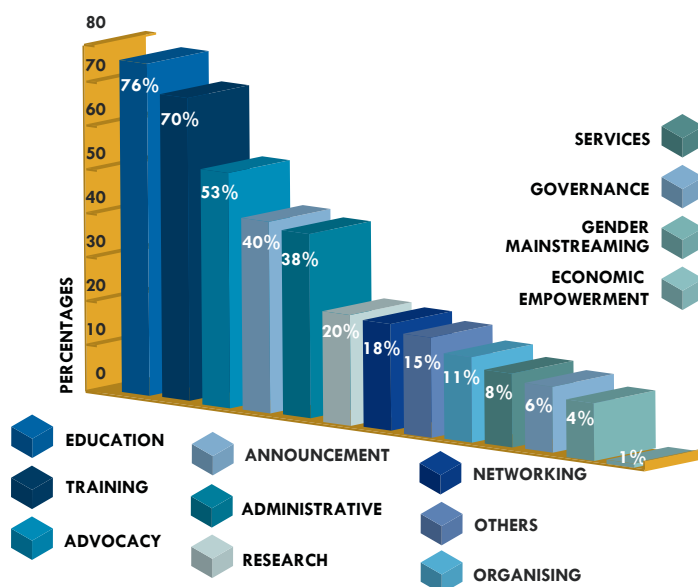**FIGURE 6.** USES OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS (N=80)

Table 6b in the annex shows the frequency of the uses of communication tools per country. These tools were used in education and information building among grassroots women in most organisations in three countries (India, 74%; Thailand, 94%; Fiji, 81%). In the Philippines, education and information building ranked second in the top uses of communication tools. On the other hand, tools are mainly used for training in the Philippines (70%) and Papua New Guinea (89%). These tools are also used for administrative purposes in Thailand (69%) and Fiji (69%) while they are also used for advocating issues (78%) in Papua New Guinea.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED BY INTERMEDIARY GROUPS

The top communication tool used by most intermediary groups in interacting with grassroots women is the film or video (78%). This is closely followed by radio (73%) and theatre (68%). Still, half of the intermediary groups reported that they used computers (53%), landline phones (53%), and other tools (53%). New ICTs like the computer figured in the top five and the use of Internet technology (46%) also closely bordered on the fifth spot. Cellular phones (31%) ranked fifteenth among 31 communication tools identified. See Figure 7 for the breakdown of the top communication tools used by intermediary groups and Table 7 in the annex for the complete list of tools used by intermediary groups in interacting with grassroots women.

FIGURE 7. COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED BY INTERMEDIARY GROUPS (N=80)

FILMS/VIDEOS (1)
RADIO (2)
THEATRE (3)
COMPUTER (4)
LANDLINE PHONES (4)
OTHERS (4)
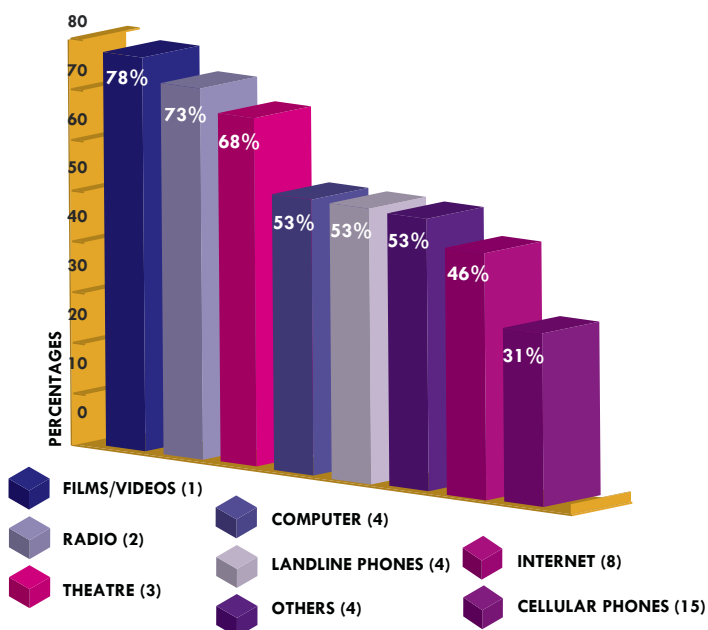INTERNET (8)
CELLULAR PHONES (15)

FIGURE 8A. TOP COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED ACROSS 5 COUNTRIES
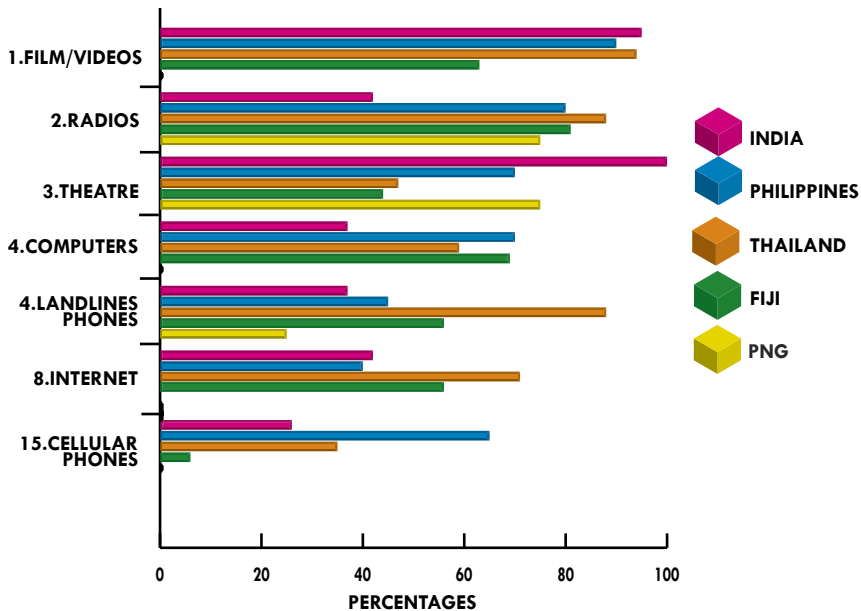
Figure 8a shows the top communication tools used across five countries and Figure 8b shows the top 2 communication tools used per country. Mostly in all countries, film/ videos, radio, and theatre interchange within the first and second top spot. Films and videos are mostly used by intermediary groups from India and the Philippines but not in Papua New Guinea. In the Philippines, the films show varying themes, issues and genre and were either feature films made by local or foreign film companies, or videos produced by intermediary groups. These are often employed in workshops, seminars, lectures, plays and in various fora where women's agenda can be discussed and are seen as great aids in jumpstarting discussions, facilitating reflections, making inputs much more understandable, and synthesising points for the grassroots women. Films were used because they are believed to help widen the perspectives of their beneficiaries, making them see worlds and images different from their own.

The radio is moderately used in all five countries while theatre is mostly used in India. In India, theatre is used in training and is preferred because it allows participants to be actively engaged on the issue. Popular theatre and plays are also used in educating people and advocating issues.

In terms of new ICTs, it is interesting to note that Thailand reported to use computers, Internet technology and cellular phones. Although cellular phones ranked fifteenth, it can clearly be seen in the graph that the Philippines used it more often in interacting with grassroots women, as compared to any other country. Computers ranked second in Fiji and are being used because they have helped the groups to produce PowerPoint presentations for the community (enhancement tool).

FIGURE 8B. TOP 2 COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED PER COUNTRY
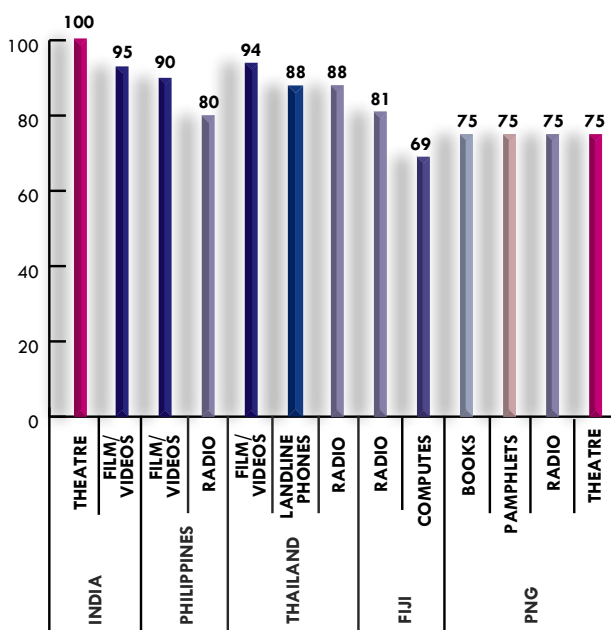
On the other hand, visual text media like books and pamphlets are mostly used in Papua New Guinea. In Papua New Guinea, books, booklets and manuals are very useful in training. Banners, leaflets and posters are used in educational awareness and pictures in these banners, leaflets, and posters seem to help beneficiaries to better understand issues.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS MOST ACCESSIBLE TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN

In terms of accessibility, radio (63%) is the most accessible tool to grassroots women across five countries. This is mostly used by intermediary groups in Fiji and in the Philippines. In Fiji, radio is by far the single most accessible tool to the grassroots women. Many intermediary groups had commented that almost every household in Fiji has a radio.

What separates the radio from the other tools with wide-reaching coverage is that it is cheap to own for the grassroots and it is easy to use because no special skills are needed to operate it. Also, in the Philippines, the radio is a tool found in many community households and works particularly well in the regions and in areas not easily reached by letters.

See Figure 9 for the tools considered most accessible to grassroots women and Figure 10a for the tools considered most accessible across five countries. Table 9 in the annex shows the complete list and frequency breakdown of accessible communication tools while Table 10 in the annex shows the complete frequency breakdown of accessible tools per country. Figure 10b shows the two most accessible tools to grassroots women per country.

Films/videos (32%) followed at a far second from radio. The Philippines used films/videos more compared to any other countries but these tools did not figure in the second top communication tool most accessible to grassroots women. In Papua New Guinea, it is reported that film/ video (75%) is the second top tool used by intermediary groups in communicating to and interacting with their beneficiaries. Films and videos are used during trainings and workshops, while pamphlets are given afterwards, so that participants can have hard copies for future reference.

FIGURE 9. COMMUNICATION TOOLS MOST ACCESSIBLE TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN (N=60)

RADIO (1)

FILM/VIDEO (2)

CELLULAR PHONE (3)

LANDLINE PHONE (4)
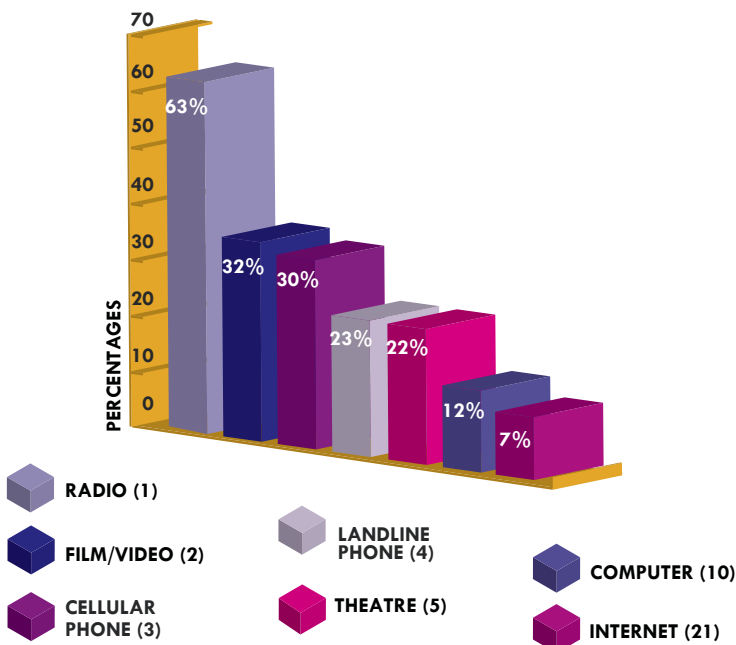
THEATRE (5)

COMPUTER (10)

INTERNET (21)

FIGURE 10A. MOST ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION TOOLS ACROSS 5 COUNTRIES
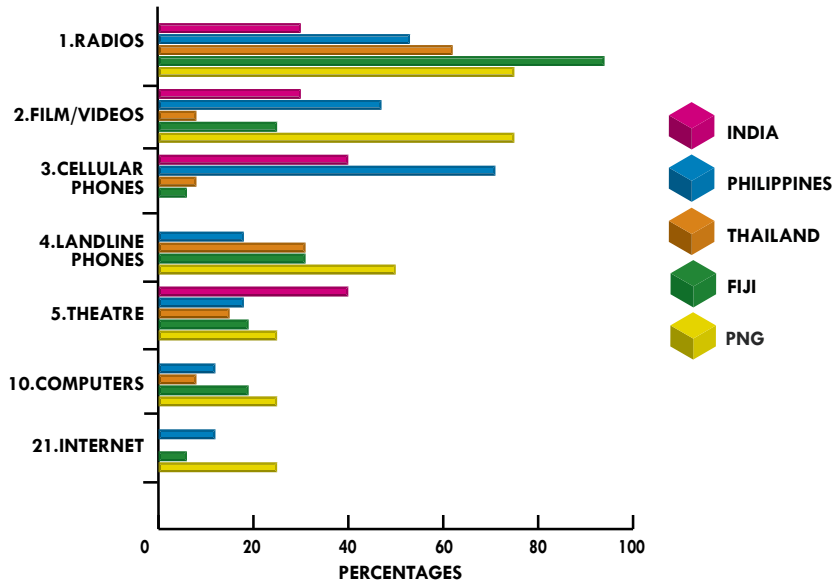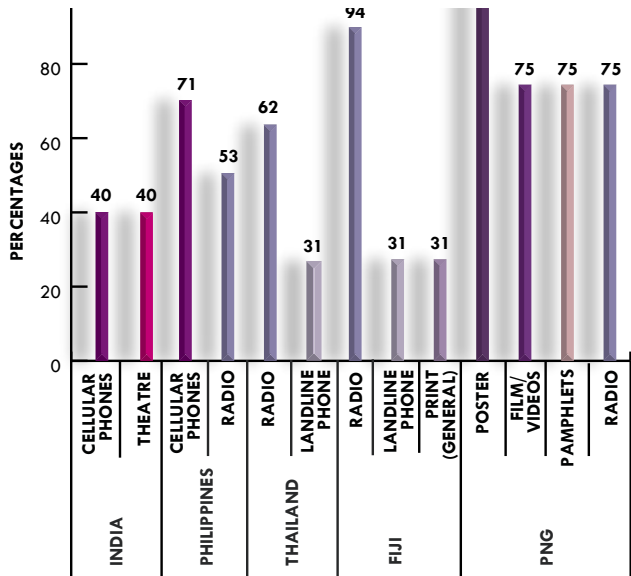

FIGURE 10B. TOP 2 MOST ACCESSIBLE TOOLS TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN

Surprisingly while the cellular phones ranked fifteenth in the tools used to interact with grassroots women, the use of cellular phones ranked third in terms of accessibility to grassroots women. In terms of accessibility, it ranked first in India (40%) and the Philippines (71%). The cellular phones have gained accessibility in India among grassroots women. As shared during the interview, there are already cellular phones in the villages. Every woman has a cellular phone, though some are illiterate and cannot send SMS. Nevertheless, through the mobile phone, they can contact and talk to one another. With the same reason as with India, the cellular phone is one of the most visible communication tools in contemporary Filipino life, with many people owning one or at least having access to one. However, cellular phone was not mentioned in Papua New Guinea as the most accessible tool to grassroots women.

Other new ICTs like computers (12%) and Internet technology (7%) figured in the tenth and twenty-first spots, respectively. Computers and Internet technology were not mentioned in India as an accessible tool to grassroots women and Internet technology was not mentioned in Thailand.

It is interesting to note that posters (100%) and pamphlets (75%) are generally used in Papua New Guinea and visual or text print in general (31%) is also used in Fiji. In Papua New Guinea, posters can be easily given away by organisations to their beneficiaries, to the extent that they run out very quickly. Also they have mentioned that through pamphlets, participants can have hard copies for future reference. In Fiji, print materials are accessible to grassroots women. According to one respondent, the print form is still the "cheapest form in the Pacific." With the high cost of other tools, the affordability of the print form thus becomes important to emphasise.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS LEAST ACCESSIBLE TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN

New ICTs like Internet technology (65%), computers (60%), and cellular phones (42%) were reported to be the least accessible tools for grassroots women. All countries except Thailand mentioned that the Internet is inaccessible to grassroots women. Internet technology was frequently reported by the Philippines and Fiji as the least accessible tool. The main reason is that its access necessitates a lot of expenses. Low accessibility is rooted in the high costs of the computer and subscription to the Internet, the lack of electricity or power supply in many areas, and the lack of skills to use the tool.

Figure 11 shows the least accessible tools to grassroots women and Figure 12a presents the least accessible tools across five countries. Table 11 in the annex shows the complete list and frequency breakdown of the least accessible communication tools while Table 12 in the annex shows the complete frequency breakdown of least accessible tools per country. Figure 12b shows the least accessible tools to grassroots women per country.

The computer is the second least accessible tool to grassroots women, as is reported by all countries and as most frequently reported in Fiji. The reasons most often cited for this low accessibility of computers include the high costs of the computer, the lack of electricity or power supply in many areas, and the lack of skills to use the tool. Likewise, in India, computers are scarce, and there is no Internet access in most villages.

Cellular phones, on the other hand, represent the third least accessible tool to grassroots women, as frequently reported by the Philippines and Fiji. This appears to be inconsistent because in the previous section it was shown that cellular phones were the most accessible tool used by grassroots women in the Philippines. In the Philippines, the cellular phone was also mentioned as least accessible because there are still some areas that lack cell sites and some telecommunication networks still do not have a strong signal. Some groups from the Philippines also defined the lack of access as the lack of cellphone load. They may have the phone but the lack of load precludes them from using the phone.

FIGURE 11. COMMUNICATION TOOLS LEAST ACCESSIBLE TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN (N=48)

INTERNET (1)

COMPUTER (2)   LANDLINE PHONES (4)

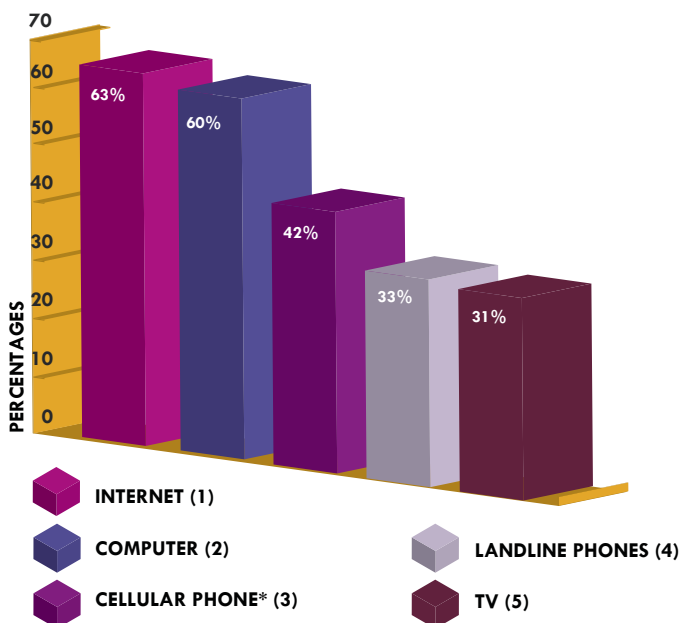CELLULAR PHONE* (3)   TV (5)

FIGURE 12A. LEAST ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION TOOLS TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN
ACROSS 5 COUNTRIES
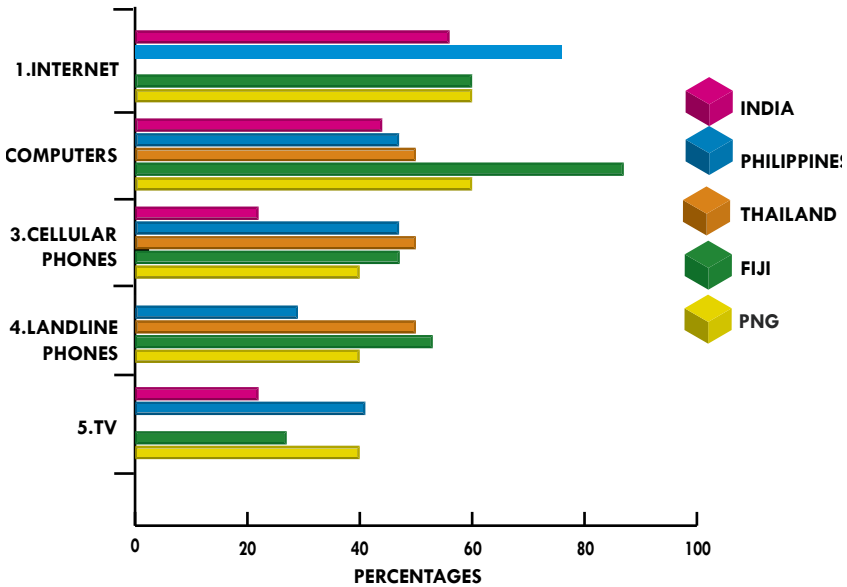
FIGURE 12B. TOP 2 LEAST ACCESSIBLE TOOLS TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN
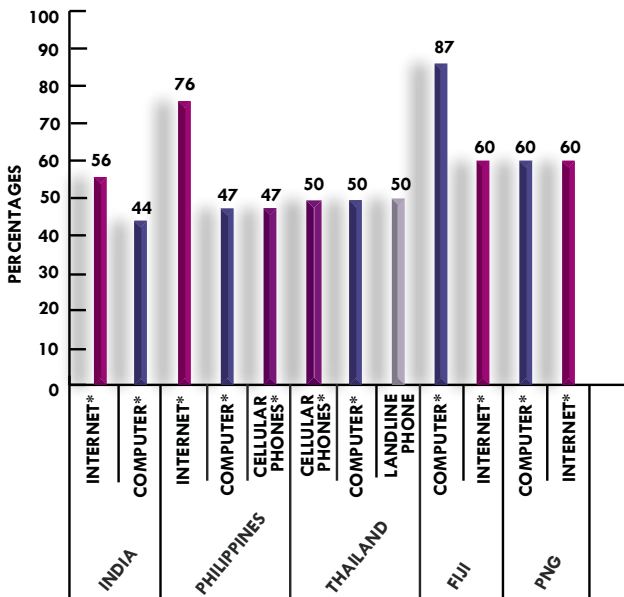
MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND REASONS WHY THE TOOLS WERE EFFECTIVE

Radio (49%) is seen to be the most effective tool in communicating and interacting to grassroots women. It is followed by theatre (36%), film/videos (25%), oral communication or story-telling (16%), and cellular phones (15%). The new ICTs like computers (10%) and Internet (9%) technology ranked tenth and twelfth respectively.

See Figure 13 for the most effective tools in communicating to grassroots women and Figure 14a for the most effective tools across five countries. Table 13 in the annex shows the complete list and frequency breakdown of the most effective communication tools while Table 14 in the annex shows the complete frequency breakdown of the most effective tools per country. Figure 14b shows the most effective tools in communicating to grassroots women per country.

Radio (34%) is the top effective tool in communicating to grassroots women. Radio ranked first as the top effective tool for most countries (Philippines, 59%; Thailand, 33%; Fiji, 67%; Papua New Guinea, 67%) except India, where it is the second (24%) most effective tool. In the Philippines, radio is seen as effective because the information broadcasted over the radio has a very high probability of immediately reaching its target communities, particularly the grassroots women, and it also does not interfere with the grassroots women's activities. In Thailand, the community radio is seen as effective because aside from disseminating news, it can promote culture through the playing of local songs and story-telling. In Fiji, radio is the most effective tool in their interactions with grassroots women, mainly because many grassroots women have access to it and more importantly, are listening to it. Some radio sessions are particularly effective because they allow women to share their thoughts on issues. In Papua New Guinea, they reported that radio is accessible and can cover a huge area.

FIGURE 13. MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS (N=67)
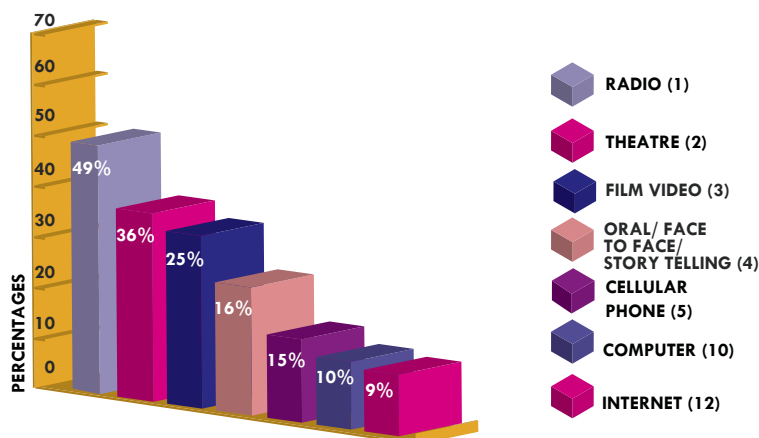
FIGURE 14A. MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS ACROSS 5 COUNTRIES
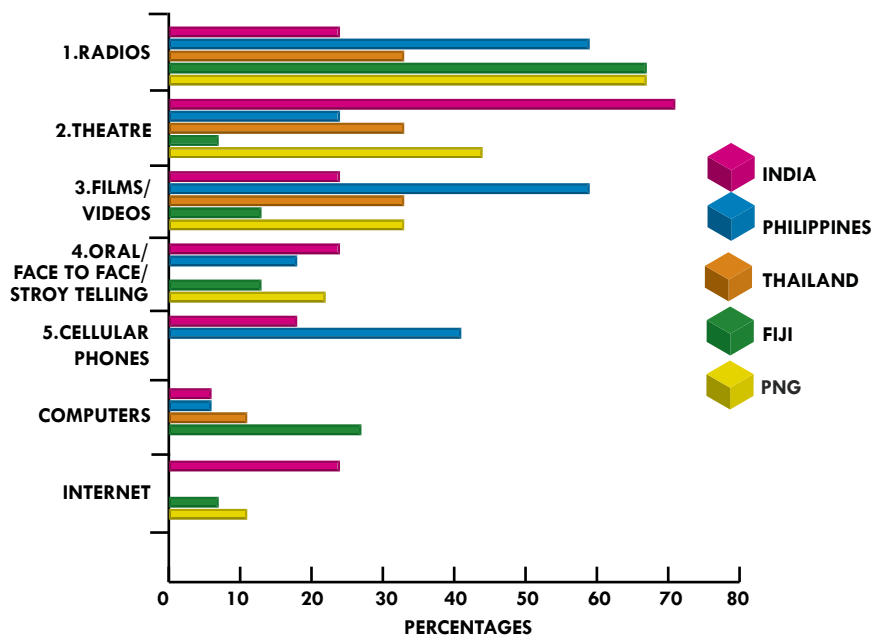
FIGURE 14B. TOP 2 MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS PER COUNTRY
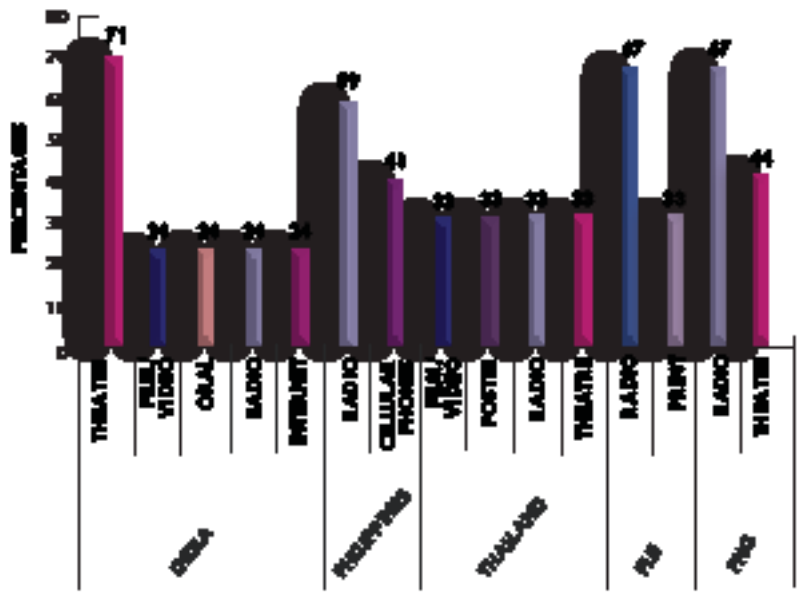
In India, however, theatre is reported as the most effective tool because it tackles tradition, is culturally appropriate, provides therapy and empowerment, and provides lasting impact. Theatre is also reported in Papua New Guinea and figured as the second top effective tool. For the intermediary groups in Papua New Guinea, theatre is effective in delivering awareness programmes on specific topics and is also suitable for communicating in large meetings and gatherings.

Films and videos were also seen as effective. These were the top effective tools for Thailand and the second most effective for India. According to intermediary groups from Thailand, films and videos are effective because of its stimulating visuals (55%) and its ability to disseminate information even to children and illiterate adults.

The cellular phones (15%) are perceived to be effective as it ranked fifth among all 31 communication tools mentioned. However, it is only seen as effective in the Philippines and India. Cellular phones in the Philippines ranked second in the most effective tools. According to intermediary groups from the Philippines, the cellular phone is an effective tool because it sends messages quickly, elicits immediate replies, and is ultimately cheaper on the pocket.

It is interesting to note that Thailand (33%) and Fiji (33%) mentioned posters and other print media as one of their effective tools. In Thailand, posters and stickers are also perceived as effective, especially when they are large and clear, as compared to newsletters. In Fiji, print is likewise effective among women because the form is something they can keep with them for later reading and re-reading.

The new ICTs like computers (10%) and the Internet (9%) ranked tenth and twelfth respectively in the most effective tools in communicating to grassroots women.

The top five reasons why a communication tool is effective are: (1) visually stimulating (53%); (2) interactive and fast (51%); (3) wide reaching coverage (51%); (4) culturally appropriate (41%); and, (5) clear target focus (34%). See Figure 15 for a graph of top five reasons why a tool was effective and Figure 17 for the graph of per country top reason why a tool is effective.

FIGURE 15. REASONS WHY A TOOL IS EFFECTIVE (N=70)
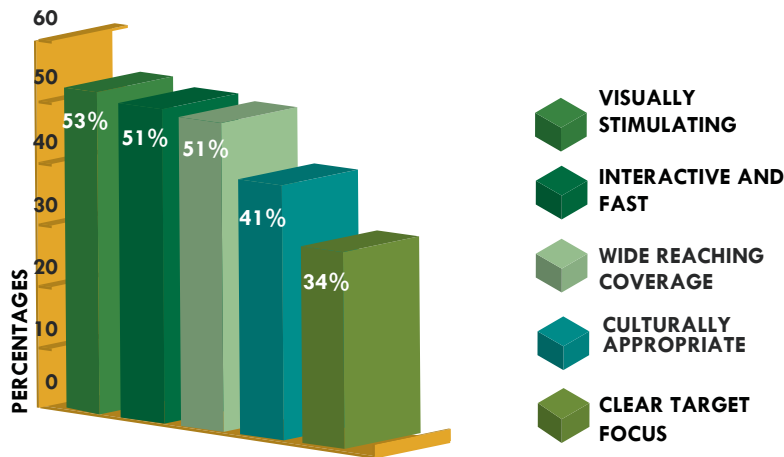
FIGURE 16. TOP REASONS WHY A TOOL IS EFFECTIVE PER COUNTRY
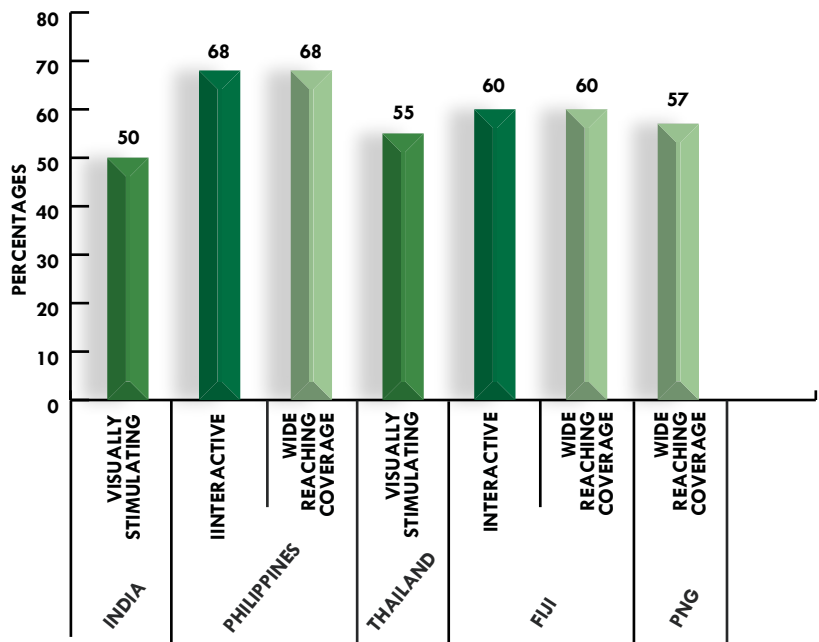
In India, the visually stimulating qualities (50%) of plays, films and banners was the number one reason why the groups decided to use these tools. In Thailand, film or video, posters, radio, and theatre were perceived as the most effective tools. These tools are effective because of their stimulating visuals (55%) and their ability to disseminate information even to children and illiterate adults.

In the Philippines, the wide-reaching coverage (68%) of the tools figured as an important reason for the tool's effectiveness. Wide-reaching coverage could refer to the ability of the tools to reach and disseminate information to far-flung areas and to many people. For example, coverage could refer to the radio's ability to get broadcast in even the most remote areas; it could also refer to the cellular phone's reach or the Internet's ability to bridge even the distances between countries. In Fiji, the radio is the best example of wide reaching coverage (60%) because of its ability to reach women living in even the remotest area. In Papua New Guinea, similar to Fiji, the radio is accessible and can cover a huge area (57%).

The interactive quality of the communication tools is also the second reason why a tool is considered effective. In the Philippines (68%), the cellular phone allows people to receive messages faster and to reply to send messages as soon as they want. The immediate feedback not only cuts back on time and costs, but can also potentially further one's understanding of the issue. In Fiji (60%), a tool is considered effective because it allows the women to comment and share their ideas and feelings about an issue being presented. Since talkback radio is quite popular in Fiji, the women are afforded the chance to discuss with the guest radio speakers the issues that affect them the most.

Two other reasons were found to contribute to a tool's effectiveness. These are cultural appropriateness (in songs, dances, and drama) and clear target focus.

LEAST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND REASONS WHY THE TOOLS WERE INEFFECTIVE

The new ICTs are still considered to be the least effective communication tools. Internet technology (44%) is seen to be the least effective tool in communicating and interacting to grassroots women. It is followed by computers (38%), cellular phones (12%), letters (12%), radio (12%), and TV (10%).

Figure 17 shows the least effective tools in communicating to grassroots women and Figure 18a for the least effective tools across five countries. Table 17 in the annex shows the complete list and frequency breakdown of the least effective communication tools while Table 18 in the annex shows the complete frequency breakdown of the least effective tools per country. Figure 18b shows the least effective tools in communicating to grassroots women per country.

It is consistent in most countries to report the Internet and the computer as the least effective communication tools. This is frequently reported by intermediary groups from Fiji. According to them, computers (83%) pose many limitations for grassroots women. In addition to being an expensive tool, it also requires a set of skills to operate it. It is also very difficult to carry around and to set up. The computer also requires electricity which not all areas have on a sustained basis. If the computer is one of the least effective, then it is no longer surprising to see the Internet (67%) as among the least effective as well. In Papua New Guinea, new ICTs like computers and the Internet might not be easily accessible and if they are, only in some centres for a certain fee.

On the other hand, only India reported that films/videos and posters are the least effective tool in communicating to grassroots women. These tools were deemed ineffective because they were not affordable for the groups. Posters require a great deal of financial resources for printing. The showing of films or videos was mentioned as ineffective because of the absence of electricity in the location as well as because of set-up problems.

FIGURE 17. TOP LEAST EFFECTIVE ICTS (N=50)

INTERNET (1)

COMPUTER (2)

CELLULAR PHONE (3)

LETTERS (3)

RADIO (5)

TV (5)
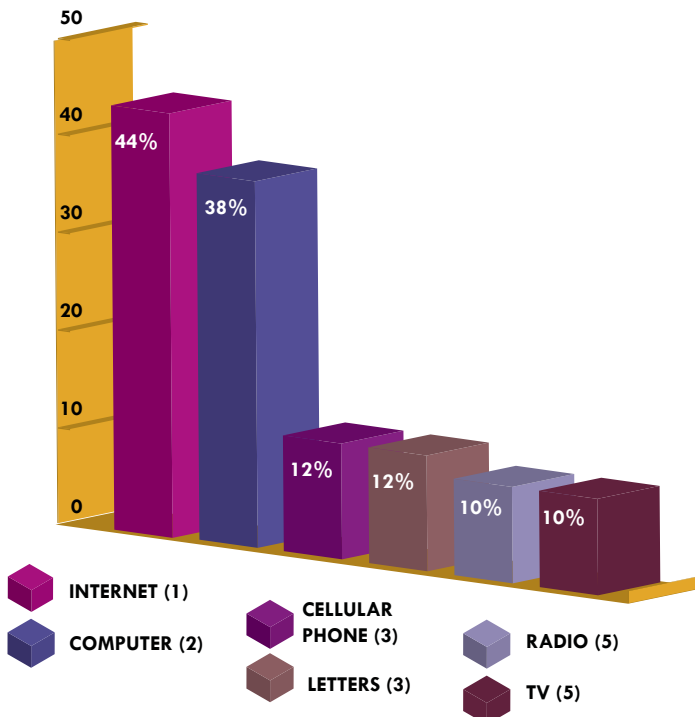
FIGURE 18A. LEAST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS ACROSS 5 COUNTRIES
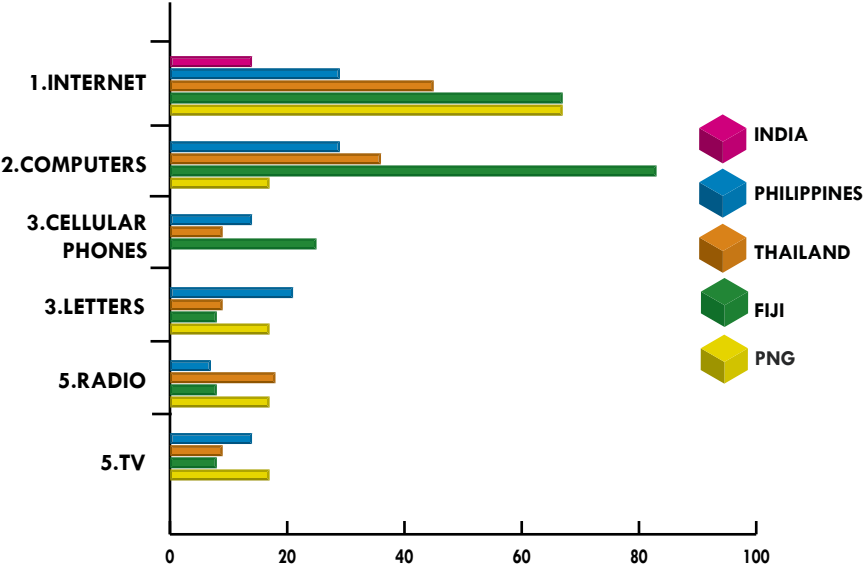
FIGURE 18B. TOP 2 LEAST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS PER COUNTRY
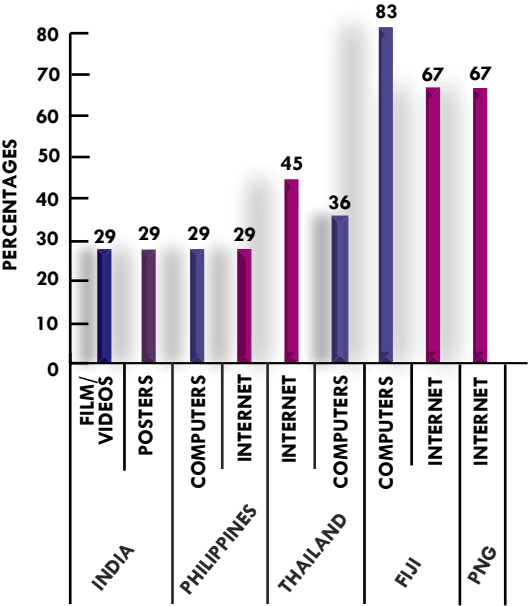
Cellular phones ranked third as the least effective tool in communicating to grassroots women. It was frequently mentioned in Fiji and the Philippines. In Fiji, cellular phones are not yet accessible to many grassroots women primarily due to its high cost. In addition, network problems still exist.

Letters also ranked third as the least effective tool and it was frequently reported by intermediary groups from the Philippines. Letters take several days to arrive unless they are hand carried. This has become particularly evident in light of the popularity of high technology equipment like the cellular phone.

The top five reasons why a communication tool is considered ineffective are: (1) unaffordability (68%); (2) difficulty in setting up or infrastructure and location (60%); (3) lack of skills, training and literacy (46%); (4) limited coverage (35%); and, (5) culturally inappropriate (29%). See Figure 19 for a graph of top five reasons why a tool was considered ineffective and Figure 20 for the graph of top reason why a tool is considered ineffective per country.

Four countries (India, 46%; Thailand, 50%; Fiji, 100%; PNG, 63%) mentioned "not affordable" as the top reason why a certain tool was ineffective. All intermediary groups from Fiji agreed that the costliness of a tool reduces its effectiveness. New ICTs like computers, Internet and the mobile phone are all still beyond the reach of the grassroots. Simply reading emails from a cybercafé proved to be costly as well. Even the "old" tools like TV and newspapers tend to be hard on the pocket for a lot of grassroots. For some organisations in Fiji, using the radio and TV to promote their issues is also a costly endeavor. As mentioned earlier, in Papua New Guinea, new ICTs like computers and the Internet might be accessible in some centres but only for a certain fee. In Thailand, limitations on budget and electricity seemed to be a disadvantage for using the Internet and the computer in rural areas. In India, posters were ineffective because it is not affordable.

In the Philippines the top reason was difficulty in setting up, infrastructure and location (81%). The problem with electricity in many communities and the poor lines were mentioned as hampering communication. In India, most of the intermediary groups mentioned that these tools were ineffective because of lack of skills, training and literacy (46%), as well as other reasons (46%).

FIGURE 19. REASONS WHY A TOOL IS INEFFECTIVE (N=65)
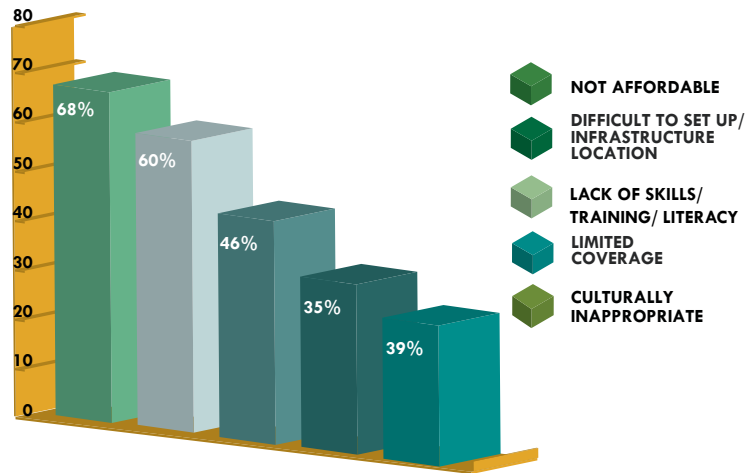
FIGURE 20. TOP REASONS WHY A TOOL IS INEFFECTIVE PER COUNTRY (N=65)
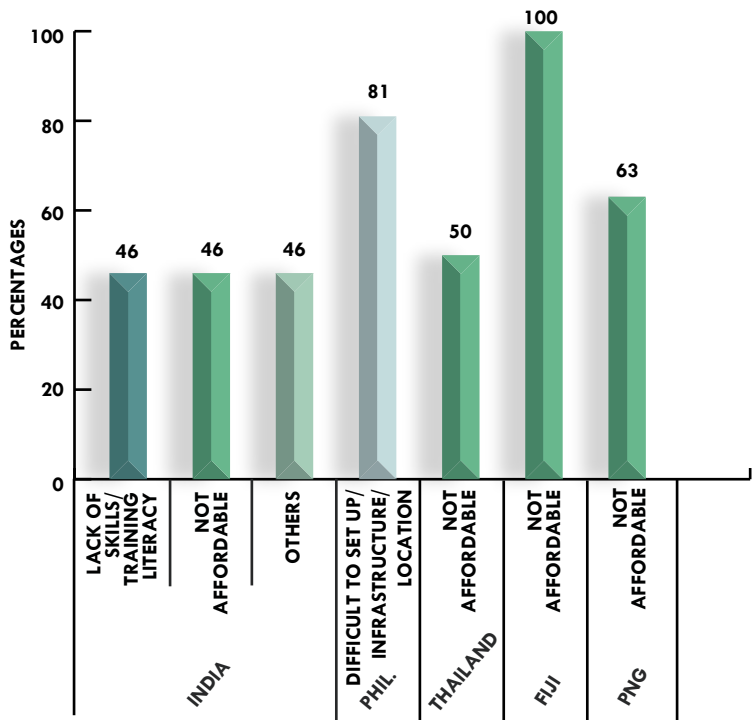
ANNEX COMPLETE TABLE OF FIGURES

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF INTERMEDIARY GROUPS PER COUNTRY

Country	f / %
Philippines	20 / 25
India	19 / 23
Thailand	17 / 21
Fiji	16 / 20
Papua New Guinea	9 / 11
# of organisations that responded	**81 / 100**

TABLE 2. TYPE OF ORGANISATION (BASED ON BENEFICIARIES)

Type	f / %
Grassroots in general	19 / 26
Grassroots women	19 / 26
Others	19 / 26
Women in general	17 / 23
# of organisations that responded	**74 / 100**

TABLE 3. TYPE OF ORGANISATION (BASED ON BENEFICIARIES) PER COUNTRY

Type	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Grassroots in general	0	0	10	50	7	41	2	13	0	0
Grassroots women	7	54	5	25	3	18	3	19	1	13
Women in general	5	38	3	15	6	35	3	19	2	25
Others	1	8	2	10	1	6	8	50	5	63
# of organisations that responded	**13**	**100**	**20**	**100**	**17**	**100**	**16**	**100**	**8**	**100**

TABLE 4A. MISSION/THRUST OF THE ORGANISATION (N=78)

Mission/Thrust	f / %
Training/ Capacity Building	56 / 72
Education/ Information Building	48 / 62
Services	45 / 58
Advocacy	41 / 53
Networking	40 / 51
Research	34 / 44
Organising/ Community building	23 / 29
Economic Empowerment	19 / 24
Governance	7 / 9
Others	7 / 9
Gender Mainstreaming	3 / 4
# of organisations that responded	**78 / 100**

TABLE 4B. MISSION/THRUST OF THE ORGANISATION PER COUNTRY

Mission/ Thrust	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
Training/ Capacity Building	11	79	18	90	11	65	11	69	5	63
Education/ Information Building	8	57	11	55	15	88	10	63	4	50
Services	10	71	16	80	10	59	8	50	1	13
Advocacy	9	64	16	80	6	35	9	56	1	13
Networking	7	50	15	75	11	65	5	31	2	25
Research	10	71	12	60	7	41	5	31	0	0
Organising/ Community building	2	14	16	80	2	12	2	13	1	13
Economic Empowerment	1	7	10	50	2	12	6	38	0	0
Governance	1	7	3	15	1	6	1	6	1	13
Others	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	75
Gender Mainstreaming	2	14	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
# of organisations that responded	**17**	**100**	**20**	**100**	**17**	**100**	**16**	**100**	**8**	**100**

TABLE 5A: STRATEGY IN COMMUNICATING WITH BENEFICIARIES (N=77)

Strategy	f / %
Training/ Capacity Building	50 / 65
Education/ Consciousness Raising	45 / 58
Networking/ Linkages	33 / 43
Service delivery	28 / 36
Advocacy/ Mobilisations	19 / 25
Organising/ Community building	18 / 23
Research/ Documentation	11 / 14
Economic Empowerment	7 / 9
Others	4 / 5
# of organisations that responded	**77 / 100**

TABLE 5B. STRATEGY IN COMMUNICATING WITH BENEFICIARIES PER COUNTRY (N=77)

Strategy	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Training/ Capacity Building	17	89	12	60	8	57	6	40	7	78
Education/ Consciousness Raising	10	53	13	65	9	64	10	67	3	33
Networking/ Linkages	6	32	8	40	7	50	9	60	3	33
Service delivery	8	42	7	35	10	71	2	13	1	11
Advocacy/ Mobilisations	6	32	4	20	6	43	0	0	3	33
Organising/ Community building	4	21	11	55	2	14	1	7	0	0
Research/ Documentation	4	21	0	0	6	43	1	7	0	0
Economic Empowerment	0	0	3	15	4	29	0	0	0	0
Others	1	5	1	5	0	0	1	7	1	11
# of organisations that responded	**19**	**100**	**20**	**100**	**14**	**100**	**15**	**100**	**9**	**100**

TABLE 6A. USES OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS (N=80)

Uses	f / %
Education	61 / 76
Training	56 / 70
Advocacy	42 / 53
Announcement	32 / 40
Administrative	30 / 38

Research	16 / 20

TABLE 6A. CONTINUED

Uses	f / %
Networking	14 / 18
Others	12 / 15
Organising	9 / 11
Services	6 / 8
Governance	5 / 6
Gender Mainstreaming	3 / 4
Economic Empowerment	1 / 1
# of organisations that responded	**80 / 100**

TABLE 6B. USES OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS PER COUNTRY

Uses	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
Education	14	74	13	65	15	94	13	81	6	67
Training	13	68	14	70	11	69	10	63	8	89
Advocacy	11	58	12	60	6	38	6	38	7	78
Announcement	5	26	12	60	5	31	6	38	4	44
Administrative	7	37	0	0	11	69	11	69	1	11
Research	5	26	5	25	2	13	4	25	0	0
Networking	3	16	5	25	0	0	4	25	2	22
Others	3	16	4	20	4	25	0	0	1	11
Organising	1	5	6	30	0	0	0	0	2	22
Services	3	16	2	10	1	6	0	0	0	0
Governance	2	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	33
Gender Mainstreaming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	33
Economic Empowerment	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
# of organisations that responded	**19**	**100**	**20**	**100**	**16**	**100**	**16**	**100**	**9**	**100**

TABLE 7. COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED BY INTERMEDIARY GROUPS (N=80)

Rank	Tools	f	%
1	Film/ Video	62	78
2	Radio	58	73

517

3	Theatre	54	68

TABLE 7. CONTINUED

Rank	Tools	f	%
4	Computer (**New ICT!**)	42	53
4	Landline Phones	42	53
4	Others	42	53
7	Posters	39	49
8	Book	37	46
8	Internet (**New ICT!**)	37	46
10	Pamphlets	33	41
11	Fax	31	39
12	Songs	30	38
13	Photo	29	36
14	Newsletter	27	34
15	Cellular phone (**New ICT!**)	25	31
15	Oral/ Story telling	25	31
15	Print Materials (general)	25	31
18	TV	24	30
19	Leaflets	23	29
19	Letters	23	29
19	Miscellaneous Papers	23	29
22	Newspaper	18	23
23	Overhead Projector (OHP)	16	20
24	Magazine	15	19
24	Slides	15	19
26	Stickers	14	18
27	Placards/ Streamers	12	15
28	Flag	10	13
29	Comics	8	10
30	Dance	4	5
31	Puppet	3	4
	# of organisations that responded	**80**	**100**

TABLE 8. COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED BY INTERMEDIARY GROUPS PER COUNTRY

Rank	Tools	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
		f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
1	Film/ Video	18	95	18	90	16	94	10	63	0	0
2	Radio	8	42	16	80	15	88	13	81	6	75
3	Theatre	19	100	14	70	8	47	7	44	6	75
4	Computer (**New ICT!**)	7	37	14	70	10	59	11	69	0	0
4	Landline Phones	7	37	9	45	15	88	9	56	2	25
4	Others	17	89	11	55	5	29	4	25	5	63
7	Posters	11	58	8	40	12	71	4	25	4	50
8	Book	11	58	6	30	9	53	5	31	6	75
8	Internet (**New ICT!**)	8	42	8	40	12	71	9	56	0	0
10	Pamphlets	5	26	10	50	5	29	7	44	6	75
11	Fax	5	26	9	45	10	59	7	44	0	0
12	Songs	13	68	6	30	7	41	3	19	1	13
13	Photo	9	47	12	60	5	29	2	13	1	13
14	Newsletter	4	21	6	30	5	29	10	63	2	25
15	Cellular phone (**New ICT!**)	5	26	13	65	6	35	1	6	0	0
15	Oral/ Story telling	11	58	5	25	0	0	7	44	2	25
15	Print Materials (general)	2	11	4	20	9	53	8	50	2	25
18	TV	5	26	10	50	6	35	3	19	0	0
19	Leaflets	5	26	8	40	2	12	4	25	4	50
19	Letters	3	16	9	45	4	24	4	25	3	38
19	Miscellaneous Papers	0	0	12	60	4	24	7	44	0	0
22	Newspaper	3	16	2	10	7	41	6	38	0	0
23	OHP	2	11	3	15	4	24	7	44	0	0
24	Magazine	5	26	6	30	1	6	3	19	0	0
24	Slides	2	11	7	35	4	24	1	6	1	13
26	Stickers	1	5	4	20	7	41	0	0	2	25
27	Placards/ Streamers	1	5	7	35	0	0	1	6	3	38
28	Flag	0	0	2	10	3	18	0	0	5	63
29	Comics	1	5	6	30	1	6	0	0	0	0
30	Dance	0	0	1	5	2	12	1	6	0	0
31	Puppet	2	11	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0
	# of organisations that responded	19	100	20	100	17	100	16	100	8	100

TABLE 9. COMMUNICATION TOOLS MOST ACCESSIBLE TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN (N=60)

Rank	Most accessible tools	f	%
1	Radio	38	63
2	Film/ Video	19	32
3	Cellular phone **(New ICT!)**	18	30
4	Landline Phones	14	23
5	Theatre	13	22
6	Letters	9	15
6	TV	9	15
8	Posters	8	13
8	Songs	8	13
10	Book	7	12
10	Computer **(New ICT!)**	7	12
10	Leaflets	7	12
10	Miscellaneous Papers	7	12
10	Newsletter	7	12
10	Oral/ Story telling	7	12
10	Others	7	12
10	Pamphlets	7	12
10	Print Materials (general)	7	12
19	Magazine	6	10
20	Slides	5	8
21	Fax	4	7
21	Internet **(New ICT!)**	4	7
21	Photo	4	7
24	Newspaper	3	5
25	Placards/ Streamers	2	3
25	Stickers	2	3
27	Comics	1	2
27	Dance	1	2
27	Flag	1	2
27	OHP	1	2
27	Puppet	1	2
	# of organisations that responded	**60**	**100**

TABLE 10. COMMUNICATION TOOLS MOST ACCESSIBLE TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN PER COUNTRY

Rank	Most accessible tools per country	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
		F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Radio	3	30	9	53	8	62	15	94	3	75
2	Film/ Video	3	30	8	47	1	8	4	25	3	75
3	Cellular phone (**New ICT!**)	4	40	12	71	1	8	1	6	0	0
4	Landline Phones	0	0	3	18	4	31	5	31	2	50
5	Theatre	4	40	3	18	2	15	3	19	1	25
6	Letters	1	10	4	24	0	0	3	19	1	25
6	TV	1	10	4	24	1	8	3	19	0	0
8	Posters	1	10	2	12	0	0	1	6	4	100
8	Songs	3	30	3	18	0	0	2	13	0	0
10	Book	0	0	2	12	0	0	3	19	2	50
10	Computer (**New ICT!**)	0	0	2	12	1	8	3	19	1	25
10	Leaflets	0	0	5	29	0	0	2	13	0	0
10	Miscellaneous Papers	0	0	6	35	0	0	1	6	0	0
10	Newsletter	1	10	1	6	1	8	2	13	2	50
10	Oral/ Story telling	0	0	2	12	0	0	4	25	1	25
10	Others	3	30	1	6	0	0	1	6	2	50
10	Pamphlets	0	0	2	12	0	0	2	13	3	75
10	Print Materials (general)	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	31	2	50
19	Magazine	1	10	3	18	0	0	0	0	2	50
20	Slides	0	0	3	18	0	0	0	0	2	50
21	Fax	1	10	2	12	0	0	0	0	1	25
21	Internet (**New ICT!**)	0	0	2	12	0	0	1	6	1	25
21	Photo	1	10	3	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Newspaper	0	0	1	6	0	0	2	13	0	0
25	Placards/ Streamers	0	0	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	Stickers	1	10	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	Comics	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	Dance	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	Flag	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	OHP	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0
27	Puppet	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	# of organisations that responded	**10**	**100**	**17**	**100**	**13**	**100**	**16**	**100**	**4**	**100**

TABLE 11. COMMUNICATION TOOLS LEAST ACCESSIBLE
TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN (N=48)

Rank	Least accessible tools	f	%
1	Internet (**New ICT!**)	30	63
2	Computer (**New ICT!**)	29	60
3	Cellular phone (**New ICT!**)	20	42
4	Landline Phones	16	33
5	TV	15	31
6	Radio	9	19
7	Fax	5	10
8	Film/ Video	4	8
8	Newspaper	4	8
10	Posters	3	6
11	Leaflets	2	4
11	Miscellaneous Papers	2	4
11	Newsletter	2	4
11	Oral/ Story telling	2	4
11	Stickers	2	4
16	Letters	1	2
16	Magazine	1	2
16	OHP	1	2
16	Pamphlets	1	2
16	Theatre	1	2
	# of organisations that responded	**48**	**100**

TABLE 12. COMMUNICATION TOOLS LEAST ACCESSIBLE
TO GRASSROOTS WOMEN PER COUNTRY

Rank	Least accessible tools per country	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Internet (**New ICT!**)	5	56	13	76	0	0	9	60	3	60
2	Computer (**New ICT!**)	4	44	8	47	1	50	13	87	3	60
3	Cellular phone (**New ICT!**)	2	22	8	47	1	50	7	47	2	40
4	Landline Phones	0	0	5	29	1	50	8	53	2	40
5	TV	2	22	7	41	0	0	4	27	2	40

Rank		India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
6	Radio	3	33	6	35	0	0	0	0	0	0

TABLE 12. CONTINUED

Rank	Least accessible tools per country	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
8	Film/ Video	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	7	2	40
8	Newspaper	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	27	0	0
10	Posters	1	11	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Leaflets	1	11	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Miscellaneous Papers	0	0	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Newsletter	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	7	0	0
11	Oral/ Story telling	0	0	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Stickers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	40
16	Letters	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0
16	Magazine	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0
16	OHP	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0
16	Pamphlets	1	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Theatre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20
	# of organisations that responded	9	100	17	100	2	100	15	100	5	100

TABLE 13. MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS (N=67)

Rank	Most effective tools	f	%
1	Radio	33	49
2	Theatre	24	36
3	Film/ Video	17	25
4	Oral/ Story telling	11	16
5	Cellular phone **(New ICT!)**	10	15
5	Print Materials (general)	10	15
5	TV	10	15
8	Others	9	13
9	Songs	8	12
10	Computer **(New ICT!)**	7	10
10	Posters	7	10
12	Internet **(New ICT!)**	6	9
13	Book	5	7
14	Letters	4	6

Rank	Most effective tools	f	%
14	Newspaper	4	6

TABLE 13. CONTINUED

Rank	Most effective tools	f	%
16	Landline Phones	3	4
16	Miscellaneous Papers	3	4
16	Placards/ Streamers	3	4
19	Fax	2	3
19	Newsletter	2	3
19	Pamphlets	2	3
19	Photo	2	3
23	Comics	1	1
23	Magazine	1	1
23	OHP	1	1
23	Slides	1	1
	## of organisations that responded	67	100

TABLE 14. MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS PER COUNTRY

Rank	Most effective tools per country	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Theatre	12	71	4	24	3	33	1	7	4	44
2	Radio	4	24	10	59	3	33	10	67	6	67
3	Film/ Video	4	24	5	29	3	33	2	13	3	33
4	Book	2	12	0	0	1	11	0	0	2	22
5	Oral/ Story telling	4	24	3	18	0	0	2	13	2	22
6	Cellular phone (New ICT!)	3	18	7	41	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Print Materials (general)	1	6	1	6	1	11	5	33	2	22
6	TV	1	6	5	29	2	22	2	13	0	0
9	Others	5	29	1	6	0	0	1	7	2	22
10	Songs	4	24	0	0	2	22	0	0	2	22
11	Computer (New ICT!)	1	6	1	6	1	11	4	27	0	0
11	Posters	2	12	0	0	3	33	1	7	1	11
13	Internet (New ICT!)	4	24	0	0	0	0	1	7	1	11
14	Letters	0	0	1	6	0	0	2	13	1	11
14	Newspaper	2	12	0	0	0	0	2	13	0	0

Rank		India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
16	Landline Phones	0	0	0	0	2	22	1	7	0	0

TABLE 14. CONTINUED

Rank	Most effective tools per country	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
16	Miscellaneous Papers	0	0	1	6	0	0	2	13	0	0
16	Placards/ Streamers	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11
19	Fax	0	0	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	Newsletter	0	0	0	0	1	11	1	7	0	0
19	Pamphlets	0	0	1	6	1	11	0	0	0	0
19	Photo	1	6	0	0	1	11	0	0	0	0
23	Comics	0	0	0	0	1	11	0	0	0	0
23	Magazine	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0
23	OHP	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0
23	Slides	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0
	# of organisations that responded	17	100	17	100	9	100	15	100	9	100

TABLE 15. REASONS WHY A COMMUNICATION TOOL IS CONSIDERED EFFECTIVE (N=70)

Reasons why tool is effective	f	%
Visually stimulating	37	53
Interactive and fast	36	51
Wide reaching coverage	36	51
Culturally appropriate	29	41
Clear target focus	24	34
Others	23	33
Affordable	22	31
Lasting Impact	21	30
Written Form	15	21
Easy to set up/ Infrastructure/ Location	11	16
Has Skills/ Training/ Literacy	8	11
# of organisations that responded	**70**	**100**

TABLE 16. REASONS WHY A COMMUNICATION TOOL
                 IS CONSIDERED EFFECTIVE PER COUNTRY

Reasons why tool is effective per country	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Visually stimulating	9	50	12	63	6	55	8	53	2	29
Interactive and fast	8	44	13	68	4	36	9	60	2	29
Wide reaching coverage	8	44	13	68	2	18	9	60	4	57
Culturally appropriate	8	44	9	47	4	36	5	33	3	43
Clear target focus	4	22	11	58	3	27	5	33	1	14
Others	7	39	3	16	5	45	5	33	3	43
Affordable	8	44	7	37	1	9	6	40	0	0
Lasting Impact	5	28	11	58	0	0	5	33	0	0
Written Form	2	11	6	32	2	18	5	33	0	0
Easy to set up/ Infrastructure/ Location	1	6	5	26	0	0	5	33	0	0
Has Skills/ Training/ Literacy	1	6	5	26	0	0	2	13	0	0
# of organisations that responded	**18**	**100**	**19**	**100**	**11**	**100**	**15**	**100**	**7**	**100**

TABLE 17. LEAST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS (N=50)

Rank	Least effective tools	f	%
1	Internet (**New ICT!**)	22	44
2	Computer (**New ICT!**)	19	38
3	Cellular phone (**New ICT!**)	6	12
3	Letters	6	12
5	Radio	5	10
5	TV	5	10
7	Book	4	8
7	Film/ Video	4	8
9	Landline Phones	3	6
9	Newsletter	3	6
9	Posters	3	6
9	Print Materials (general)	3	6
9	Slides	3	6
14	OHP	2	4
14	Theatre	2	4

| 16 | Newspaper | 1 | 2 |

TABLE 17. CONTINUED

Rank	Least effective tools	f	%
16	Oral/ Story telling	1	2
16	Pamphlets	1	2
16	Songs	1	2
16	Stickers	1	2
	# of organisations that responded	**50**	**100**

TABLE 18. LEAST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS PER COUNTRY

Rank	Least effective tools	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Internet (**New ICT!**)	1	14	4	29	5	45	8	67	4	67
2	Computer (**New ICT!**)	0	0	4	29	4	36	10	83	1	17
3	Cellular phone (**New ICT!**)	0	0	2	14	1	9	3	25	0	0
3	Letters	0	0	3	21	1	9	1	8	1	17
5	Radio	0	0	1	7	2	18	1	8	1	17
5	TV	0	0	2	14	1	9	1	8	1	17
7	Book	0	0	3	21	1	9	0	0	0	0
7	Film/ Video	2	29	0	0	1	9	0	0	1	17
9	Landline Phones	0	0	0	0	1	9	1	8	1	17
9	Newsletter	0	0	0	0	1	9	1	8	1	17
9	Posters	2	29	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	0
9	Print Materials (general)	0	0	0	0	2	18	1	8	0	0
9	Slides	0	0	0	0	1	9	1	8	1	17
14	OHP	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	0	0
14	Theatre	1	14	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	0
16	Newspaper	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Oral/ Story telling	0	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Pamphlets	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	0
16	Songs	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	0
16	Stickers	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	0
	# of organisations that responded	7	100	14	100	11	100	12	100	6	100

TABLE 19. REASONS WHY A COMMUNICATION TOOL
IS CONSIDERED LEAST EFFECTIVE (N=65)

Reasons why tool is least effective	f	%
Not Affordable	44	68
Difficult to set up/ Infrastructure/ Location	39	60
Lack of Skills/ Training/ Literacy	30	46
Limited Coverage	23	35
Culturally inappropriate	19	29
Others	14	22
Not interactive	13	20
Written Form	10	15
Diffused target focus	5	8
Not very stimulating	3	5
No lasting impact	2	3
# of organisations that responded	**65**	**100**

TABLE 20. REASONS WHY A COMMUNICATION TOOL
IS CONSIDERED LEAST EFFECTIVE PER COUNTRY

Reasons why tool is effective per country	India		Philippines		Thailand		Fiji		PNG	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Not Affordable	6	46	11	69	6	50	16	100	5	63
Difficult to set up/ Infrastructure/ Location	4	31	13	81	5	42	13	81	4	50
Lack of Skills/ Training/ Literacy	6	46	8	50	2	17	11	69	3	38
Limited Coverage	2	15	8	50	3	25	6	38	4	50
Culturally inappropriate	3	23	6	38	3	25	7	44	0	0
Others	6	46	1	6	4	33	0	0	3	38
Not interactive	1	8	4	25	2	17	5	31	1	13
Written Form	1	8	7	44	0	0	2	13	0	0
Diffused target focus	1	8	3	19	0	0	1	6	0	0
Not very stimulating	0	0	0	0	2	17	1	6	0	0
No lasting impact	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	6	0	0
# of organisations that responded	**13**	**100**	**16**	**100**	**12**	**100**	**16**	**100**	**8**	**100**

HOW INTERMEDIARY GROUPS VIEW EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN 5 ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES

WHAT IS EMPOWERMENT?

5 main themes emerged across the 5 countries on the meaning of empowerment: [1] economic independence, [2] political participation, [3] community organising or solidarity-building, [4] individual agency or self-transformation, and [5] societal transformation. Family transformation was a theme that emerged in the Philippines.

- **Economic independence** meant making women financially independent across the 5 countries. Economic independence as a step to end women's subservience and violence against women was cited in the Philippines. Economic independence as leading to women's greater confidence was noted in the Philippines and PNG. Economic independence however was focused on accessing money for women's projects in Thailand and was geared towards basic needs of communities and the issue of land in Fiji.

- **Political participation** was described across the 5 countries largely in terms of the intermediary groups' various activities on legislation and governance. Some were specific to women whereas others pertained to communities and peoples in general. Political participation for women was commonly defined in terms of women knowing and asserting their rights across all 5 countries. Political decision-making

in terms of women's leadership in positions of governance was extensively discussed in the Philippines and Fiji and were also mentioned in Thailand and PNG. Political participation was more in terms of communities negotiating with the government in India and not in terms of women seeking elective positions.

- **Community-organising and solidarity-building** held a similar meaning for intermediary groups in India and the Philippines where women were described as having a shared struggle against common oppression and injustice. Specifically mentioned was putting an end to violence against women. The meaning of community-organising was in terms of alliances and networks in Thailand and communities making their own decisions in Fiji. Solidarity amidst diverse ethnicities and faiths was also mentioned in Fiji. PNG, on the other hand, cited intermediary groups as strengthening women's solidarity towards coming together and forming organisations with women's issues as the main agenda.

- **Individual agency or self-transformation** was the most expounded theme of empowerment across all 5 countries. Within this theme are many dimensions of the transformed self: (1) self-worth/awareness (e.g., realising one's value), (2) personality (e.g, developing confidence), (3) expression (e.g., being able to speak and interact), (4) independence/freedom, (5) control (e.g., making one's own decisions), and (6) rights/society (e.g., becoming a leader and contributing to society).

- **Family transformation** was a unique theme that emerged in the Philippines and referred to the need to address the root of gender inequality in the home. Intermediary groups promote equal sharing of power in the home and encourage men in particular to be part of the social change process.

- Finally, **societal transformation** was included as a main theme given specific social issues raised in relation to empowerment in all countries except Thailand. India in particular talked about changing discourses that speak ill of women. The Philippines cited the issues of peace and the environment. Fiji mentioned a creation of a culture of concern in the society regarding social issues. PNG referred to transformation in the way society views individuals, specifically in the way men view women.

Empowerment is…	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
Economic Independence	• strengthening women's economic means through capacity-building, natural resource management, handicraft development, education, savings and credit activities, legal aid, and local self-governance • increasing women's income-earning ability • training • supporting women's income-generating activities • teaching women about financial investments; economic literacy; how to budget money; how to invest in education	• economic independence as primary for grassroots women's empowerment • economic independence as a step to ending women's subservience • economic independence as a step to preventing violence against women • economic independence as increasing women's confidence & self-esteem • addressing the issue of equitable distribution of wealth • engaging in microfinance loans, savings, forms of livelihood, education, skills training, financial management, and values teaching for grassroots women
Political Participation	• [**intermediary group**] has a programme on legal rights; initiates public campaigns; <u>evolves feminist and human rights jurisprudence</u>; does legislative advocacy; provides legal expertise; <u>informs women about laws for preventing violence</u>; distributes materials & resources; initiates training programmes; produces cultural events; <u>negotiates with government</u> to discuss community problems; <u>holds government and non-government bodies accountable</u> to the development process; <u>creates spaces for dialogue</u> between grassroots women and government bodies	• [**intermediary group**] teaches women to know and assert their rights; <u>makes the laws accessible to grassroots women</u>; pushes for legislative reforms; <u>pushes for gender-responsive governance</u>; <u>pushes for women-friendly/community-friendly laws</u>; engages in legislative lobbying; enforces government responsibility • [**women**] <u>knowing their rights</u>; asserting their rights; <u>participating in leadership</u> positions at all levels of governance especially at the barangay or community level

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
• distributing money for projects promoting women's economic independence • finding money • helping in business, financial management, marketing, product development • struggling to get women's projects funded by government (e.g., Tambol Organizations) • developing alliances	• dealing with issues of land, poverty, & squatter settlements • teaching communities how to look for sources of livelihood • teaching communities how to invest in education • addressing lack of access to basic goods such as education, health, employment, land, services, & infrastructure together with communication tools • helping people meet basic needs before new ICTs • running skills-building & income-generating programmes • communities developing action plans to reduce poverty • communities putting up small-scale businesses	• empowering women in terms of economic sufficiency • making women financially independent • economic independence increases women's self-confidence • meeting basic needs is a prerequisite to empowerment – the capacity to contribute positively to one's family, community, parish, and society
• [**intermediary group**] <u>acts as consultant to the government</u>; campaigns and hold trainings for women's rights and women's political participation; trains women to take part in Tambol (local governance); gathers women's proposals for political reform; engages in international mechanisms; coordinates with organisations regarding platforms drawn from women in the community; does research on effects of government policies on women and communities; engages in leadership and governance; works with government; enforces government responsibility; advocates for laws; trains women on how to use laws	• [**intermediary group**] teaches women how to exercise their rights; lobbies for legislative change; trains and educates women to effect social change; facilitates dialogue between community and government; <u>informs grassroots women of what is happening at the national level</u>; lobbies government to be accountable & uphold its responsibilities to communities • [**women**] <u>knowing their rights &</u> how to access their rights; knowing how to effect social change; <u>taking part in dialogues</u> with the government; <u>participating in political decision-making</u>; participating in decision-making at the club, parish, community, national, & international levels	• [**intermediary group**] engages in legislative advocacy to <u>further women's issues</u> and peace advocacy; collects and disseminates useful information on laws for communities; <u>works with the village court system, especially for tribal fights</u>; evolves feminist and human rights jurisprudence • [**women**] <u>participating in political decision-making</u> • [**people**] knowing their rights & how to assert their rights

Empowerment is...	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
Community Organising / Solidarity Building	• **women** coming together; uniting and sharing experiences; collaborating; forming g roups; networking; giving each other support and security; becoming part of a collective • **women** fighting for their rights; fighting against common injustice; putting a stop to domestic violence; organised their common identities and struggles • **women** acting not only for themselves but for their communities	• **women** having a sense of solidarity with other women; seeing themselves as part of a greater whole/community; seeing themselves as part of one nation • **women** sharing their stories of inspiration with each other • women organising; coming together as an organised group • **women** bonding together against common oppression; sharing a sense of common injustice and a commitment to eradicate violence • **specific groups of women** bonding together (battered women, homeworkers, migrant workers)
Individual Agency/ Self-Transformation	SELF-WORTH/ AWARENESS • internalises knowledge; prioritises her health and her self; continues to use symbols of empowerment PERSONALITY • develops confidence, courage, self-assurance EXPRESSION • able to express, talk, and negotiate with other parties INDEPENDENCE/ FREEDOM • gains independence CONTROL • makes informed choices, makes her own decisions, controls all aspects of her life, takes charge of her own body	SELF-WORTH/ AWARENESS • increases level of awareness; internalises knowledge; regains her self-worth; learns to focus on her self and her personal development PERSONALITY • develops confidence, creativity, imagination, critical thinking, innovativeness EXPRESSION • able to express, speak up, assert, interact, communicate, & face other people INDEPENDENCE/ FREEDOM • gains independence, self-sufficiency, and the capacity to solve her own problems

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
• [**intermediary group**] organises and strengthens alliance network or promotes community network development	• **communities** making their own decisions for change • creating safe spaces for people of different ethnicities and faiths, in order for solidarity to flourish amidst these diversities	• [**intermediary group**] engaging the community; strengthening women's solidarity; strengthening group participation; disseminating information to facilitate solidarity; giving women strength to carry on their work; <u>trying to form an organisation with women's issues as the main agenda</u> • **women** networking; feeling they are "part of something bigger"; feeling they are not alone in facing gender inequality
SELF-WORTH/ AWARENESS • recognises her values as a human being; feels no shame; lives up to her potential • PERSONALITY • develops confidence, courage, creativity EXPRESSION • able to express her own thoughts and feelings, to communicate, speak out, share her problems, share her experiences, and confront her husband on a personal level INDEPENDENCE/ FREEDOM • gains independence, autonomy, self-reliance, & the capacity to organise things on her own	SELF-WORTH/ AWARENESS • raises one's awareness; realises one's resources within PERSONALITY • develops confidence, self-esteem CONTROL • able to stand up for one's choices • claims one's right to one's own body RIGHTS/ SOCIETY • able to access basic health services • able to be a leader • able to engage with other stakeholders – government, intermediary groups, donors, agencies	SELF-WORTH/ AWARENESS • realises her basic human rights PERSONALITY • develops confidence EXPRESSION • able to speak out, speak up, and ask for help when needed INDEPENDENCE/ FREEDOM • gains independence, self-determinism, self-sustenance, self-sufficiency, the power to help her self • gains freedom (especially from men or husbands) CONTROL • makes her own decisions; knows which step to take next

Empowerment is...	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
	RIGHTS/ SOCIETY • able to give her own perspective on issues • able to be a leader • able to help herself and others • develops strength to question society & interrogate why society has marginalised women	CONTROL • makes informed choices, makes her own decisions, directs her own life, controls her own body RIGHTS/ SOCIETY • able to be a leader • participates in decision-making processes in the family, community, and larger society
Family Transformation		• [**intermediary group**] sees the need to address the root of gender inequality in the home; to dispel the notion that wives are obligated to follow their husbands • [**intermediary group**] envisions equal sharing of power between women and men in the home • [**intermediary group**] encourages women to actively question and reflect on their roles; makes mothers realise they have lives apart from their children • [**intermediary group**] involves men in social change; teaches men to move beyond their macho attitudes, to help in the home, to listen to and appreciate their wives more • [**intermediary group**] envisions ending gender stereotyping in children

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
CONTROL • makes her own decisions RIGHTS/SOCIETY • gains liberation (from cultural shackles that bind) • gains freedom (from grief and oppression) • able to be a leader (takes on leadership roles) • participates in society • values social responsibility • able to help others SPECIFIC ISSUES • working against the negative stigma against women sex workers and women survivors of violence • addressing and preventing violence against women and children		RIGHTS/ SOCIETY • gains freedom from violence and discrimination • stands up for her rights; makes a stand against violence and discrimination within her family and the larger world • able to help her community • forms her own organisation • dialogues with men (previously forbidden) OTHERS • [**intermediary group**] envisions holistic development of person – spiritual, material, social growth

Empowerment is...	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
Societal Transformation	• infiltrating discourses and everyday knowledges that vilify or speak ill of women • transforming traditional beliefs about women • incorporating women's perspectives into the public discourse	• addressing specific social issues such as peace and the environment

WHEN IS INFORMATION EMPOWERING?

Fourteen (14) themes emerged on what makes information empowering across the intermediary groups interviewed in the 5 countries. The top 3 themes were shared across all the 5 countries. First, information is empowering when it is accessible. Accessibility is primarily in terms of language and suitability or appropriateness of information and tools to the target group or community. Second, information is empowering when it is accurate. Accuracy is defined as based on research and data gathered from the ground or from the group or community. Third, information is empowering if it is transformative or leads to change.

The fourth and fifth most common themes were cited in all countries except PNG. Information is empowering if based on interactive dialogue. Dialogue is often referred to as two-way communication, consultation, listening, and feedback. The fifth theme revolves on the utility of information. Information that is practical and can be useful in everyday life is deemed empowering.

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
• changing social structures that affect people's lives • altering the way society views certain individuals and issues • making people more understanding of others • sharpening the skills through which society members become more aware of the issues that surround the community	• developing a culture of concern regarding social issues • creating a culture of peace; peace-building, restorative justice, & non-violence	• society sees everyone as an equal partner; having equal rights; having equal responsibilities • transforming men; changing men's attitudes towards women; making men aware of the consequences of violence • changing leaders' attitudes towards women • making the community understand the roots of violence • peace-building; making women involved in peace-building

Other themes that emerged point to empowering information as easily accessible, constantly updated, continuously repeated, based on trust, and involved the people in the process. India specifically mentioned how information built on existing discourses is empowering such that counter-discourses must be linked to what currently exists. Thailand highlighted how information must be nonjudgmental, specifically in reference to stigmatised groups, and how information must target women. Lastly, PNG cited that including an understanding of men in order to help change men makes information empowering.

Information is empowering if it is…	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
1 > accessible or suitable to the community.	– clear and direct messages; in the local language, Hindi; considers translation issues from English to Hindi; simple and not theoretical or academic; accounts for cultural differences; sensitive to gender, class, and caste	– in a format and language that people can understand; in popular form, not alienating, not intimidating; approach is suited to the characteristics of the target group (e.g. by age) and the local culture
2 > accurate or based on research from the ground.	– gathers information from the grassroots women themselves; gives importance to record-keeping & proper documentation	– gives real picture from the ground; based on firsthand information; based on thorough analysis and is supported by data
3 > transformative or leads to change.	– fosters women's independence; makes them curious; makes them more critical; makes them more confident; leads to agency, choice, & the power to decide [e.g., that marriage is not a woman's ultimate goal]	– translates to action and concrete results; leads to transformation and change in behavior (e.g., negotiation with husbands); leads to proaction & community participation
4 > by means of interactive dialogue.	– based on a two-way process; asks grassroots women what kind of development they desire; listens to grassroots women; asks for feedback	– based on a constant process of dialogue
5 > useful.	– gives practical information, tools, skills, knowledge that grassroots women can apply in everyday life	– gives information useful for everyday life

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
– in a language local people can understand; comprehensible; adapts the level of communication to the group; considers the unique characteristics of each group/ audience	– in a language grassroots women can understand; addresses translation issues – English, Fijian, and diverse ethnic languages; useful, relevant, and suited to the needs of grassroots women	– uses very simple language that is understandable to grassroots women; readily comprehensible; in simple English or Pidgin; in local language; gives information suitable to grassroots women's level
– collects information from the group with real effort to know the community; data collected from the villages (e.g., what needs to be done); solutions to problems are based on research	– based on data from the ground, from the community, from consultation, and from social analysis	– based on research from the community; based on women's experiences on the ground; based on being immersed in the community; gives importance to documentation; is confirmed by the community
– transformative; identifies cultural values that need to be changed	– makes women aware of their choices and enables them to make their own decisions	– gives a deeper understanding of the self and society; leads to independence and self-reliance; fosters equality; leads to awareness of human rights
– based on two-way communication; asks for feedback/ reactions; involves listening; is done in consultation with all people involved (the government, allies, related public organisations); considers advice & recommendations from people involved	– based on two-way communication; gives importance to feedback, consultation, listening, and respect for grassroots women's knowledge	
– gives information on who to contact for needed information; gives ideas on how to see things; gives needed knowledge	– gives information useful to grassroots women's lives (e.g., livelihood)	

Information is empowering if it is…	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
6 > easily accessible.		– quickly reaches the community
7 > based on trust.	– based on a relationship of trust between the intermediary group and the community borne out of listening to each other	– develops trust in the process
8 > updated.	– based on constant communication with the community	– constantly updated
9 > based on continuity & repetition.	– based on continuous engagement with the community; gives repeated exposure to the information	
10 > involves the people.	– involves the local people in the process	
11 > builds on existing discourses.	– countering discourses builds on existing discourses	
12 > nonjudgmental.		
13 > targets women.		
14 > includes an understanding of men.		

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
	– is readily available to grassroots women	– information is readily available (e.g., copies in the community)
– based on a relationship between the intermediary group and the community built on trust and rapport		
– gives importance to frequency because repetition is often necessary when talking to the grassroots due to the lack of access to formal education		
		– based on intermediary group's involvement in the community's struggles
– does not prescribe strict right and wrong answers but rather enables one to see the complexity of the issue and its many dimensions		
– targets women because men always get the share in development		
		– includes information that can make men aware of their own behavior and push them to change

WHEN ARE COMMUNICATION TOOLS EMPOWERING?

A common theme across the 5 countries is the belief that all communication tools in general are useful and necessary. That each tool can be most empowering for a specific group and a specific context was cited in India, PNG, and Thailand. That a tool can be good or bad depending on its use was cited in the Philippines. Specific issues raised include accessibility of tools in Fiji and India; the need to be critical of the purpose of tools in India; the power of tools to further exacerbate class, gender, and digital divides in the Philippines; and the government and business control of mass media in Thailand. Other points raised in relation to communication tools in general are receptivity to technology in Fiji and Thailand; the power of mass media in the Philippines; the need for special skills to use technology and the lack of donor support for intermediary groups to use tools in Thailand. In addition, women's illiteracy affecting the use of communication tools was cited in India and Thailand.

- **Oral, two-way, face-to-face communication** or interaction was considered the best way to empower grassroots women in all 5 countries.
- **Theatre and the performing arts** were viewed as empowering for grassroots women across the 5 countries as well. **Theatre** was particularly linked to traditional culture in India, the Philippines, and Thailand. The use of **songs** was cited in India and the Philippines, **puppetry** in India, and **dance** in the Philippines.
- **Print media** was seen as empowering in Fiji and PNG. The lack of electricity and the reading culture makes **print media** suitable for Fiji. Visual print media appears to be very popular in PNG. **Print media** was not seen as empowering in India, the Philippines, and Thailand.
- **Film** is viewed as empowering because of its emotional impact in Fiji, PNG, and the Philippines. Though highly accessible, it is viewed as not interactive enough in India and Thailand. Mainstream films were cited as problematic in the Philippines and Thailand, as these films serve to promote capitalism and patriarchy as ideologies.
- **Television (TV)** was seen as *potentially* empowering in India, the Philippines, and Thailand but has not been so because of its commercial content. **TV** has no reach in Fiji and is not mentioned in PNG.
- **Radio** was seen as empowering across the 5 countries for its wide reach. **Radio's** popularity among grassroots women was specifically mentioned in Fiji, India, and the Philippines.
- **Telecommunications** was cited as inaccessible in Fiji and the Philippines. It was not mentioned at all in India, PNG, and Thailand.
- The **cellphone** was empowering only for the Philippines where there is wide coverage and easy access. The c**ellphone** was cited as inaccessible in Fiji, PNG, and Thailand. It was not mentioned in India.

- The **computer** was cited as useful for presentations in the Philippines and Thailand. The **computer** was not mentioned separately from the **Internet** in India, Fiji, and PNG.
- The **Internet** was seen as empowering only for the intermediary groups in terms of efficiency and connectivity but not in terms of empowering grassroots women. This was the case in Fiji, India, the Philippines, and Thailand. The **Internet's** empowering effect on intermediary groups was not mentioned in PNG. **New ICTs** were seen as potentially empowering for grassroots women in Fiji and PNG but not necessarily so in India and the Philippines. **New ICTs** were considered not suitable for grassroots women in Thailand. Access to **new ICTs** must come only after basic needs, according to intermediary groups in Fiji, India, and the Philippines. **New ICTs** are largely inaccessible in Fiji and PNG given lack of electricity and infrastructure.

In all 5 countries, intermediary groups did not consider **new ICTs** as empowering for grassroots women. The only exception was the power of the **cellphone** in the Philippines. In general, the **computer** and the **Internet** were not seen as empowering tools. Instead, intermediary groups claimed that **traditional communication tools** were most empowering for grassroots women. **Oral communication** was believed to be the best tool by which to empower grassroots women in all 5 countries. **Theatre and the performing arts** was empowering across the 5 countries as well. **Radio** was also empowering for all 5 countries but is particularly popular among grassroots women in Fiji, India, and the Philippines. **Print media** was empowering in Fiji and PNG but not in India, the Philippines, and Thailand. **Film** was empowering in Fiji, PNG, and the Philippines but not as empowering in India and Thailand. **TV** was seen as *potentially* empowering in India, the Philippines, and Thailand but not in Fiji and PNG. Lastly, **telecommunications** was not empowering across the 5 countries.

Communication Tools	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
Tools in General • belief that all communication are useful and necessary across the 5 countries; that each tool can be most empowering for a specific group and a specific context is cited in India, PNG, & Thai; that a tool can be good or bad depending on its use is cited in the Philippines • specific issues raised – accessibility of communication tools, particularly new ICTs, in Fiji & India; that groups need to be critical of the purpose of communication tools is cited in India; that tools can further exacerbate class, gender, and digital divides is cited in Philippines; that government and business control of mass media is a problem in Thailand • other points raised – receptivity to technology in Fiji and Thailand; the power of mass media in Philippines; the need for special skills to use technology & the lack of donor support for intermediary groups' use of communication tools in Thailand • women's illiteracy affecting use of communication tools cited in India and Thailand	• all communication tools are necessary • search for tools that are accessible and self-sustaining • each tool has its own advantages and disadvantages • need to understand the context of the use of tools – in which context will an ICT work? for which group? class? age? gender? • it is in the process not the tool • need to be critical of the use of tools – for what end? for what purpose? • women's illiteracy vis-à-vis men affects their use of tools (cannot read the news, cannot use the computer) • communication tools can bring about change – a revolution	• communication tools can have limited accessibility because of problems with costs, coverage, or language • tools are manifestations of negative forces (e.g., globalisation, patriarchy, capitalism, rich/poor divide, rural/urban divide, young/old divide, digital divide) • tools are neutral and can be good or bad depending on how they are used • mass media is powerful and influential • tools can be used to complement each other for greater effectiveness • tools that create interaction, participation, reflection, and dialogue are more empowering • the use of communication tools, particularly new ICTs, is inevitable and necessary

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
• communication tools' value is in facilitating networking & bridging communication • tools are most empowering when they are participatory and includes women themselves • control of mass media by government and business is seen as a problem as content is for commercial purposes only • there is a tool compatible/ suitable for every situation • problem in using communication tools arises when special technological skills are needed • some tools may not be suitable for grassroots women given literacy requirements • it takes time to integrate tools into the community • lack of donor support for intermediary groups' use of tools • each tool has its own power • tools are effective if they are enjoyable	• not the form or medium but the content; all communication tools are useful • need to make tools more accessible – cheaper • issue of receptivity to technology • communication tools can change lives	• communication tools can be empowering • need feedback on how tools are being used • different tools can be empowering to different groups of people

Communication Tools	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
Oral Communication • oral, two-way, face-to-face communication/ interaction is considered the best way to empower grassroots women across the 5 countries	• two-way face-to-face communication is most empowering because of the interactive participation and feedback	• oral communication (e.g., meetings, trainings) is most empowering because of immediacy, dialogue, and direct interaction
Theatre & Performing Arts [songs, puppetry] • theatre was viewed as empowering across the 5 countries and linked to traditional culture in India, the Philippines, and Thailand • use of songs was cited in India and the Philippines • use of puppetry in India • use of dance in the Philippines	• traditional communication tools such as theatre, songs, puppetry are empowering because they are powerful in grassroots women's consciousness as they build on tradition — evoking emotions, inciting connections, facilitating interactions, and making a unique impact • **Theatre** • **Songs** • **Puppetry**	• theatre is most empowering because it facilitates interaction and has immediate impact; if it involves the women, it builds their capacity, raises their awareness, and leads to growth • traditional communication tools such as song, dance, and indigenous forms are effective because grassroots women are able to express themselves confidently without needing special skills • **Theatre** • **Songs** • **Dance**
Print • print was seen as empowering in Fiji and PNG; particularly suitable to reading culture of Fiji & lack of electricity; visual print media popular in PNG • print was not seen as empowering in India, the Philippines, and Thailand	• the use of print media (newspaper) is a problem as women do not read them; use of books can engage the community and start a dialogue • **Books**	• producing newspapers for grassroots women is too costly; popular publications need to be more visual to be understood; print media are good because women can take them home • **Newspapers** • **Publications**

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
• oral communication is most empowering because of two-way/person-to-person communication – brings about clarity, understanding, and opportunity for dialogue	• oral communication is most empowering because of the personal interaction and the dialogue that takes place – "To go and sit down with them"	• oral communication (e.g., training) is most empowering because of the two-way interaction, the intermediary group's sense of being part the community, and the women's increased confidence; hurdle is women having to ask permission from husbands to join meetings
• theatre is empowering because it uses tradition and culture and is particularly suitable to older audiences (35 years old and up); it is engaging and has immediate impact; participatory theatre further empowers the women or the community themselves	• theatre is empowering because it facilitates interaction	• theatre is most empowering because of its ability to convey the message and involve the community; suitable to basic literacy level in rural areas; also the use of songs • **Theatre** • **Songs**
• print is seldom seen as empowering given the high illiteracy rate and is used largely as reference or supplement to training • **Books**	• print is most empowering because it is accessible given intermittent power supply and its suitability to Fiji's reading culture • **Newspapers** • **Newsletters** • **Handbooks** • **Books**	• print media's power depends on which medium is used; visual print media such as posters and stickers are most effective and are in high demand; textual print media such as manuals and pamphlets are handy and accessible but may be problematic given low literacy levels; cartoons and comics are also useful • **Posters** • **Stickers** • **Manuals** • **Pamphlets** • **Comics** • **Cartoons** • **Books**

Communication Tools	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
Film/ Video • film is viewed as empowering because of its emotional impact in Fiji, PNG, and the Philippines; though highly accessible, it is viewed as not interactive enough in India and Thailand; mainstream films are problematic as cited in the Philippines and Thailand	• film/video, given its wide reach and replicability, can be empowering but loses on the participatory process of traditional communication tools; film is used to initiate dialogue; most empowering when produced by the community themselves • **Slide**	• film/video can be potentially empowering as they "move" viewers; however, mainstream films are filled with gender stereotypes & are counterproductive; alternative films can provide counter-conditioning while providing enjoyment and facilitating discussion
TV • television is seen as potentially empowering in India, the Philippines, and Thailand but has not been because of its commercial content; has no reach in Fiji; not mentioned in PNG	• television, despite its wide reach thereby providing empowering potential, is not accessible to intermediary groups and generates useless entertainment often for commercial ends	• television is potentially empowering given its recall power; however, mainstream television still keeps alternative voices away
Radio • radio was seen as empowering across the 5 countries due to its wide reach; its popularity among grassroots women was cited in Fiji, India, and the Philippines	• radio can reach grassroots women as women listen more to the radio than men	• radio is effective because of its wide reach, affordability, and popularity among grassroots women; radio should be supplemented by interactive methods
Telecommuni-cations • landline as inaccessible cited in Fiji & the Philippines; not cited at all in India, PNG, and Thailand	No mention	• the use of landline phone is a problem given high costs, difficulty in access, and lack of infrastructure

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THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
• film/video, though accessible, interesting and easy to understand, lack personal interaction and immediate feedback; mainstream films are filled with dominant ideologies that promote capitalism and patriarchy	• film/video can be empowering given its emotional impact	• film/video is empowering because it crosses the language and literacy barriers & is very powerful in relaying a story such that it creates a deep impact on women; problems include lack of resources, equipment, and electricity
• mainstream television can be empowering if there is access to its production; however, its content is generally not useful and is filled with gender stereotypes	• television is not empowering given limited reach/coverage	No mention
• radio can be influential especially to younger audiences (35 years old and below); however, the content of mainstream radio is not useful	• radio is most empowering because of its reach and women's love for radio	• radio is most empowering because of its reach; it is effective because people discuss what they hear on the radio
No mention	• the use of landline phone is a problem	No mention

Communication Tools	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
Cellphone • cellphone is empowering only for the Philippines where there is wide coverage and easy access; cellphone is not accessible in Fiji, PNG, and Thailand; not cited in India	No mention	• the cellphone is empowering given its wide coverage, speed in communication, and "handy" quality; intermediary groups have used cellphones for mobilising grassroots women and sending messages to policymakers; problems include cost of credits and potential miscommunication
Computer & Internet • the computer's usefulness for making presentations was cited in the Philippines and Thailand • the Internet as empowering only for the intermediary groups in terms of efficiency and connectivity was cited in Fiji, India, the Philippines, and Thailand; new ICTs are seen as potentially empowering for grassroots women in Fiji and PNG but not necessarily so in India and the Philippines; it is considered not suitable for grassroots women in Thailand • access to new ICTs must come only after basic needs are met according to groups in Fiji, India, and the Philippines • new ICTs are largely inaccessible in Fiji and PNG given lack of electricity and infrastructure	• new ICTs are valued by intermediary groups for their efficiency and connectivity (e.g., email campaigns); however, they are also seen as alienating and isolating as they cut personal interaction and remove the passion in activism; they are also not necessarily empowering to women who use them • though intermediary groups recognise the unfortunate situation of grassroots women's lack of access to new ICTs, access to these new media can only come after they are able to access their basic needs • there is a belief that feminist groups are not maximising the use of new ICTs and that making new ICTs accessible to people is the way forward	• the computer is valued by intermediary groups in terms of efficiency (for work and presentations to the community) and connectivity; however, it remains inaccessible to grassroots women given high material costs and skills requirements; it is also seen as a non-necessity for grassroots women compared to basic needs • the Internet is valued by intermediary groups for its connectivity – broadening their networks and knowledge base; but they point out that the Internet can also exacerbate patriarchy and the digital divide; it remains inaccessible to grassroots women who do not have access to computers • there is a belief that using new ICTs is inevitable

THAILAND	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
• the use of the cellphone is rare because of lack of skills and inaccessibility	• the use of the cellphone is a problem	• the cellphone is not accessible given lack of network coverage especially in remote areas
• the computer is useful for intermediary groups in making presentations that makes the audience understand more effectively • new ICTs, such as the Internet, are believed to be not suitable for grassroots women; new ICTs are inaccessible to grassroots women and will require years to learn • new ICTs are useful to intermediary groups in networking with organisations in other countries	• the Internet is potentially empowering for grassroots women – equaliser for women and men; but at the moment is only empowering for intermediary groups that use it • new ICTs can be alienating and intimidating and is still a rarity in Fiji • new ICTs are largely inaccessible given lack of electricity and infrastructure • new ICTs are not a necessity given Fiji's more basic problems in meeting grassroots women's basic needs • new ICTs are empowering for intermediary groups but not for grassroots women	• the Internet is viewed as potentially empowering for grassroots women • new ICTs are largely inaccessible given lack of electricity, infrastructure and skilled personnel • new ICTs are perceived as "for men" or "for the educated" only

Country	Communication experience focusing on traditional communication tools	Impact of intermediary groups and grassroots advocacy work
INDIA	• face-to-face interaction as key for community development work • communication work as having multiple audiences • language barriers can be overcome primarily through cultural arts (e.g., theatre, song, etc.) • meetings perceived as less personal and less effective given low attendance • communicating with beneficiaries in intimate settings such as their own homes • effective learning is learning that touches emotional level	• importance of building trust and confidence • importance of addressing literacy deficiency
PHILIPPINES	• face-to-face interaction as key for community development work • communication work as having multiple audiences • language barriers can be overcome primarily through video (e.g., participatory video making) • target audience determines appropriate communication tool	• contributes to self-sustainability of group • become savvy users of new ICTs and other communication tools • regional networking is necessary and facilitated by intermediary groups • cannot do away with face-to-face interactive forms of communication provided by traditional communication tools • develops next generation
THAILAND	• face-to-face interaction as key for community development work • communication work as having multiple audiences • language barriers can be overcome primarily through translations • traditional communication tools still seen as most effective because it facilitates dialogue better	• leader oriented • provides support (e.g., moral support, resources, organisational development, etc.) • promotes diversity and empathy • facilitates dialogue for better understanding • negative stigma of feminism • building trust of the people
FIJI	• face-to-face interaction as key for community development work • communication work as having multiple audiences • traditional communication tools still most effective because of the intimacy, camaraderie and enjoyment experienced by the women	• leader oriented • builds a sense of community (e.g., support group, lessens loneliness, etc.) • contributes to family income • raises critical issues • provides recreation and relaxation

Grassroots women's views on new ICTs	Grassroots women's notions of empowerment
• more useful for administrative concerns of organisation • more appropriate for communication outside of immediate community spaces • does not generate as much discussion • requires steep learning curve • utility of new ICTs as something for the future	• learning through interaction with others
• most useful and appropriate for outside of the community spaces (e.g., national, regional & international spaces) • cellphones useful for within the community communications • need for funds to invest in and maintain necessary equipment	• learning how to live comfortably in a modern world • being equipped with skills and knowledge, and being able to confidently share these • going beyond the domestic realm/roles (e.g., travelling) • contributing to the fulfillment of the organisation's mission
• no mention • could play role as facilitating/ mediating with media, government, etc.	• capacity to transform the community positively (e.g., help others, diversity and difference accepted, solidarity, etc.) • recognise the multiple identities of women and their rights
• little mention • cellphone as least effective because of lack of network signal • email as somewhat effective since 2002 (because of bandwidth)	• having a sense of belonging / family • traveling, literally going places • spiritual fulfillment

HOW GRASSROOTS WOMEN VIEW COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND EMPOWERMENT IN 5 ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES

COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE OF GRASSROOTS GROUPS

Across all the countries of study, communication for community work is deemed effective if it is face-to-face and interactive. Whether it is utilised for purposes of education, direct services, advocacy, organising and recruitment, information dissemination, relief and rehabilitation, and so forth -- traditional communication tools remain more appropriate for on-the-ground community development work.

Traditional communication tools are perceived as more appropriate for the community level because it encourages dialogue and is more personal and intimate, touching the emotions and promoting camaraderie as well as enjoyment. Such media included theatre arts, song, music, participatory videos, and the like.

There is also recognition of the multiple levels, or multiple audiences, that grassroots women's groups communicate with. While the community level is primary in terms of constituency building, community organising, consciousness raising and community development, other audiences, such as the State bodies, development organisations (including donor communities), and social movements, are also key sources as well as targets of information and communication for grassroots groups.

Language barriers are commonly posed as challenges in communication work. At one level there is the diversity of languages used within one country, depending on geographic location, indigenous groupings and other socio-cultural factors. On another level there is the need to be equipped in the use of the English language when dealing with national, regional, and international bodies and/or spaces of discussions. Some of the ways in which these language barriers are dealt with include translations, the use of cultural arts, and the use of visually-oriented communication tools.

IMPACT OF INTERMEDIARY GROUPS (IGS) AND GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY WORK

Certainly, grassroots groups look to intermediary groups (IGs) for support in terms of organisational development, resources, and skills training, among other areas for development. However, the need to build trust and confidence between intermediary groups and grassroots groups was also identified as crucial and not something that could be assumed to automatically exist.

Given the multiple levels of audiences that grassroots groups communicate with, their networking on national, regional, and international spheres was also seen as an area where intermediary groups definitely play a key role.

Raising critical awareness and facilitating a better understanding of issues and concerns of the grassroots were also cited as the function of intermediary groups. While organisations are said to implicitly promote a leader-oriented attitude among the grassroots, the groups are also said to help facilitate the creation of a sense of community.
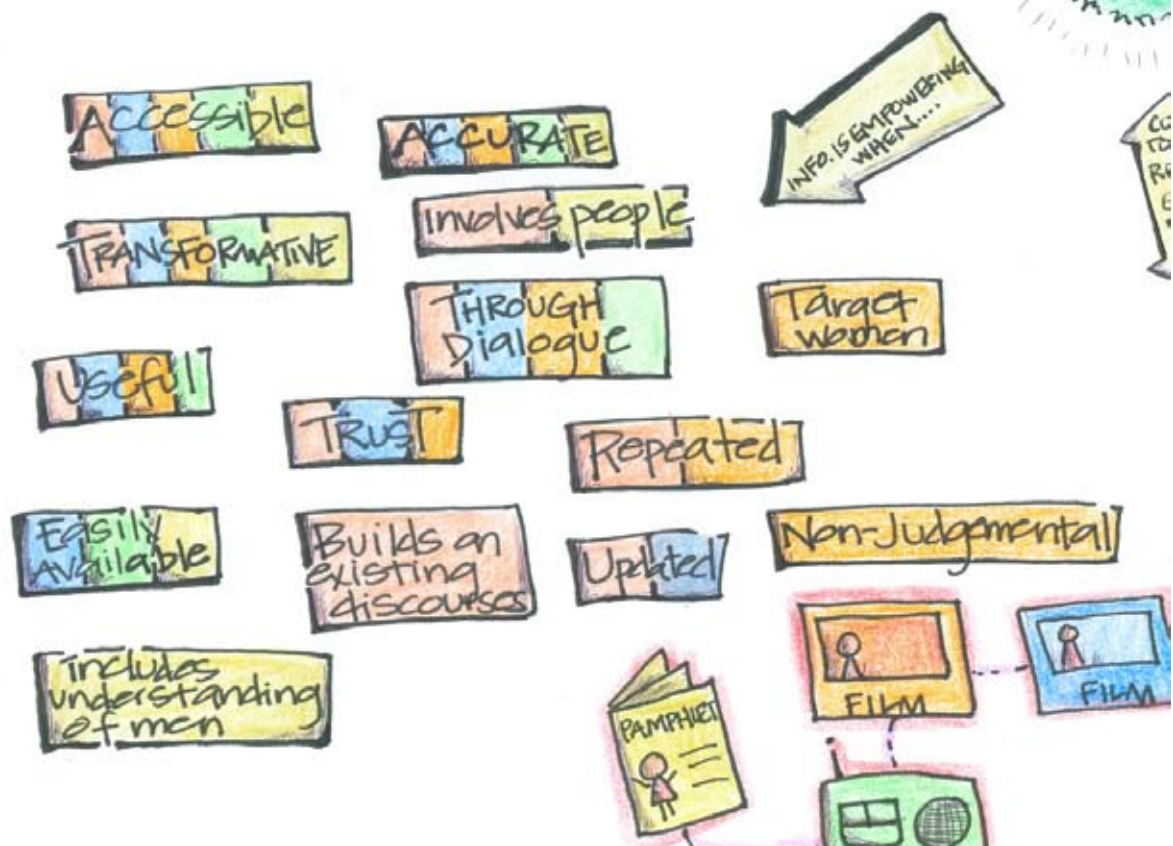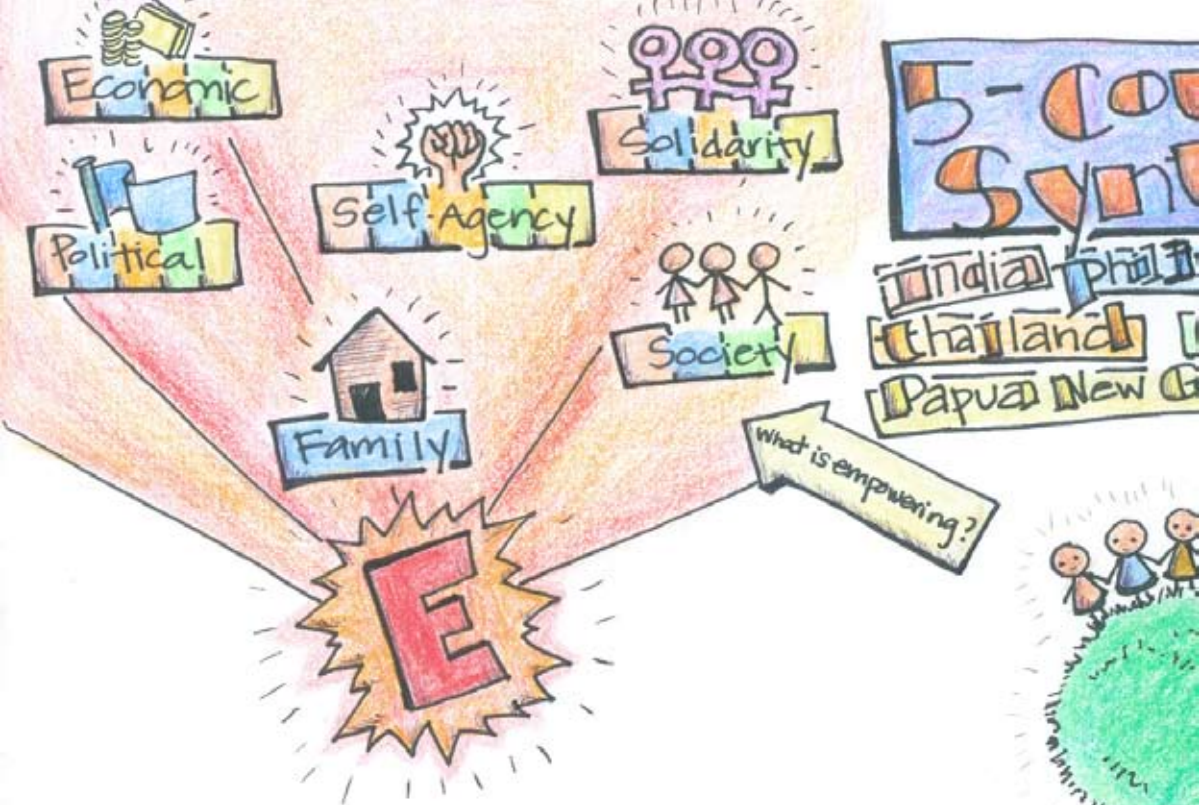
GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S VIEWS ON NEW ICTS

As against traditional communication tools, new ICTs are generally described across the countries as less effective because of the perception that they were unsupportive of dialogue. In addition, new ICTs were viewed as less effective because they require better infrastructure and a steep learning curve, both of which are currently problematic in some situations. Furthermore, grassroots women project the utility of new ICTs as something that is for the future.

However, there was a significant recognition of the value new ICTs played in terms of linking the grassroots groups to national, regional, and international audiences, spaces, and events. The general view was that, other than for internal administrative work of the organisation, new ICTs were more appropriate for purposes outside of the immediate community spaces.

Also important to note was the point on the need for funds to not just purchase and invest in new ICT equipment, but equally important were the funds required for its maintenance.

GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S NOTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

The notions of empowerment were diverse. They ranged from understanding empowerment as learning to live comfortably in a modern world, to being equipped with skills and knowledge, to learning through interaction. Empowerment was also described as going beyond the domestic realm, as in being able to travel, as contributing to the mission of the organisation, and as contributing to the positive transformation of the community in general. Finally, empowerment was also seen as recognising the multiple identities of women and their rights.

Economic

Political

Self-Agency

Solidarity

Society

Family

E

What is empowering?

5-Co
Syn

India Phili
Thailand
Papua New G

INFO. IS EMPOWERING WHEN...

Accessible

ACCURATE

Involves people

TRANSFORMATIVE

THROUGH Dialogue

Target women

Useful

TRUST

Repeated

Easily Available

Builds on existing discourses

Updated

Non-Judgemental

Includes understanding of men

PAMPHLET

FILM

FILM

untry
thesis

ppines
fiji
iuinea

COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE
- Multiple audiences
- Audience determined
- Traditional tools
- Intimacy
- Face-to-face = key to community development

IMPACT of I.G
- Build trust
- Address literacy deficiency
- Self-sustain
- Build community
- Build new gen.
- Recreation
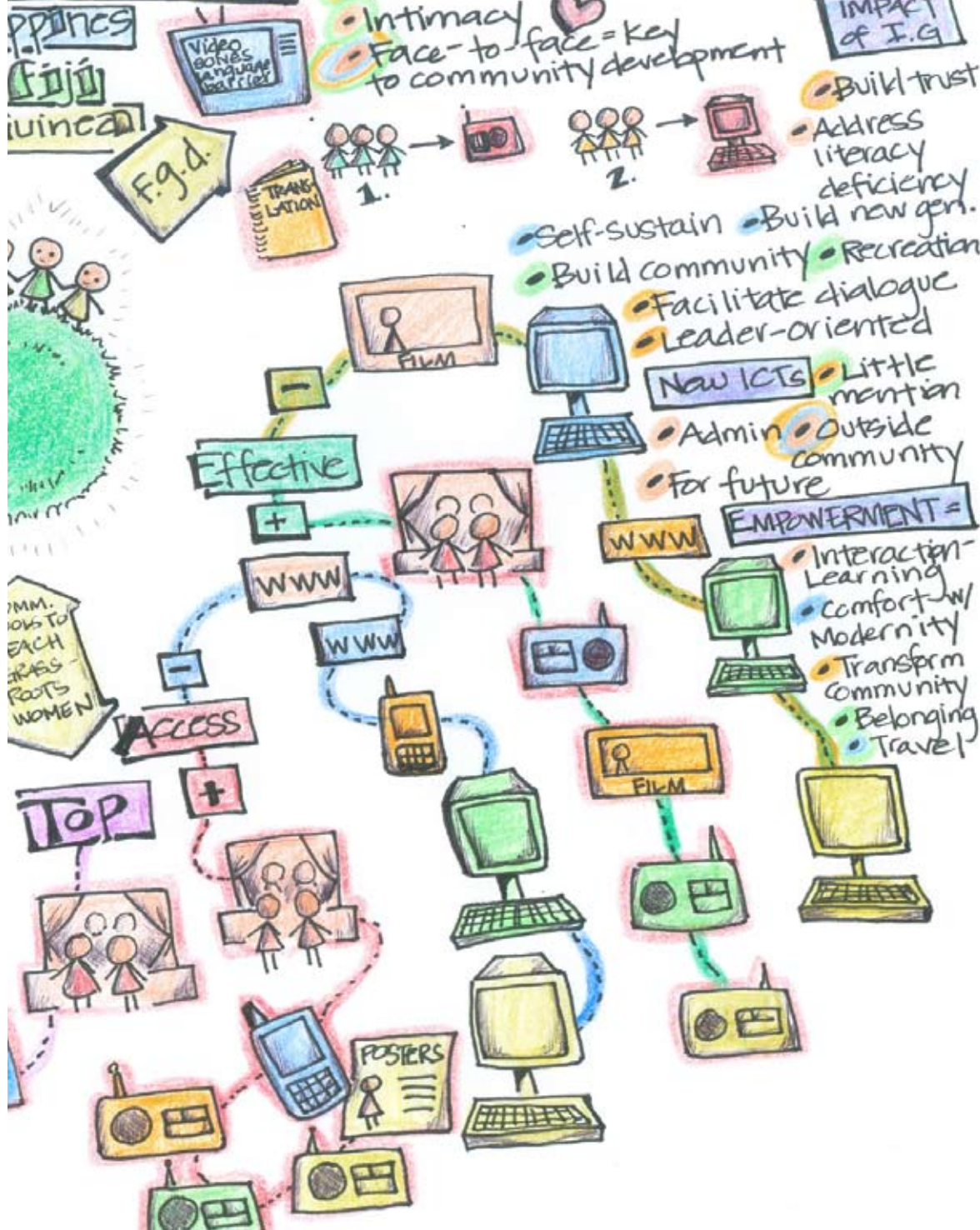- Facilitate dialogue
- Leader-oriented

Video tones language barriers

F.g.d.

TRANSLATION

1. 2.

New ICTs
- Little mention
- Admin
- Outside community
- For future

EMPOWERMENT =
- Interaction-Learning
- comfort-w/ Modernity
- Transform community
- Belonging
- Travel

FILM

Effective
+
−
WWW
WWW

ACCESS
+
−
TOP

MM. OLS TO EACH RAS- ROOTS WOMEN

WWW

FILM

POSTERS

CHAPTER 27

CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study was done in the context of interrogating the ICT-centric framework of development and the influx of new ICTs in gender and development work. On the assumption that access to new information and communication technologies will lead to women's empowerment, project interventions privileged the use of new ICTs over traditional communication tools long used by intermediary groups in effecting change with grassroots communities. Has the emergence of new ICTs affected the way in which intermediary groups use traditional communication tools in reaching grassroots women? Are new ICTs perceived as more effective and more empowering compared to traditional communication tools? With the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Isis International-Manila together with Aalochana of India, CMDI of Thailand, FemLINK of Fiji, and HELP of Papua New Guinea embarked on a research to determine the most effective communication tools used by intermediary groups in reaching grassroots women.

The research findings from 5 Asia-Pacific countries, namely India, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea, show that traditional communication tools such as radio, popular theatre, and film were evidently the most effective tools in interacting with grassroots women. Oral communication or direct, two-way, face-to-face interaction was clearly the most empowering way of sharing information between intermediary groups and grassroots women. The utility, accessibility and effectiveness of traditional

communication tools in development work for grassroots women's empowerment were repeatedly observed and substantiated by the intermediary groups. On the other hand, new ICTs were reported to be generally inaccessible and ineffective for grassroots women across the 5 countries.

Though the general research findings across the 5 countries overwhelmingly support the power of traditional communication tools over new ICTs for grassroots women's empowerment, the specific communication tool most frequently used, most (and least) accessible, and most (and least) effective varied from country to country. Film or video emerged as the top communication tool used with the 5 countries combined, followed closely by radio and popular theatre. Among the new ICTs, the computer emerged as the fourth most commonly used, primarily for making visual presentations when meeting with grassroots women. But comparing country data on the top 2 most frequently used tools, the radio emerged as the most frequently used tool in 4 countries (Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, and PNG), film in 3 countries (India, Philippines, and Thailand), and theatre in 2 countries (India and PNG). The landline was in the top 2 for Thailand and print media in terms of books and pamphlets for PNG. The computer was mentioned in the top 2 for Fiji.

The most accessible communication tool for grassroots women using the combined data for all 5 countries was the radio; which was also reported as among the top 2 most accessible tools in all countries except India. This was supported by the Review of Related Literature where radio emerged as the most accessible tool in the 5 countries as well. Film emerged as the second most accessible tool using the combined data but was only in the top 2 of PNG. The cellular phone was the third most accessible and was reported in the top 2 of India and the Philippines. Interestingly, the cellular phone was also mentioned as the third least accessible tool using the combined country data. Theatre was among the most accessible tools for India, the landline for Thailand and Fiji, and print media for Fiji and PNG. The poster, as a type of print media, was specifically mentioned as the most accessible tool in PNG. The least accessible tools were primarily the new ICTs, with the Internet and the computer cited the most. Again, the RRL supported this finding as the literature showed that new ICTs were indeed least accessible in all 5 countries.

The most effective communication tool from the combined country data was the radio followed by theatre and film. Looking at the per country data, radio was among the top 2 most effective tools in all 5 countries; theatre in 3 countries (India, Thailand and PNG); film in 2 countries (India and Thailand); and print media in 2 countries (Thailand and Fiji). Story-telling or the oral tradition and the Internet were mentioned in India whereas the cellular phone was among the most effective tools in the Philippines. Among the new ICTs, only the cellular phone was effective and only for the Philippines. Among the top reasons why a communication tool is perceived as effective included a tool's wide reach or coverage, visually stimulating qualities, interactive features, cultural appropriateness, and

clear target focus. The Internet and the computer were the least effective tools because of high costs, lack of infrastructure in some countries, and the skills/literacy requirements. The cellular phone was the third least effective tool using the combined country data.

Intermediary groups from all the 5 countries repeatedly confirmed that oral communication or direct interaction was the most empowering means of interacting with grassroots women. The Focus Group Discussions with grassroots women corroborate this as the women found face-to-face interaction with the intermediary group the best mode of communication. Intermediary groups also report the radio and popular theatre or performing arts as empowering in all the 5 countries. These were again supported by the FGDs with grassroots women who found these traditional communication tools most appropriate for them. Film was cited as empowering in 3 countries (Fiji, PNG, and the Philippines); television or TV in 3 countries (India, the Philippines, and Thailand); and print media in 2 countries (Fiji and PNG). Telecommunications or the landline was not cited.

Intermediary groups further validated that new ICTs, namely the Internet, computer, and the cellular phone, are generally not empowering for grassroots women. Though intermediary groups found the Internet empowering for themselves, these tools were not empowering for the grassroots women they served. However, the utility of the computer for making visual presentations was cited as empowering in the Philippines and Thailand. The use of the cellular phone for mobilisation and other activities was also empowering for the Philippines. Interestingly, only intermediary groups in Fiji and PNG see the potential of new ICTs in empowering grassroots women. Groups from India and the Philippines generally believe that new ICTs will not necessarily lead to development. On a similar note, the intermediary groups in Thailand found new ICTs as inappropriate for grassroots women. Grassroots women from the FGDs supported these views as they described new ICTs as least effective except for communicating outside of their immediate communities. As a unique case, the Philippine FGD highlighted the value of the cellular phone for facilitating communication among grassroots women.

The meanings of empowerment for the intermediary groups were diverse. The general themes that cut across all 5 countries were empowerment as economic independence, political participation, community-organising or solidarity-building, societal transformation, and individual agency. Empowerment as individual agency was most elaborated by the intermediary groups in the 5 countries. Family transformation was uniquely mentioned in the Philippines. The top 5 ways by which information becomes empowering are when information is accessible, accurate, transformative, based on interactive dialogue, and useful. The accessibility, accuracy, and transformative quality of information were shared themes in all 5 countries. Accessibility meant communicating in the local language and using tools suitable or appropriate for the grassroots women or community. Accuracy referred to using only information based on research from the

ground or the community. Lastly, transformative quality implied that information is for initiating change.

The 81 intermediary groups interviewed in the 5 Asia-Pacific countries were a mix of grassroots women-specific organisations, grassroots in general, women in general, and groups addressing diverse social issues. Although these groups do not represent the population of intermediary groups in the 5 countries, all the intermediary groups work with grassroots women. In addition, the groups were sampled from the different regions of the country to ensure geographical representation.

B. IMPLICATIONS ON POLICIES, PROGRAMMES, AND PRACTICES

Given the above research findings, Isis and the country partners see four policy, programme, and practice areas of consequence to this study: [1] gender and development paradigms and communication policy directions; [2] the politics of traditional communication tools, state interventions, and donor programmes for grassroots women; [3] social movements, feminist networks, intermediary groups, and communication strategies; and, [4] traditional communication tools and new ICTs as shaping and reflecting everyday life. The first area focuses on the realm of communication policies that has repercussions on grassroots women. The second area revolves on state and donor programmes and the revaluing of traditional communication tools in development work. The third looks at communication strategies of social movements, feminist networks, and intermediary groups. Lastly, the fourth area centres on communication practices that are intertwined with the lives of grassroots women on the ground.

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS
AND COMMUNICATION POLICY DIRECTIONS

Current communication policy directions in the developing South are clearly based on the neo-liberal model of development where "modernisation" is perceived as the key to poverty alleviation and the uplifting of poor peoples' quality of life. This model continues to be critiqued for universalising Northern realities and formulas for development and imposing such upon the rest of the world. The so-called economic boom facilitated by new ICT developments are based on skewed development measures such as Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that emphasise profits made and the growth of corporations, rather than seriously accounting for the just distribution of wealth within a nation and the development of the lives of its people. Within this context, the unique needs of poor women are either taken for granted or invisibilised.

It is imperative therefore to look at new ICT policies in particular and communication policies in general within alternatives models of development. There are already several alternative notions of development by which this study can draw on that are more

appropriate for new ICT and communication policy directions in the developing South context and can better address the unique needs of poor women. Among these are the development as freedom model and the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum respectively which place greater emphasis on people's dignity rather than companies' profits.

From this study, the key issue in terms of gender and development and communication policies is access. Within a neoliberal model of development, grassroots women and intermediary groups who work for women's empowerment cannot access communication tools that are potentially empowering. Primary examples here are mass media tools such as radio and television that are seen as effective tools given their wide reach and stimulating quality. The popularity of the radio among grassroots women makes it a most effective tool for empowerment despite limited access. Television, though recognised for its potential to empower grassroots women, is virtually inaccessible. The enormous potential for development of these tools is hindered by the difficulty in accessing radio and television due to control and ownership structures that are largely private and for commercial ends. Hence, communication policies must support community access to mass media as tools for women's empowerment.

Though new ICTs were not seen as empowering or effective communication tools, the lack of access to new ICTs further widens the divides that marginalise grassroots women. This study has shown that new ICTs are the least accessible tools. And though some intermediary groups acknowledge the potential of ICTs for empowering grassroots women, high costs, lack of infrastructure, and skills and literacy requirements remain obstacles to utilising the computer and the Internet for development work. Similar to mass media structures, policies must ensure community access to new ICTs.

Hence, this study brings the issue of access, control, and ownership of mass media and new ICT structures in the context of neoliberal policies and regulations into the fore. It points to the need for mass media reforms within an alternative model of development that can promote the inclusion of grassroots women in development. Media reforms can be geared towards giving grassroots women the freedom to choose the communication tool most appropriate for them. This implies the need to break structural barriers through communication policies that are inclusive of poor women, rural women, and women marginalised for diverse reasons, including language, ethnicity, caste, and disability.

THE POLITICS OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS, STATE INTERVENTIONS, AND DONOR PROGRAMMES FOR GRASSROOTS WOMEN

With the advent of new ICTs and the phenomenon referred to as the "information society", traditional communication tools became relegated as a thing of the past. The ICT

for Development (ICT4D) model privileged new ICTs over traditional communication tools. Hence, States and even the donor community became more inclined to support development programmes and projects related to new ICTs, such as capability building in the use of new ICTs (e.g., computer usage, website development) and engaging in new ICT policy directions (e.g., Internet governance, universality).

However, this study clearly shows that traditional communication tools are still more frequently utilised by intermediary groups in reaching out to grassroots women, whether for women's organising, consciousness-raising, advocacy work, or community development work in general. Traditional communication tools are also perceived as more effective and more empowering for grassroots women compared to new ICTs. Radio, popular theatre, and film consistently emerged as the most frequently utilised as well as the most effective communication tools. Only the computer was being utilised with relative frequency primarily to prepare visual presentations when meeting with communities directly. This connects to the finding that face-to-face meetings and direct interaction is still the most empowering way of communicating with grassroots women. In addition, traditional tools are the primary mode of communication utilised by grassroots women themselves.

In contrast, the new ICTs, namely the Internet, computer and the cellular phone, were generally seen as not empowering, not effective, and not accessible. The Philippines was a unique exception that reported the effectiveness of the cellular phone for mobilising and networking among grassroots women. In general, new ICTs seem to be more appropriate for intermediary groups' administrative work, for grassroots women communicating with audiences outside of the immediate community, such as state bodies, intermediary groups, donors and international groups, and for networking.

In light of these findings, support for the use of traditional communication tools for development projects at the community level become equally if not more important compared to support for development projects using new ICTs. Funding for traditional communication tools such as street theatre, alternative films, and community radio seem more relevant to communities and grassroots women. In addition, States, donors and other development agencies should recognise the utility of oral face-to-face communication in empowering grassroots women and support programmes that can facilitate constant direct interaction with them.

Underlying the support for these projects is the recognition of the role of intermediary groups in development in general and grassroots women's empowerment in particular. This implies that States, donors and other development agencies must respect the knowledge and expertise of intermediary groups. As such, programmes cannot be determined from the top down. The voice of grassroots women and communities, for instance their choice of communication tools for their own empowerment, must be included at the very least through the intermediary groups who work with them on the ground.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, FEMINIST NETWORKS, INTERMEDIARY GROUPS, AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Amidst the dominant forces of neo-liberalisation is a growing and highly critical global social movement. The politics of new ICT development however is a relatively new domain for social movement activism. There have been however a number of feminist initiatives in this area, notably the Women Empowering Communication Conference in 1994; the Know How Conferences in 1998, 2002, and 2006; the World Summit on the Information Society or WSIS in 2003 and 2005; and, quite recently, a meeting in Bangalore toward the building of a Feminist Network on Communication and Information Society Policy held October 2007. Such spaces provide important insights into how gender is linked to the 'information society' phenomenon, its policy implications, and the role of social movements within this context.

The question is how extensively are the voices of grassroots women and marginalised communities included in debates and discussions on communication issues at a national, regional, or global scale. As this study shows, grassroots women are evidently excluded in the 'information society' facilitated by new ICTs. Intermediary groups who are able to engage in social activism within the 'information society' act as mediums or channels for grassroots women's perspectives. As such, spaces that determine the information and communication agenda of larger social movements and feminist networks must include the views of grassroots women, even if through intermediary groups. Social movement actors who are part of the 'information society' need to be constantly conscious of whose perspectives they are including in the development agenda.

Beyond the issue of exclusion of grassroots women and marginalised communities in the 'information society', feminist groups and feminist communication activists call for a more gendered understanding of the 'information society' phenomenon. They envision an analysis beyond poor women being marginalised and vulnerable to ICT development practices, programmes and policies. Possibly one way to advance this gendered understanding of communication and the 'information society' is to bring together feminist networks and communication activists. As such, new forms of social activism are needed. Intermovement dialogues and the building of alliances may foster a more holistic understanding of the 'information society' as a gendered phenomenon.

Together with the need to engender communication work is the need to recognise the value of communication in feminist and social movements. A major implication of this study is how communication strategies are not integral to development work. Intermediary groups do not have clear communication strategies in working with grassroots women and there is little or no support for the communication work that they do. As such, intermediary groups, feminist networks, and social movements must see communication strategies as integral to social activist work. As shown in this study, knowing the communication tools

that are most accessible, effective, and empowering for grassroots women in particular contexts is valuable in facilitating the process of empowerment. Knowing when information is empowering can help intermediary groups design the most appropriate communication strategy for their target communities.

TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND NEW ICTs AS SHAPING AND REFLECTING EVERYDAY LIFE

To a large extent, the ways in which people experience social realities are very much intertwined with their ways and forms of communicating, whether in local communities, broader societies, or global social movements. What has emerged from this study is how divergent are the general characterisation of traditional communication tools vis-à-vis new ICTs. For instance, popular theatre and face-to-face dialogues are perceived as more intimate, interactive, and grassroots women friendly, whereas news ICTs are generally described as alienating, threatening, requiring a steep learning curve for grassroots women, and something of the future. Hence, traditional communication tools seem more attuned with grassroots women's everyday lives.

This however does not signify that new ICTs cannot be useful or empowering for grassroots women or the people in marginalised communities. From the study, some intermediary groups do see the potential of new ICTs for grassroots women's empowerment. Perhaps in the same way that the advent of mass media shaped social reality in the past, the entry of new communication technologies will do the same in the future. The question is how new ICTs will shape and reflect the everyday life of grassroots women if ever these new technologies will be accessible to communities. A striking example is the case of the cellular phone in the Philippines where even grassroots women have actively made it a part of their everyday lives.

What was evident in this study is how each traditional communication tool can be empowering depending on people's social realities. The accessibility of a tool together with its suitability or appropriateness to the specific group and culture is among the determinants of a tool's empowering potential. For instance, theatre, with its link to traditional culture, is empowering in India, the Philippines, and Thailand. The lack of infrastructure and the reading culture in Fiji makes print media most suitable. Hence, intermediary groups must exercise specificity in their choice of tool. Intermediary groups must realise that a specific tool may be most effective for a particular group of people and their unique situation or context.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

With the four areas for policy, programme and practice implications outlined above, Isis and the country partners put forth 12 key recommendations addressed to policymakers and programme implementers. Policy recommendations are addressed primarily to policymakers. Programme recommendations are addressed to the State, donors and other development actors and agencies. Recommendations for practice are addressed to social movements, feminist networks, and intermediary groups.

POLICIES

[1] Based on feminist development paradigms, policies should take into account the three types of mass media ownership: (1) private, (2) public, and (3) community. As such, policies should be geared towards the creation of an enabling environment to ensure public service and community access to mass media systems and structures.

[2] In the context of existing class, caste, and racial divides as well as diverse forms of marginalisation, the State should be held accountable for its responsibility to provide access, control and ownership of new ICTs to grassroots women and marginalised communities. For instance, the State can provide the necessary infrastructure to allow rural communities to have access to new ICTs, subsidise costs of accessing new ICTs, create free public access to new ICTs, and ensure translation to local languages of marginalised groups.

PROGRAMMES

[3] Given that oral face-to-face communication surfaced as the strongest tool for empowering grassroots women, States, donors and other development agencies should recognise this and support this direct and interactive mode of communication work by intermediary groups. As such, support for intermediary groups' programmes and projects should include meeting with their constituencies for more effective communication.

[4] Given that traditional communication tools are found more effective in empowering grassroots women vis-a-vis new ICTs, States, donors and other development agencies should support intermediary groups' use of traditional communication tools. For instance, the provision of public spaces for meetings; funding or programmes for street theatre and performing arts; the creation of public libraries and women's resource centres; financing posters and print materials; support for independent or alternative films, community TV and community radio; and, support for translation into local languages of information for marginalised groups.

[5] Appreciating the role of intermediary groups in development work and grassroots women's empowerment, States, donors and other development agencies should recognise intermediary groups' knowledge and expertise. In particular, intermediary groups' choice of communication tools given their knowledge of what is accessible, effective and empowering for grassroots women must be respected and supported.

[6] Recognising the need for gendered information and communication, States, donors and other development agencies should support programmes for "gender mainstreaming" in information and communication projects. This can entail having a regular gender media officer or conducting regular gendered communication training activities for intermediary groups, government bodies, and other stakeholders.

[7] As stated by grassroots women in the focused group discussion, new ICTs are perceived as desired forms of communication but will require a steep learning curve. Recognising this need, States, donors, intermediary groups, and other development agencies should develop grassroots women's individual and organisational capacities in the use of new ICTs.

PRACTICES

[8] Recognising the need to include and prioritise grassroots women's voices in the development agenda, intermediary groups, feminist networks, and social movements should ensure their involvement in the development of communication policies and programmes. This implies the systematic inclusion of perspectives of marginalised peoples and communities in the advocacy agenda of feminist networks and social movements. This may be done through regular consultations and dialogues with grassroots communities or as mediated by intermediary groups.

[9] Recognising the importance of communication work in social activism, intermediary groups and social movements in general should develop clear communication strategies especially when working with grassroots women. This implies that communication strategies are seen as integral to social activist work and not as a supplement, "add-on", or as a technique that is only useful for advocacy.

[10] Recognising the significance of women infocom groups and the lack of financial assistance for gendered information and communication work, feminist organisations and movements should engage in new forms of working such as intermovement dialogues and alliance-building. Feminist infocom groups can (1) popularise feminist ideas within communication organisations and other issue-based social movements on the one hand,

while (2) infusing communication ideas within feminist organisations and networks.

[11] Guided by this research showing when information is empowering for grassroots women, intermediary groups should make information (1) accessible, (2) accurate, (3) transformative, (4) dialogue-based, and (5) useful, among other criteria. Accessibility means using the local language and tools appropriate for the target group whereas accuracy refers to information based on research on the ground or data gathered from the community.

[12] Guided by this research showing when communication tools are most accessible, most effective, and most empowering for grassroots women, intermediary groups should practice specificity in their choice of communication tools for effective communication. As such, intermediary groups should examine when specific types of communication tools work best for a specific purpose and target audience, including the possibility of combining traditional communication tools and new ICTs.

D. THE PEOPLE'S COMMUNICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA OR PC4D

In conclusion, this research showed that traditional communication tools are more useful, more accessible, more effective, and more empowering for grassroots women compared to new ICTs. The radio, popular theatre and film were the most effective tools in the 5 Asia-Pacific countries included in this study. Furthermore, oral communication or direct face-to-face interaction was the most empowering mode of communication between grassroots women and intermediary groups.

Underlying the effectiveness and empowering potential of any communication tool is a common denominator that resonates across the 5 Asia-Pacific countries studied. This shared element in the communication process is the centrality of grassroots women in determining the intermediary group's choice of communication tool, and consequently choice of communication strategy. It is the focus on grassroots women and what is appropriate, suitable, and yes, empowering from their own perspective and experience that leads to empowerment. The relative utility, accessibility, effectiveness and empowering potential of each tool differ for each country, and even for each intermediary group in its unique context. But the common thread to a communication tool's success is its harmony with the practices of grassroots women on the ground.

In this light, Isis International-Manila together with Aalochana of India, CMDI of Thailand, FemLINK of Fiji, and HELP of Papua New Guinea, propose a People's Communications for Development or PC4D Agenda.

In accordance with the set of implications and recommendations arising from the research results, the PC4D agenda has three major spheres: (1) practices, (2) programmes,

and (3) policies. Akin to the solar system, practices lies at the core while programmes and policies revolve around it in successive concentric circles, similar to planets orbiting around the sun. This analogy to the system of the planets highlights the dynamism of the three spheres. As the sphere of practices resonates with communication activities by grassroots women or people on the ground, the sphere of programmes is simultaneously busy with intermediary groups or other development actors engaged in communication projects, while the sphere of policies is likewise filled with States and other bodies setting communication policies.

Framed within the research parameters, grassroots women lie at the core of communication practices, intermediary groups in communication programmes, and States and other development bodies in communication policies. However, the key players in development may enter any sphere, thus the analogy of rockets. States, donors, and other development agencies may initiate or support programmes as well as determine or influence policies. Intermediary groups, feminist networks, and social movements may direct programmes for grassroots women and for social movements as well. They may also be engaged in their own communication practices.

As with the solar system, communication programmes and communication policies must constantly revolve around communication practices. As such, the PC4D model stresses that programmes and policies cannot be separated from what is happening on the ground. The basic assumption is that development takes place only when programmes and policies are solidly focused on community practices. Policies and programmes that are not based on the perspectives and experiences of the people in communities will not lead to the kind of development that is truly empowering to people. Hence, development must begin from the ground, must be rooted in practices, and must be determined by grassroots women, communities, and people themselves. Failure to keep people and community practices at the core leads to maldevelopment.

Isis International-Manila, Aalochana, CMDI, FemLINK, and HELP envision a development agenda that is centred on people's communications. PC4D is a call to ensure that communication programmes and communication policies are constantly grounded on community practices. Ultimately, PC4D is a reminder that people are at the core of development.

[Pe+D Mindmap Key]:

RED ROCKETS = closest to grassroots 🚀 ORANGE ROCKETS = next-closest to grassroots 🚀 YELLOW ROCKETS = furthest from grassroots 🚀

UN

P.O.S

PRACTICES

PROGRAMS

GOV