

# IAWRT

Voices/Pictures



Voices/Pictures is the story of how women began to speak in the broadcasting history. When the Dutch radio journalist and economist Lilian van der Goot in the aftermath of World War II brought together colleagues from countries that had been fierce enemies, allies or neutral, she was convinced that a woman's voice can serve mutual understanding. The International Association of Women in Radio and Television has grown from these roots into a world wide network with over 300 members in over 50 countries. This book tells the story of sixty years of foresight, struggles and achievements.

The story of International Association of Women in Radio and Television

## Voices/Pictures

THE STORY OF  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN  
IN RADIO AND TELEVISION

**IAWRT**  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF WOMEN IN RADIO AND TELEVISION

[www.iawrt.org](http://www.iawrt.org)



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editorial board

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN RADIO AND TELEVISION**

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# Voices/Pictures

## THE STORY OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN RADIO AND TELEVISION

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# Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to write the foreword for this history of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television.

The pleasure comes from journeying into the past with the authors and experiencing the richness of more than 50 years of our organisation's history.

There is a very old and famous Chinese proverb which says: If you want to know your past, look into your present conditions. If you want to know your future, look into your present actions.

It is both an invitation to honest reflection and a call to action.

And it is a timely reminder as I write this foreword that we best honour our predecessors by continuing to be successful.

Reading the archival exploration really brings home the challenges those early pioneers faced. There was no pro-forma for them to fill in to apply for funding, no criteria to match, no process to follow. They had to make it up as they went along, on a journey through often hostile territory.

Of course, there were helpers along the way, colleagues, employers and later sympathetic officials from organisations such as the UNESCO. But the truth must be faced: without those early women rolling up their sleeves and getting on with it, IAWRT would not have happened.

The association was naturally as much concerned with correcting women's unfairness in developed countries as addressing women's needs in developing nations, then often labelled the Third World.

But the association grew not only by adding television but also by shifting its focus, first reaching out to women working in communist Eastern Europe and later stretching out further to Asia and Africa. It is part of IAWRT's history that the organisation has learnt and taken advantage of the fact that members in the so-called North have as much to learn from their colleagues in the South.

Scholarships and prizes have contributed towards the sharing of knowledge and the encouragement of excellence in broadcasting. Thanks to our generous supporters and individual funding projects, IAWRT has been the vehicle for real and sustained improvements in broadcasting practice. By funding women working in the media

they have improved the lives of not just the individuals themselves but the societies in which they work.

As the current holder of the office of President, I am especially proud of the way IAWRT has managed to navigate the often tricky issue of reconciling some core values of democratic journalism – such as objectivity, fairness and balance – with the need for campaigning journalism to correct blindingly obvious oppression and injustice, especially against women and children.

With perseverance and assistance from associations such as ours, women throughout the world have played increasingly active roles in the media. The glass may still be half empty, but it is already half full and – I hope – getting fuller every year.

Writing a foreword to this history is, of course, also a chance for me to acknowledge the contributions of individuals to its production and to the association as a whole.

In an organisation with such an active and enthusiastic membership as IAWRT's it is impossible to name everyone who deserves it; the speech would be longer than the dinner, which is never good practice.

But I must mention a few people. First and foremost, the History Committee in its various iterations, particularly Dr Inge von Bönninghausen, Gundel Krauss Dahl and Dr Christina Ruhnbro for their hard work of researching, writing, editing, sorting out pictures, working with layout colleagues and printers. I would also like to thank those of our members who contributed their stories and memories to this book and last but not least, to all our members and supporters – and even the occasional critic who has made us stop and reassess – I say a profound and sincere “Thank you”.



Olya Booyar  
*President*

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN RADIO AND TELEVISION



## CHAPTER 1

# Digging in the Archives

# Digging in the Archives

## The early years of the association

Once upon a time – that was in the 1930's – a Dutch woman was convinced that women have a specific potential which should be recognised for the benefit of societies.

She was Lilian van der Goot, a Doctor of Economics and head of women's programmes in radio at AVRO (Algemeene Vereeniging Radio Omroep). In this capacity she founded what today is IAWRT.

Already in 1949 she had a vision of women radio journalists coming together to discuss their profession, the audience, the programming, the need for programmes for women and the hope that women have a special talent for peace. She was among other things deeply involved in the peace process – a natural consequence so close to the end of the second World War.

During the wartime occupation of Holland she had heard some BBC programmes that showed her the power of radio – one about a German prisoner-of-war who found a common bond in an English household through the shared craft of shoe-making; another by some miners' wives who met miners' wives in neighbouring France and found a link in the unique way of life dictated by their husbands' work.

Those examples convinced her of how this powerful instrument used by women might perhaps serve the cause of mutual understanding in a world recovering from war.

In the IAWRT Bulletin no 12 March 1977, Lorna Moore from the UK wrote the history of the association up till then. She writes:

“In 1949... Lilian van der Goot was advised to contact Catherine King from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. It proved to be a good advice. The following year Mrs King went to Holland and she and Mrs van der Goot talked with Betty Barzin (Belgium), Olga Autenreith (New York), who, in turn, discussed with Dorothy Lewis. They heard of Gabriele Strecker in Frankfurt and got in touch with her. There were no funds, no organisation – not even a clear plan”.



But in the fall of 1949 Lilian van der Goot invited some female radio colleagues to a very first informal discussion in Nordijk van Zee in Holland. There and then they discussed 1) aims, 2) techniques, 3) response. An embryo was created.

The outcome of that discussion was the first official meeting which took place in London in 1950. Three women from three continents took part, Catherine King from Australia, Dorothy Lewis from USA and Lilian van der Goot from Holland. They emphasised the importance of radio, remembering the impact programmes such as *Here is London*, *This is the BBC Home Service* and *Kommentar zur Lager* had had during the war.

Next step was taken a year later, in October 1951; the baby International Association of Radio Women (IARW) was born.

The meeting took place in Amsterdam, where delegates from eight countries met. The press reported radio personalities from Denmark, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Canada, USA and Switzerland.



### Too many Women's Circles

A couple of months before the first Amsterdam meeting, a Swedish colleague had visited Lilian van der Goot in Holland. When back in Sweden she expressed her doubts in a letter to her hostess in Holland about the suggestion of an association for women radio journalists, even if the idea that “radio women of the world should meet and discuss their problems... as an important piece of work to promote international understanding”. The letter goes on “However, we – she had talked to her colleagues at home – feel very doubtful whether it should be necessary to constitute an actual international association with by-laws, membership, dues and all. There are so many women’s organisations already! Couldn’t we meet from time to time just to discuss common problems”.

Consequently there was no Swedish representative at the meeting in Amsterdam, where the group voted to create the International Association of Radio Women.

They defined its purposes 1) to promote exchange between radio women of various countries, 2) to exchange techniques of radio and television in the women's field, 3) to improve methods of contacting and serving the listeners, 4) to extend the range of programme content in order to improve the practice and ideals of the profession. (Note that in paragraph 2 television was mentioned even if that medium was not a reality for these radio women at that time!)

Summing up this first official meeting can be done in a couple of questions: What do we want to do? How is it done? What do we know about the response?

Lilian van der Goot has drafted the answers to these questions: First of all radio should be used "to help people enjoy the infinite variety of interests of the world today, enlightened by as much knowledge as possible about every country in the various phases of its struggle to actually become a democracy".

Further – "to make women realise that family life is a part of a whole".

And how should it be done? Noted answer, "there is agreement that speakers should mostly address themselves to the 'illiterate but potentially intelligent section' and that it is stimulating for most audiences to be taken a little above their actual level. Listeners will also appreciate having things clearly explained as long as they feel the speaker is not looking down upon them or preaching".

### Three Presidents

Apart from programme discussion the meeting also decided that the association should be developed and run by three coordinating presidents. Lilian van der Goot got Europe and the Middle East as her responsibility. Dorothy Lewis from the United Nations Radio was to have North and South America as her department and a president for the Far East was to be appointed at a later stage that eventually never occurred. The idea behind this threefold was "that radio women in the fields of international understanding must recognize as much diversity as compatible for peaceful co-existence".

Reports had reached the meeting from Norway (very critical), Sweden, Great Britain and Australia expressing various points of view. Often a bit doubtful cheer-ups – shouldn't woman issues be part of the ordinary programming?

The Danish participant, Inga Dahlsgård, reported from a joint letter from Norway and Sweden stating "they could not take part in our Association because they considered in radio matters women were not different from men".

On the other hand, German women were found more positive and having better knowledge and interest in politics, due to the fact that they, at the time, lived in a country in need of reconstruction.

## Struggling Along

In September 1952 a new letter from Scandinavia landed on Lilian van der Goot's desk. This time from one of the original eight from the first Amsterdam meeting, namely Inga Dahlsgård from Denmark.

“My dear Lilian,

I am very sorry to let you know that there will be no participants from the Scandinavian countries in the third meeting of the International Association of Radio Women in November. This summer I had the opportunity to discuss the matter with our Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian colleagues, and none of us are able to take part in this work. All of us find the basis of the Association too slack and too private. None of us can see, that our participation in an organisation of radio women on this basis would be useful to us in our work as responsible organizers and leaders of broadcasts especially for women.”

In a pungent answer Lilian van der Goot understands that “the Norwegians (and others) are holding the opinion that as far as broadcasting is concerned, there are no women (only people who do the household work, get and look after children etc).

What you write us now is an extension of this Norwegian point of view, as it seems to express the thought that not only are there no women, but also no individuals who take initiatives and make things grow, but only (state)organisations which are big and perfect from the beginning.

Don't you realise, Inga, how contrary to real life such viewpoint is?”

## Annual Meetings

In the beginning the association met annually. In November 1952 IAWR met again in Amsterdam at a conference to which more stations sent observers: France, Italy and the UK were there.

Already in June the following year 22 women from 16 countries met in Paris at UNESCO headquarters and discussed the social and political education of women through radio.

“They realised that, oddly enough, radio producers were a means of world communication but themselves remained isolated and that they needed a journal in which to exchange their professional experiences.” (IAWRT bulletin no 12)

That was the first plea for a Newsletter for the Association. All the conferences had so far been documented in a conference bulletin, which was a strong sign of the wish to keep in contact with colleagues.

Lorna Moore writes: “Much of the Association’s value lies on individual membership but without the generous support of broadcasting stations for most of the members in subsequent years the Association could not have thrived. It had no official broadcasting voice; but largely because UNESCO faithfully supported it in the early days, by housing the conferences in Paris and giving technical facilities and interpreters, the idea flourished.”

The next meeting took place in Brussels (June 1954). Here an important step was taken, namely the decision to bring recorded programmes for discussion at the upcoming meeting in Paris the year after. Since then that part of conference programming has developed immensely. (See chapter Conferences)

### Founding Mothers

Lilian van der Goot – or as her real name was Willhelmien Hendrika Posthumus-van der Goot – described herself as a statistician by training and an ardent (though moderate) feminist. She was born in Pretoria, South Africa, May 2nd 1897 and died in Amsterdam, January 1st 1989.

As mentioned earlier Lilian van der Goot became the first Dutch female Doctor of Economics.

For the benefit of young feminist researchers van der Goot with friends in 1935 founded the International Archives voor de Vrouwenbeweging (International Archives for the Women’s Movement).

One of her main activities was the fight for women’s right to work. She also organised a successful national campaign against a proposed law prohibiting women from any work outside their homes.

In 1936 she was appointed Head of the Women’s Programme at AVRO-Radio. She got involved in the women’s movement during the thirties when she



Mrs Dorothy Lewis.

had joined the Nederlandsche Vereeniging van Staatsburgeressen (Netherland's Union of Women Citizens).

Mrs Dorothy Lewis also belongs to the association's early history. A veteran in radio, Dorothy Lewis began in 1927 as a woman's commentator in New York. Later she joined the UN Radio and became known as the UN's Grandma and was noted for her spectacular hats, according to Newsweek (July 16, 1951). Very early she too had plans to form an association of women radio journalists, that is in the US, but the idea stranded due to WWII. She did not take part in the first Amsterdam meeting, but had an observer there, and in the press Mrs van der Goot and Mrs Lewis were mentioned as the prime movers in the effort to form an international group of radio women.

### Growth and Diverting Concepts

In 1955, 23 members from 11 countries met in Paris again, as two years previously hosted by UNESCO. This cooperation had grown out of Lilian van der Goot's friendship with the Mexican José Garza y de Garate who was head of the Radio Division of UNESCO in Paris. As we know from a long letter from Betty Barzin, founding member from Belgium, the British especially had not been altogether happy with the last meeting because they were used to more formal procedures. Barzin writes: "Our Association is no longer the friendly club it has been... Before long we may even have some sort of consultative status with UNESCO – which would be a wonderful crowning of your initiative, Lilian dear. Your baby has become an important adult, and you should be proud of it."

From Lilian van der Goot's five page long answer it becomes very clear that for her it was not a matter of being adult or of changing a friendly club into an organisation with elaborate rules, committees and resolutions. She first of all wanted the free flow of ideas and experiences among equals. "Teamspirit" is her central idea of how a fruitful giving and absorbing can function. "An active committee leading a passive assembly may be a good pattern when more or less ignorant people come to be taught by more or less clever ones. But we come together to exchange (all served all serving, no one stands alone to paraphrase Pope). So a passive assembly, feeling safe in their right to demand because they have paid, for our association is sterility death... Now it has been miraculous that from the beginning we have been able to create a teamspirit, surmounting first the difficulties of distance (between USA, Australia and Europe), then the gap between allied, neutral and ex-enemy-feelings and finally the hurdle of difficult people and combinations (who will always be with us)." Lilian van der Goot wanted the association to become "a new element for good in the international jungle." (December 1955)

Nevertheless she did see the necessity of working on the rules and sent a draft to all members asking them to give their comments. Compared to the founding charter this draft is more precise in respect to the structure of the organisation and to decision making. Van der Goot sticks to the idea of having presidents for different regions of the world and adds to them area boards of three to seven vice presidents. All officers should be indicated by members of the group in consultation with the General Board, which is composed of the regional presidents and is “responsible for the general functioning of the association and the seat of the organisation... The General Congress, which includes all members, present or absent, is the supreme authority of the Association.”

In the beginning membership had been possible for “Any woman of executive standing who is responsible for or has given proof of sustained interest in radio and television programs for or by women”. In her new draft, van der Goot suggests that women of executive standing should be eligible and those who have proven “sustained interest in matters pertaining to women and Radio or Television.” She goes beyond those that are responsible for women’s programmes and takes in those who are conscious of the specific role of women in the profession. Decisions including designations should be reached by general agreement of “those concerned”. If this “in exceptional cases” was not possible, those concerned could take a majority vote. (Letter to Dorothy Lewis, Dec. 27 1955)

### Lilian Resigns

This proposal, which kept the core ideas, was rejected at the following meeting in 1956 in London, where 12 out of 65 members gathered. Willemien Hendrika Posthumus-van der Goot, the president for Europe and Near East, stepped back. In her letter of January 1957 to all colleagues she resumes her idea of the association: “Plenty of room for growth and differences in world-background. The association’s only aim: to provide suitable ways and meeting places, when and wherever possible, for exchange of experiences and friendly discussions of professional problems. Every member equal, free, safe, her participation making her a better, less lonely woman and broadcaster!... When we were discussing a proposal of rules along the above lines, the 12 members present in London made it clear they wanted on the contrary a centrally organised association following the usual formal scheme with committees, resolutions, votes etc in which moreover the feminine point of view was not stressed because out of date and felt to be rather restrictive. I trust all absent members will now understand I did not resign for a whim, I did do it regretfully, but could not possibly do otherwise. Children and associations often take roads unforeseen by parents or founders who then have to let go.”

## Changing Names and Structures

Since no new statutes were passed, those assembled in London could not elect a new board. A provisional board was appointed which also served as a statutes committee: Dorothy Lewis (president for the American continent), Mable P. Davis (UK), Gabriele Strecker (Germany), Kate Aiken (USA) and Adrienne Vavas seur (France). In Paris 1957 the association was substantially changed, beginning with its name. International Association of Radio Women (IARW) became International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT). It was opened to freelance professionals, and conferences from then on were held biennially. The most radical change concerned the Board of Governors. Whereas in 1951 three presidents had been agreed upon and no other officers, in the new statutes of 1957 there is one president, two vice presidents, a secretary-treasurer, three board members and two additional board members who may be appointed. Voting is regulated as well as the dues, languages and dissolution of the association.

Members of the new board were: president Dorothy Lewis (USA), vice presidents Catherine King (Australia), Betty Barzin (Belgium), secretary/treasurer Mabel P. Davis (UK) and board members Adrienne Vavas seur (France), Janet Quigley (UK), Gabriele Strecker (Germany), Popy Rigopoulou (Greece) and Myrle Swan (Ceylon, today Sri Lanka).

## A Try for a Newsletter

Besides the intensive discussions on the structure of the association and therewith its future, another important activity was the establishment of a Newsletter. In May 1955 José Garza y de Garate, acting head of UNESCO Radio Division spent several days in the Netherlands. IARW president van der Goot arranged meetings, invited him to her house and “generally tried to make myself useful”. They most probably had met before at the 1953 meeting in Paris and continued their contact in 1955 when UNESCO again hosted the conference. Shortly afterwards van der Goot wrote a letter to all

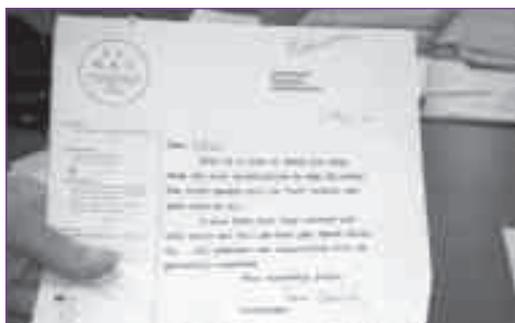


The original letter-head with the first ordinary board.

members informing them that there were plans to publish a monthly newsletter with “feminine information on a world scale!” (Letter to J. Garza y de Garate, January 6th 1956) All contributions should come from members of the association. Van der Goot would collect and edit them, UNESCO would print and mail the Newsletter. In January 1956 van der Goot received 30 copies for the trial run. There was a suggestion to use some of the material for a UNESCO bulletin. In the same letter J. Garza y de Garate announced that he himself would be going to Mexico for a longer home leave but had talked the project over with a colleague. After that there is no more mentioning of the Newsletter. The report of the 1957 conference in Paris doesn’t mention the Newsletter. Regrettably no copy has been found so far.

### Documents and Missing Links

From 1956 onwards when van der Goot stepped back as president for Europe and Near East there is no more material on IAWRT at the IIAV except for the Report of the Eight Annual Conference 1957 in Paris where it was decided to meet biennially



and the “Revised Statutes” were adopted. Unfortunately so far no documents have been found concerning the years up to 1968 except for the above mentioned article written by Lorna Moore (UK) in 1977. From this we know that the next conferences were held in 1959 in Cologne, in 1962 in Paris two years later in Vienna and thereafter in London.

### The UN Accreditation

Lorna Moore’s article was the only source for the early years until only lately when president Frieda Werden (2005–2007) visited the IIAV in Amsterdam and gave the first hint of van der Goot’s ego-documents there. So Christina Ruhnbro and Inge von Bönninghausen were able to investigate the very early years of IAWRT. And today it is also possible to clear up a misunderstanding that dates back to Lorna Moore’s article. She wrote that through Dorothy Lewis (president 1957–1961) the association became accredited as a non-governmental organisation to the United Nations. Dorothy Lewis was employed at the UN Department of Public Information

(DPI), and it was to this department IAWRT gained accreditation in those early days. This accreditation to the DPI, which IAWRT still holds, does not entitle to any kind of special status and has to be clearly distinguished from the accreditation with “special consultative status” at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which gives much more comprehensive ways of influencing the Council’s politics. In 1985 president Felicity Kinross successfully went through the difficult procedure of ECOSOC accreditation for IAWRT.

Again we can learn that telling her or his story is always an adventure and although one may think that the unknown is what lies in the future it is just as true that the past holds a basketful of surprises.

Footnote: All quotations come from documents collected at the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women’s Movement (IIAV), Amsterdam, Netherlands.



Digging in the archives. Christina Ruhnbro and Inge von Bönninghausen at the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement (IIAV), Amsterdam, Netherlands.



**Bulletin No. 19**  
**Report on the 24th Conference**  
**in New York and Washington, May 13-19th 1990**

**CHAPTER 2**

**The Whirling  
World of  
Media**

# The Whirling World of Media

## A look at politics, communication and women on the move

It was only six years after the end of the biggest war ever fought, when in 1951 eight women from European countries, Canada and the United States got together in Amsterdam and founded the International Association of Radio Women (IARW). What were the most important features of that time and the following decades of the association's growing? We can trace three, the political map was entirely redesigned, electronic technology rapidly enabled world communication, and women's movements all over the world deeply changed the role of women in society. How do these three lines interlink and create an environment that influences the work and life of media women?

### Hot and Cold War

The second World War had not only raged on the entire European continent but also in northern Africa and the South Pacific. The United States was involved, as well as the Soviet Union, Japan and China. Around 50 million people were killed. One should have thought – and people on all continents did think – that out of this catastrophe there would grow a world wide will to build a lasting peace. But on the contrary, as soon as the bombing and fighting stopped, the Cold War between East and West began. Political, economical and above all militaristic threats kept both sides under alarm. The Iron Curtain not only divided Europe into two but also influenced the other powerful development of the 20th century: the decolonialisation. India became independent in 1947 and during the fifties and sixties in most African countries long and bloody fights for independence were successful. Some were supported (and used) by the West, some by the East. Due to colonial exploitation, corruption and other factors, this very often was not the end, but the beginning of severe economic and political problems.

Industrialised countries in the sixties started development aid programmes which in Africa were sometimes criticised as being neo-colonial. So during the 1990's there was an ideological and practical switch from aid towards development co-operation. Media played a vital role in the political West-East power structure as well as in development efforts.

In this political setting it was courageous and proved to be far-sighted to start an



Family gathering around the radio, 1927.

international women's association. Step by step the organisation widened its transnational activities and membership. IAWRT crossed the Iron Curtain as early as 1978 for conferences in Sofia/Bulgaria, Budapest/Hungary and Prague/Czechoslovakia and also reached out to Kingston/Jamaica, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, India and Ghana. At these conferences, practical workshops on professional skills were part of a commitment in development co-operation and so were the two bigger projects – the “Nepal Project” and “Network” (See chapter: Activities).

### Information and Communication

Besides this very roughly sketched post-war situation, there is another important development touching our interest in the environment around the founding and growing of IAWRT. Communication had always been a powerful weapon no matter whether soldiers had fought on horses or with canons and bombs. When telegraphing was invented, information itself became a “gun”, quick and easy to handle. This happened on a large scale during World War I. And vice versa the war gave a strong push forward to developing the telegraph and telephone. In a next step, the early 1930's saw the new technology of broadcasting developing into a mass medium, used

first for entertainment, later for information and propaganda. The British Broadcasting Company, for instance, first installed its short wave Empire Service in 1932 to reach the British colonies and the Commonwealth. 1939–1945 the BBC was on air in all countries at war. As news jingle they used the first notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (♩♩♩♩) which in the Morse alphabet stands for victory. Listening to the BBC was a prosecutable offence in Germany where the Hitler regime installed a



German troops listening to the radio during the invasion of Poland, 1939.

Ministry for Propaganda to keep the press and radio under total control. The radio women who met in Amsterdam in 1951 had experienced the janus-faced character of radio only a few years earlier and they were also well aware of being a rare species in a man's world.

Television experiments date back to the twenties but became a mass medium in the United States from around the 1950's and some years later in Europe and the USSR. Be-

sides the technological development of radio and television, a legal framework had to be worked out because both media are very strong political instruments. In the beginning there were three main ways of regulating national broadcasting systems, 1) public controlled companies on a legal basis, independent of the state, controlled by elected bodies and financed through consumers fees (the BBC is the model),



The BBC headquarters under construction, 1931.

2) state owned broadcasting controlled by an appropriate authority (France), 3) commercial ownership on the basis of advertising (USA). The first and the second model were exported in the main to developing countries in line with the system in the respective colonial empires which they had belonged to. When they became independent in most cases, they had to build up their own system and educate their professionals. Most European development agencies and

many NGO's were and are engaged in development co-operation in this field. Today in almost all countries, there is a mix of public, state and commercial broadcasting.

TV-productions, especially in the field of entertainment, are hardly national anymore. A small number of big global companies dominate the market. Radio however gained importance especially in developing countries, because equipment and sets are cheap, and where illiteracy is high radio is superior to all written information. And while in remote poor areas even the lack of batteries may be a big problem for a local women's radio group – as we witnessed at the Zimbabwe conference – in other parts of the world the success of a radio programme is measured by the number of podcasts that were downloaded from the Internet.

All these very fast technical developments during the 20th century led to the deeply worrying political question of who has access to information. The gap between people with and without money, education and political influence, also produces an information gap. No surprise that inequality between women and men, generally coinciding with the other disparities, also generates a gender information gap.

### Women on the Move

Sixty years ago women working in radio were a very small minority in several aspects: they were well educated, they worked full time and in absolutely male surroundings. On top of that they had a word in the public arena, whereas for hundreds of years the “private” had been the female domain. When Lilian van der Goot and her friends founded IARW all of them worked on programmes for women – and that meant for





During the 1980's the worldwide women's liberation movement demonstrated for equal rights.

housewives. Some of these programmes were rather conservative, others questioned traditional family patterns and women's roles. The world of housewives was described in Betty Friedans "The feminine Mystique" (1961) and millions of women around the world recognised their daily reality. This book and a number of equally rebellious publications, gave expression to thoughts and desires that had not been communicated before. The protest against oppression converged with other revolts of students or workers and made women move towards liberation. Internationally the UN Women's Year and first World Conference on Women in 1975, the Decade and the following Conferences (1980, 1985, 1995) gave visibility and weight to the world-wide movement, addressing inequality, violence, social exclusion, poverty and the claim for reproductive health. And there was a growing awareness of the importance of gender representation in the media as well as the strong influence of stereotypes in radio and television.

At the Fourth UN World Conference, the Beijing Platform for Action was signed by 189 States. One of its twelve Critical Areas of Concern is Women and the Media. Two "strategic goals" were set 1) increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication, 2) promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media. The Platform asks for actions to be taken by governments, national and international media systems, non governmental and media professional associations and advertising organisations. For the Beijing+5 Conference, IAWRT gave a statement which became part of the NGO evaluation of the Platform's implementation.

## Participation and Portrayal

As part of the preparations for the Beijing Conference, the Global Media Monitoring Project, GMMP, had been organised by the Canadian NGO Media Watch. Volunteers from 71 countries collected over 15 000 news stories from newspapers, radio and TV news published on the same day (January 18th 1995) and along an identical model. The two main questions were: who reports and who is reported on, split up into very differentiated items. The Global Media Monitoring Project was repeated in 2000 and 2005, now organised by the World Association of Christian Communication. Margaret Gallagher, the well known media researcher and responsible for the 2005 GMMP report, found that the results are strikingly consistent. The first study found that women were 17% of the world's news subjects. It took ten long years until the number had risen to 21% in 2005. Men are 83% of experts and 86% of spokespersons. Older women are totally absent from sound and picture.

These findings are irritating on the background that there was once the belief that more participation of women in radio and television would more or less automatically improve the representation in programmes. This proved to be a mistake because the power of male structures, to which women have to adjust if they want to be part of the game, was underestimated. The number of radio and TV producers has grown to around a third in many countries and a viewer might think they predominate. But this has more to do with “selling” the news than with power in decision making. In a survey in 39 countries the International Federation of Journalists in 2000 found that more than a third of journalists are women but less than 3% are senior media executives. According to Margaret Gallagher's findings, male attitudes are still the most common obstacle to advancement. She also found that the constant commercialisation of media, the loss of public interest values and of pluralism, makes progress in women's employment contingent and fragile.

With regard to media and all the other issues of the Beijing Platform for Action, the follow-up processes showed that the Fourth World Conference on Women was the most progressive political statement the community of nations ever put forward. For a number of reasons, which cannot be analysed in this context, most of the signatory countries today do not even remember what they stood for in 1995. And unfortunately there is not a civil society movement to call for fulfillment.

Skimming through sixty years of development in the political and economical power structure, in communication technology and in women's role in society, we see that women in radio and television have been directly affected by these developments, while at the same time analysing and presenting the rapid changes to their audiences.

As diverse as IAWRT's membership may be, we all share this challenge of taking part – and keeping distance.



## CHAPTER 3

# Presidents look back

# Presidents look back

## “We all need international contacts”

GERD MELLVIG AHLSTRÖM, SWEDEN, PRESIDENT 1970–1974

“Two legs. Networking and professional exchange that is what IAWRT should stand on. Unfortunately during my time it was more of the first leg, I must say”.

It was in 1968 Gerd Mellvig Ahlström was sent to the Zürich conference by her bosses to “find out what it all is about”. Previously the association had been met with scepticism. (See Chapter: Digging in the Archives)

Gerd was burning for equality, for women journalists’ need for travelling, meeting colleagues, being present at meetings to the same degree as male colleagues. Something that was even more rare at that time. Women had not had the same opportunities as men to go to big international sessions as men always had. “Women have the same need for contacts and to see the world with their own eyes. And to be accepted as normal professionals also internationally”.

What Gerd found in Zürich was a good sistership along with lots of diverting opinions. She reported home and was then able to go to the next conference – the Brussels conference in 1970 – where future aims for the association were settled. One strong wish was to widen the membership to countries behind the Iron Curtain – this was in the shadow of World War II and the Cold War.

### Building Bridges

Gerd, coming from neutral Sweden, was the woman to try to bridge the gap between East and West, the conference hoped. So she had to telephone her bosses in Stockholm and ask if they could host the next conference. The answer was yes. And she was elected president.

That was the beginning of a busy time for her trying to explain the meaning of IAWRT and to make as many East European Broadcasting stations as possible send delegates to Stockholm. Lots of letters were written in Stockholm and sent around the world.

A year before the Stockholm conference, Gerd wrote to the members: “Although it may seem somewhat strange in these days of steadily, improving equality of sexes

to preserve an all-female association like ours, I hope you will all agree that there is still ample motivation in the simple fact that we all need international contacts for professional information and personal encouragement.” (Bulletin No 8, July 1971)

In 1972 the Stockholm conference could, due to Gerd’s efforts, welcome delegates from the then Soviet Union, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.

On the agenda were programme discussions, with strong emphasis on the human level. Useful professional and strong personal contacts were developed. As usual (sic!) at IAWRT conferences the financing of the association was a worry and a matter of discussion.

The delegates also met with in-house colleagues to exchange views on the profession. “All male”, a delegate remarked.

Gerd’s last conference problem was to get the IAWRT delegates out of the country – a spectacular Croat plane hijacking in southern Sweden really disturbed all flight connections.

Next baton went to Finland, where warm, artistic Sirppa Sivori-Ask was able to bring the Helsinki delegates to the Soviet Union. It was possible due to Finnish president Urhu Kekkonen’s disarmament negotiations and his faith in international contacts.

In Gerd’s remembrance from Finland is a reception where delegates were offered a Mesimarja – a drink made of arctic brambleberries – that many took for a soft drink, followed by a sauna bath with beer. Maybe some didn’t remembered yesterday the next day!

And from the Jamaica conference her memory tells about a country in riot, which meant that excursions were undertaken with armed policemen in the bus! Her verdict of that conference is hard: “There the professional leg was very weak!”



**“Women have the same need for contacts and to see the world with their own eyes. And to be accepted as normal professionals also internationally!”**

INTERVIEW BY CHRISTINA RUHNBRO

## “Sofia behind the Iron Curtain marked a milestone”

ELIZABETH KIRKBY, AUSTRALIA, PRESIDENT 1976–1980

I first learnt of IAWRT in 1963 when I was head of the Talks and Features Unit of Radio Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur. The Director-General of Radio and Television Malaysia had been informed of this organisation that was supporting women in television and radio. He asked me if I would like to be a member and I think they paid my first subscription, but there was no money to send me to attend conferences in Europe. I don't think they even found the money to send one of my Malay colleagues. Conferences then were strictly for men.

In 1965, I moved with my husband and family to Sydney and within a few weeks, I was employed by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in the Schools Division, and as a producer for Light Entertainment. In 1966, I became the first on air presenter of a programme for women, MORNING CALL. It was a daily one hour broadcast directed to the housewife. The programme was fully-scripted, remarks were not permitted and the interviews were devoted to cooking, children's health, books and sometimes a discussion with a prominent woman. Current affairs, politics and advertising were banned.

I discovered that the Executive Producer of the programme, Ruth Stirling, was also a member of IAWRT but had never been given leave to go to a conference. Catherine King from the UK was a founder member of IAWRT, but had never been able to attend a conference after she emigrated to Australia.

### Married? – Stay at Home!

The Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) never considered it important enough to fund women to attend conferences in Europe. In fact, at that time married women had only just been allowed to take up paid employment in government departments or with statutory bodies. In the 1960's, the place of the married woman was in the home! However by 1970 I attended the Brussels IAWRT Conference at my own expense. Two of my programmes were of interest to IAWRT. One was *English for Aborigines*, the other was *Learn Indonesian*.

In 1972 I was also playing in a TV soap opera which gained wide popularity because it was written around four middle-aged couples and a group of young people, including the two young professional men who were gay. The success of the show made it possible for me to attend the 1972 Conference in Stockholm, again at my own expense, when I was elected to the Board of IAWRT. I flew to the Helsinki Conference in 1974 and met Sirppa Sivori-Asp, and had the great experience after

that Conference of going to Rovaniemi in Lapland, then further north to see the Northern Lights.

It was after this conference that delegates had the opportunity to visit St. Petersburg, then Leningrad, and our President Helen Rapp (1974–1976) averted a potentially damaging diplomatic incident. One of the American delegates, Evelyn Macdonald, was carrying American currency in her wallet. The Russian police at the border check point found it hard to believe that anyone would carry US dollars in their purse and were reluctant to let Evelyn out of the USSR. Very patiently and diplomatically, Helen who was fluent in Russian, talked for over an hour with senior police officials and assured them that it was not unusual for US citizens to carry US dollars for unforeseen emergencies and there had been no black-market trading! Eventually, we were all allowed to continue on our return journey to Helsinki. It was on this visit to St. Petersburg that I met the radio veteran Nina Krymova, and I was able to cement our friendship in Moscow when I attended a World Actors conference.



**“Conferences then were strictly for men”** |

I was elected President of IAWRT in 1976 and shared the responsibility of organising the Sofia Conference with programme director Yonka Kotzeva. In the days before e-mails or video-conferencing, organising involved travelling to the venue to liaise with the host radio and television organisation.

### Going East

The 1978 conference marked a milestone in the annals of IAWRT, as it was the first conference held behind the “Iron Curtain”, when the relationship between the USSR and the West was very tenuous. Bulgaria at that time had a communist president and was one of the closest allies of the USSR. So my journey to Sofia was a great adventure. I was amazed at the difference in the lifestyle in Sofia compared to Moscow. The hotels and restaurants were elegant and sophisticated and Yonka’s friends were most hospitable.

The conference was held between September 24th and September 28th, and afterwards some of the delegates were taken to the Black Sea resort of Varna. As an

Australian, I was amazed that such a variety of accommodation had been built without destroying the beaches and the forests that flanked them. The IAWRT delegates were taken to a traditional Balkan wedding at the Golden Sands and to lunch at a Fisherman's Restaurant. I think all the delegates from the West were impressed, particularly by the magnificent recital of Russian Orthodox music in the crypt of the Cathedral in Sofia and by the performance of "La Traviata" in the Opera House. Being in a communist country we were chaperoned during the trip by a very charming and sophisticated "tourist officer". I developed a strong suspicion that it had been decided that a group of media women from the West should be under quiet surveillance.

### Going West

I attended my last conference as President in 1980 when it was held in Kingston, Jamaica, the first time that the IAWRT had ever held a conference outside Europe. Due to the hard work and enthusiasm of Dorothy La Croix, the Kingston Conference was an outstanding success. One year later I was elected to the Parliament of New South Wales, the first woman of my party, the Australian Democrats, to gain a parliamentary seat in that State.

I attended the conferences in Oslo 1982, in Stockholm 1992 and New Delhi 1999, but I missed the others as the conference dates clashed with my parliamentary sittings. In any case, my media days were over. But I remained in touch with the many friends I had made through IAWRT. Sirppa Sivori-Asp, Felicity Kinross, Christina Ruhnbro, Lore Walb, Lilo Thelen, Marianne Gerhardt, Helga Prollius, and Marianne Grewe-Partsch. I visited Inge von Bönninghausen in Cologne (and climbed the tower of Cologne Cathedral!), Mal Johnson in Washington and Gundel Krauss Dahl in Norway. Gundel and her husband have visited me in Australia, as have Ruth Brändli and Christina Ruhnbro. So my life is still linked with IAWRT and I have so many memories of one-time colleagues from whom I learnt so much. Dorothea Kempa-Rohne, Gerd Mellvig Ahlström and Helen Rapp.

The IAWRT has been such an important part of my life for over forty years. I am proud of the fact that I was elected President although I am sad that Australia was never more closely involved. Maybe that now Olya Booyar is President that will change. Certainly IAWRT made it possible for me to visit many of the great cities of the world, and learn about them in friendly and stimulating company. I cherish the memories of those cities and my IAWRT colleagues.

## “A True Internationalist”

SIRPPA SIVORI-ASP (1928–2006), FINLAND, PRESIDENT 1980–1984

The Finnish president carried out her role with great energy, enthusiasm, diplomacy and intelligence. Sirppa Sivori-Asp was a woman of many talents and also ahead of her time in many ways. She always emphasised the global importance of the IAWRT and put a lot of effort into finding new members all around the world. She herself was a very international person: born in Viborg, Finnish Carelia, when it still was part of Finland. Viborg was one of the most international cities in Europe at that time and the little girl could hear several European languages when strolling along on the streets. But everything changed when Finland lost Viborg in the war against Russia.

During the 40’s Sirppa travelled to the United States to study at the Playhouse School of Theatre in Pittsburgh. Some ten years later she became involved in the art of Puppet Theatre and advanced to being world known for her productions. She even founded the puppet theatre “GREEN APPLE” in Helsinki, Finland in 1971 and became a member of the Union Internationale de la Marionette (UNIMA) a year later. She was elected as the Union’s international president in 1992 which post she held up to year 2000.

Sirppa Sivori-Asp made her career as a producer and director of TV children’s programmes at the Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE. She came into contact with IAWRT early in the 1970’s and attended the conference in Stockholm in 1972. When YLE hosted the IAWRT conference in 1974, being the coordinator, she could really use her talent and enthusiasm. The preparations started well ahead of time. No e-mail then existed. Director Generals of broadcasting companies received invitation letters by air mail



“My visible soul,  
my puppet”

asking them to nominate their representative to attend the meeting in Helsinki, Pasila, YLE head quarters.

### **IAWRT's World Map**

Sirppa succeeded, assisted by Britta Kavanne, liason at the YLE international relations, to contact about 80 media women around the world. New countries showed up on IAWRT's world-map. Luckily the Finnish Broadcasting Company was a very generous host to settle all the multiple travelling details for the 28 participants who managed to make it to Helsinki, and they were met at the airport in company cars and taken to the hotel. When participants entered the company headquarters, many of them dressed up in their national dresses, they aroused a lot of attention in the corridors. The conference itself was all recorded and a full conference report was written. Several resolutions were prepared by IAWRT, especially if a single member was in some trouble in their country or job. Full solidarity was expressed by the IAWRT in writing and forwarded to those involved.

At the Helsinki conference in 1974 Sirppa was elected vice president, and six years later at the conference in Jamaica, she succeeded Elisabeth Kirkby as IAWRT's president. She was actively engaged in the plans and decisions around the IAWRT Nepal project where she was a member of the Steering Committee, and she helped launch the international register Network. She worked constantly to convince more media women from new countries to travel to the international meetings.

During her presidency she was in charge of the Oslo conference in 1982 and the following one in Budapest in 1984. In the conference bulletins we can read that new colleagues from Gambia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Indonesia were on the participants list in Oslo, and in Budapest newcomers came from Czechoslovakia.

### **"A Happy Clown"**

Sirppa not only wished to create a big IAWRT-family expressing respect and tolerance to all the differences between the nations and individuals, but she also succeeded in leading the association forward towards this goal. She had this rare combination of professionalism and warmhearted humanity, for which the members of those days certainly remember her. In her own words from her career in the theatre: "I am a happy clown, a harmless puppet player with a visible soul, my puppet".

BY BRITTA KAVANNE AND SINIKKA SIEKKINEN

## “Editorial independence should never be taken for granted”

FELICITY KINROSS (1923–1991), UNITED KINGDOM, PRESIDENT 1984–1988

A lovely person with a beautiful name was the IAWRT president from 1984 to 1988. Felicity Kinross with a many-sided background and really living up to her name, was a perfect match as our association’s president.

I knew her from IAWRT meetings. She was there when I first attended an IAWRT conference. It was in Oslo in 1982, and during a following excursion we discussed mosses and cryptogams.

I saw her last in 1991. She stayed in my home and we were busy preparing the 1992 Stockholm conference. A meeting that she didn’t attend. She died only a fortnight after her stay with me. In the obituary (Newsletter, February 1992) Claire Chovil wrote:

“Felicity enjoyed people, and the intricacies of their lives and talents and achievements fascinated her. She loved to talk: about friends, colleagues, or dilemmas (a favourite word) in her current programme or project. Her viewpoint was positive, humorous, unobtrusively Christian. For her, talking was a part of thinking and the more she talked the better she talked.”

Felicity Kinross started her working life in the visual media in 1944 and joined the BBC in 1951 as a producer in School Broadcasting, Radio. Five years later she was enrolled to the Gold Coast Broadcasting Service. Her task was to work as the School Broadcasting Organiser setting up a department from scratch for the Ghana Broadcasting Service after the independence. She did two tours of duty in Ghana as Head of Programmes.



**“Our role is not only promoting women’s affairs but in giving a woman’s point of view on all subjects covered by the media.”**

## Out of Africa

“This experience influenced her for life. She loved Africa and made many African friends. She also had an instinctive understanding of the problems faced by producers working to establish a network for educational broadcasting in new areas.”

She returned once more in the same errand to Africa, this time to Uganda. Felicity Kinross brought these experiences with her when she became a member of the association. She was there when conferences were planned, she took part in them, bringing in the BBC ideology, we felt. She was an early organiser of what IAWRT was to become:

“From conversations with IAWRT members from African and Asian countries she developed a particular interest in providing media training for women in developing countries who were not able to travel abroad to train... Felicity was a strong supporter of IAWRT as an independent organisation which could provide a forum for discussion about programme making on all kinds of social issues. She believed that IAWRT should particularly aim to interest and support young women producers in countries where television was still developing. She was keenly aware that editorial independence should never be taken for granted and that its values need discussion both by those who have always had it and those who have to struggle for it.”

## To the UN

As president she was keen to channel news of other media women and their achievements to the IAWRT membership, and cuttings from newspapers and magazines became a regular feature in the Newsletter. Her experience and sound sense guided the association through the ups and downs of the Nepal project, where she sat on the Steering Committee. But perhaps most important of all, she managed to gain NGO consultative status for IAWRT at the UN in 1985. It was a great achievement and a personal experience for her – as she reported back in the Newsletter:

“When it came to it, I did not go before the Committee till 4pm, and I was quite jumpy with all the hanging about waiting. My fact sheet came in very useful. Every delegate had a copy. I was asked only three questions:

- Why has IAWRT not applied before since it has been in existence since 1951? I explained our UNESCO connection in the past and our recent change in direction with the Nepal Project.

- Why has IAWRT not got more members? A GOOD QUESTION. Please let's see if we can up the membership. Have you all canvassed people in your station recently? I replied that members in broadcasting stations in 29 countries meant access to an enormous number of people and went on to explain our role is not only promoting women's affairs but in giving a woman's point of view on all subjects covered by the media. I think they appreciated that.
- This was about government backing which I was able to dispose of. No more questions. Are we agreed that IAWRT should have Cat. II. The hammer came down and we had got it, or rather we hope we have. Formally we have to wait for ECOSOC to confirm it. This should come through this month."

### Coffee and Ice

Felicity was a passionate researcher and – surprisingly to all of us – for years her subject was icecream! She found out everything about the delicious refreshment and the man who had brought it from the Italian part of Switzerland to London. In 1991 her book “Coffee and Ice – the Story of Carlo Gatti in London” was published. Only now when writing this little piece in memory of Felicity Kinross I found out that she had used all her detailed knowledge to also write a novel, “Ragazzo”. It paints a picture of Victorian London. The manuscript lay unread in the archives of the London Canal Museum until the museum published it online.

To me, and I suppose to many others as well, Felicity was the incarnation of the best of a British lady. She could be strongly, though kindly demanding, when she called a board member, suggesting things to be done. And of course they were done.

Unforgettable is my memory of her from the New York/Washington conference right after the Berlin wall had fallen. Young, enthusiastic but slightly ignorant American colleagues, offered to help building up the whole European media after years behind the Iron Curtain.

“May I remind you that the BBC always has been the free voice in Europe”, Felicity pointed out in a frosty, very British and polite voice.

She would have approved of the IAWRT of today!

BY CHRISTINA RUHNBRO

(Quotations from the obituary by Claire Chovil)

## “A permanent struggle with impossibilities”

KLÁRA POÓR, HUNGARY, PRESIDENT 1988–1992

Wonderful times they were, the eighties, for several reasons: those were the best years of the Hungarian Television which at that time was very good from a professional point of view, those were the best years of my career as a TV journalist and those were the years when Hungarian TV started seeking for international connections on the level of reporters and cameramen etc.

The invitation of the Bulgarian TV came as a gift from heaven. It informed about the meeting of IAWRT in Sofia, and that socialist countries were to be represented on a proper level and fluent English was required. Being the only female TV person speaking English, plus engaged in themes of current foreign affairs and world economy, I got selected for the task, as the only solution.

Funnily enough I was not looking very much for participation, I thought I would get bored stiff with the meeting, because I have had very sad experiences with conferences. But what a wonderful surprise! No stiff speeches, no boredom, no useless pompous task! It was all nice friendship, excellent professionalism, very useful exchange of ideas, not only about programme-making but everything and anything with the best of our professionals.

Thus I became a very enthusiastic member of IAWRT.

There was just one strange problem which arose from the difference of political systems. As long as I was a member and later a Board member, Hungarian Television generously covered membership fee, air tickets, hotel rooms and whatnots of travelling to conferences and board meetings. They regarded my IAWRT membership as one of the contacts with the western world by which we could show that we were equal with them, if not more equal.

### A Western Invention

But when in 1988 I was elected president I got no further support, no secretary to type letters and articles, no time on air to make women’s programmes etc, because by that time it was very clear that IAWRT was a “Western invention” for promoting women in radio and television. We were very proud that socialism was a heaven of ambitious professional women, be they coal miners, steel workers or radio and TV journalists, so we wouldn’t need any promotion or even encouragement. Now this created a real problem for me.

My pet idea was that being president I would recruit as many good professionals from the socialist countries for IAWRT members as possible. I knew they hungered

for exactly the same experience of discussing their matters with wonderful colleagues from all over the world. We were all craving to tear apart our programmes, centimetre by centimetre, second by second, sentence by sentence, because all of us, and you too my dears who read this, want to know infinitely more about our profession, about the world.

Imagine how I did this without anyone to write the many letters, without the money to mail them. I would have paid the expenses but I could not, because every Hungarian citizen was entitled to buy 100 dollars from the Hungarian National Bank only once every second year, which due to later very liberal developments in our currency policy became more frequent. We got 100 bucks every year, very generous!

So, my presidential time was a period of permanent frustration and struggle with impossibilities. Plus the fact that because of the above mentioned favourable situation of women in Hungary, I would not have been allowed to go abroad to conferences, board meetings or any IAWRT occasion unless I brought back current affairs reports from the respective countries. And this meant that at least 70% of my time there was taken up by real hard work of organising interviews and shooting reports.

Still, I always say: those were the days, my friend, we thought they'd never end... as it says in the old English song. And I think the rest of the text is also very up to date: we live the life we choose, we fight and never lose, those were the days, oh yes, those were the days. Once more, don't forget:

We fight and never lose...

With everlasting friendship to Ruth, Inge, Felicity, Sirppa, Christina, Gundel, Maria Innessa and many others whom I found for life in IAWRT.



**“My pet idea was that being president I would recruit as many good professionals from the socialist countries as possible.”**

## A truly professional association

CHRISTINA RUHNBRO, SWEDEN, 1992–1997

A presidency can be compared with a journey. Mine was a five year long trip from Stockholm to Harare, Zimbabwe, via Manila, the Philippines. It was an interesting and pleasant journey.

In 1992 I succeeded Klára Poór from Hungary as the IAWRT President. The election took place in my native country Sweden at the 25th IAWRT Conference.

Little did I know then how many hundreds of letters, faxes and telephone calls I was to deliver around the world. It was before the advent of Internet, e-mails and sms's.

Asked after my election, what I wanted IAWRT to be, my frank answer was “a truly professional association”, knowing that already from the beginning of its history most male and some female colleagues regarded a women's organisation as unnecessary. And even to some men as threatening! So the answer to what IAWRT stands for is: a professional organisation, a women's organisation, an international organisation with international commitments.

### Women on the Move

The theme for the Stockholm conference (the 2nd one) was “Women on the Move”. That was to become the catchword for the following years. Anna-Leah Sarabia from The Philippines volunteered to host the next biennial conference in Manila. The offer was accepted and a new era in IAWRT's history started. For the first time the association travelled eastwards outside Europe. Even if IAWRT already from the very beginning had had members from far away countries, seen from the European horizon, the physical contact had been poor. Journeys were long and expensive. In Manila, at last, the opportunity had come to meet with colleagues in person from Korea, Australia, Russia, Mongolia, China, India – to mention just a few member countries.

### Hard Work

In between biennial conferences the boards are at work. There are plans to be drawn, an endless job to try to widen the membership, fundings to be found, keeping contact with the membership – in my case mainly through a printed Newsletter. Long before I became the president, I was a member of the board in different capacities. And during one meeting preceding the Stockholm conference, the board adopted a new logo – the present one – to be read as if the big W stands for the crown of sexes: Women.

In Stockholm, the general meeting wanted an overhaul of the statutes. The task was given to Gundel Krauss Dahl, Mette Jansson, both from Norway, and myself. The reason for the revised statutes was as Gundel formulated it: “aims and visions must necessarily be different today than they were when the statutes were formulated in post-war Europe in a world which looked very different”. Since then the statutes have been altered again a couple of times. The world is ever changing.

### IAWRT Awards

In the preparations for the Manila conference in 1994, IAWRT’s TV Award was born. With the example of the European Prix Egalia competition, Mette Jansson from Norway and myself started the work to invite members to send in their programmes under a selected theme to an international jury. That is – the programmes were sent to Stockholm and I had to literally carry them to the other side of the world. Where the jury (including myself) then met a few days before the conference and the winners were announced at the end of the conference. The very first winner was Inge von Bönninghausen from Germany.

As a radio journalist myself, I was not satisfied with only a TV-competition. I strongly advocated also for a Radio Award. And at the 2nd conference during my presidency, in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1997, a radio award was added to the conference. Again I had to carry almost a hundred entries to the competition – a “burden” that cost me a night at a London hospital due to overstrain. My luggage also contained a laptop – the first ever brought to an IAWRT conference – along with a portable printer! Sounds stone-age, nowadays!

Since then it takes two for an IAWRT Award. The total amount of TV- and radio entries reached its highest number in Harare.



**“As a radio journalist myself, I was not satisfied with only a TV-competition. I strongly advocated also for a Radio Award.”**

## Financial Problems

Going back in the history of IAWRT, a constant cry for money can be heard. In the early years one of the funding mothers noted a weak will to pay dues to the association. Oddly she remarked that she found members from weaker economies more willing to pay!

During the Manila conference we tried to tackle this eternal problem by establishing sliding due scales. Which meant that members should pay according to their economic ability, bearing in mind that conditions for journalists/women are so different from country to country.

Usually a presidency is, at its most four years. Mine was five due to an unfortunate planning backlash. We had hoped for a conference in Canada, but had to shift to Zimbabwe. That gave me an extra year – and of course extra job, much due to the fact that our Zimbabwean member, Musi Khumalo, got the opportunity to further education in Great Britain. And thus was out of the country!

## Action!

To end this summary of a presidency. It is only to establish a fact: Women's associations are still needed. Maybe unfortunately. At the Beijing Women's conference in 1995 – where I held two IAWRT workshops with the famous American feminist, activist and writer Betty Friedan as the main participant – the Secretary General, Gertrud Monghella from Tanzania stated: “We don't need more analysing of women's problems. We need action!

Still!



Betty Friedan and IAWRT-members, Hong Zhou, China, Mal Johnson, USA, Anna Leah Sarabia, the Philippines and Maria Kysilkova, The Czech Republic.

## “IAWRT became a part of my life”

GUNDEL KRAUSS DAHL, NORWAY, PRESIDENT 1997–2001

It seems like something of a paradox that IAWRT should come to play such a major and longlasting role in my life. For at the outset I was sceptical and very much in doubt whether I should become a member. When in 1970 the then president, Dorothea Kempa-Rohne from Germany, asked me to join the association I answered that it seemed to me that the time had come to establish a joint professional organisation for men and women alike. (During the research in connection with this book it has become clear that this was a “Scandinavian viewpoint” at the time.)

Dorothea’s sound arguments – and not least the positive attitude of my own Director General at the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) convinced me that an organisation of this kind was still relevant and necessary and that it was an opportunity not to be missed. My boss was of the opinion that it would be valuable for NRK to be represented in an international organisation like IAWRT. So I became NRK’s first representative for radio and later – on my suggestion – a TV producer, Mette Janson, was also appointed



**“In my opinion this broader international aspect made the association much more interesting”**

I attended my first IAWRT conference in Brussels in 1970 and became a board member at the following conference in Stockholm in 1972. Since that first time I have not missed a single conference (except the one in Prague in 1988 when I was away on a radio reporting trip on the Trans Siberian railway and through China.)

Gradually the association became a part of my life. The network of friends and colleagues around the world became important both professionally and on a personal level. Together with Mette Janson and another radio colleague, Birgit Gjernes, we arranged the conference in Oslo in 1982.

But now more specifically to the time of my presidency. I was elected at the conference in Zimbabwe in 1997. I felt that the lack of some basic core funding made it impossible for the association to uphold a minimum of central administrative functions and thus be able to realize its potential.

As the membership had developed and become more international the association had also become poorer. From members backed by their stations – who paid membership fees and financed travels – the majority of the members were now without financial backing, often freelancers and independent producers, many from developing countries and often unable to pay the membership dues. In my opinion this broader international aspect made the association much more interesting with a greater potential both for the individual member and for the association as such.

I made it my job to convince the funding agencies in Norway that IAWRT was worth supporting and that core funding was necessary for the association to develop in a democratic, global and professional direction. For the conference in Zimbabwe I had managed to get the Norwegian Development Agency, Norad, to provide some funding to enable members from developing countries to participate. Since Norad does not channel funds directly to international organisations we were advised to form a national group and apply for membership with FOKUS, the umbrella organisation for Norwegian women’s organisations. Since then IAWRT Norway has been a member of FOKUS and the funding has grown from the initial conference scholarships to an allround support which allows a variety of activities, projects and membership benefits for those in the South.

More or less as a side effect of this process, the first national IAWRT group was formed. A seed was sown and the formation of the Norwegian group fell well in line with the plans and recommendations laid down at the Zimbabwe conference. I was strongly in favour of more regional activities between conferences. Informal national groups should be formed around a local board member, to define local priorities and suggest regional activities. In the follow-up we managed to fund the two first regional workshops which again led to the formation of national IAWRT groups, one in Zimbabwe and the other in India. Regional workshops have since been on the agenda and are part of the annual funding from FOKUS.

The need for practical training was another issue which was strongly voiced at the conference in Zimbabwe. A real break-through was achieved in this field during the next international conference in New Delhi in 1999. There Worldview International Foundation made us the generous offer of practical internship at their TV station Young Asia Television in Sri Lanka. In the years that followed a number of IAWRT members were given three months hands-on training at the YATV studios in Colombo. (See chapter Sharing Knowledge)

### **To Make an Impact**

It has been a challenge for IAWRT to make its voice heard in the international media debate. This has not always proved easy but at the UN conference “Beijing+5” in

2000, IAWRT's formal statement on Women and Media (Section J in the Platform of Action) was included in the alternative report from the non-governmental organisations. During the session in New York we were represented by four delegates, arranged workshops and panel discussions, partly in cooperation with Women's Media Foundation and with the community radio organisation, AMARC.

### Fitting Place and Theme

The planning and carrying through of the Berlin conference in 2001, my last as president, was special in many ways. It marked the 50th anniversary of our association – an event which was celebrated with a special exhibition and greetings from members near and far.

It took place in the reborn and reunited capital of Germany with its scars from wars and conflicting ideologies, and the overall theme was journalism in conflicts, wars and peacemaking – in a gender perspective. A fitting time, place and theme.

And finally – what springs to mind for me personally from my years as president?

The electric moments during the New Delhi conference when the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Mary Robinson, addressed the conference and Violet from Zimbabwe appealed to her for the life and safety of her journalist colleagues back home. Or in Berlin when Naheed from Palestine and Aliza from Israel confessed that the friendship they had found through a joint project three years earlier could not survive in the present more hostile atmosphere. Or when Nicky from South Africa looked round at the participants in the conference room and exclaimed spontaneously “It feels like having a big family to back you up!”

Not a bad testimony of the solidarity which is one of the basic values of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television.



The IAWRT statement on Women in Media.

## “Create the space for stories, visions and dreams”

JAI CHANDIRAM, INDIA, PRESIDENT 2001–2005

It has been an exhilarating and rewarding experience to serve on the IAWRT Board.

The organisational development challenges were many. Should we increase membership and lose the intimacy of the small membership organisation? How can we be beneficial to members and increase their participation in activities in the period in between the biennial conference? How can we add more activities, training, seminars, and co-productions? What can we do to be more visible and proud of belonging to this media organisation? Today IAWRT is more decentralised with new chapters in position and it has gained more visibility. There are more activities in between conferences, and more communication through the web and e-mail has made the organisation more dynamic.

Of deeper concern were the differences in perspectives, concerns and interests in media and the status of women in the member countries, elevating the whole vision of our discussion into a new magnitude. How can we discuss, build bridges, draw upon the experiences and “herstories” of media women from across the nations and focus on the many disparities in the situation of women in Asia and Africa when their lives are so different?

### Country Specific Problems

It was not always easy as we all came with varied interests in what we wanted and how we should develop our media skills. The issues were often country specific: female foeticide, infanticide, honour killings, forced marriage, trafficking, violence against women, impact of globalisation on women, feminisation of poverty, women’s health issues and traditions that are oppressive to women. There had to be a lot of give and take in the perspectives and interests we brought with us.

The need for networking professional women in media had ignited me when I was working in the headquarters in Doordarshan, the Indian National Television organisation. Given my experience in production and training, I had advanced to a fairly senior position and found myself at odds with the seniors who were of course men. I was often lonely in my media related decision-making and desired more views and perspectives on women and development, violence against women, reproductive health and rights. In the late 70’s and early 80’s in my stints with the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting and Development (AIBD) in Kuala Lumpur, I had the

opportunity to develop courses on women and media. These in-country and regional courses in Asia and South East Asia served to raise the awareness of media women who had little exposure to programme making and had never heard of the “double burden” and “equal pay” etc. We at the AIBD, found funding support for the development of a resource kit “Into Focus, Changing the Images of Women in Media”. This was an audio-visual print kit which had five modules: Media, Work, Health, Violence and Family. The developing and making of the resource kit enabled us to bring together some of the best minds in gender studies, Margaret Gallagher, Anna Leah Sarabia, Sally Cloninger and many others in the region.

In 1994, when the IAWRT was planning the biennial conference in Manila, Anna Leah Sarabia invited me to be the keynote speaker on the theme of “Family”, and I was also asked to be on the jury for the first IAWRT TV Award.

Five years later, I was asked to organise the conference in Delhi. This was also a widely attended meeting with Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The women farmers who demonstrated their use of community videos were also a highlight, as were the video-audio workshops. For the conference I was lucky to be able to draw upon support from Doordarshan, Star TV and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts.



**“The IAWRT has provided a unique platform to inspire women, to strategise change to meet the many challenges that face women in media”**

### **To Create Platforms**

I had been on the IAWRT Board since the conference in Zimbabwe in ‘97 and in 2001 in Berlin I was nominated for President. I was very reluctant to stand for President and taken aback when I was questioned on my ability to contribute to IAWRT funding and networking. I felt the question was legitimate as it raised underlying issues of the growth of membership in Asia and Africa and wider representation. I felt my work and connections with a number of international



Workshop in the garden of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, with participants from Africa, USA, the Philippines and India. New Dehli, 1999.

organisations as well as national media organisations in the Asian region would help to create new platforms for development. Spurred by the doubts that had been raised, I was determined to move the organisation forward.

I was able to give a “presence” to IAWRT both in Asia and Europe through my active participation in many forums, seminars and workshops. It was an honour that Elizabeth Smith, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association and Noyleen Heyzer, the then Director of UNIFEM, agreed to be our speakers and chief guests at the 2003 conference in Ghana and become Honorary members of IAWRT.

During my term I was able to increase membership through personal contact at professional meetings and persuasive follow-ups. In India, I suggested a film festival as many of our members were independent film makers who found it hard to screen their films. I found support for the festival through various agencies and now the festival is in its fourth year and has been traveling in India and I hope will move abroad. The IAWRT has provided a unique platform to inspire women, to strategise change to meet the many challenges that face women in media. The sharing of many stories of courage, discrimination, and the experiences of women, helped to bridge the divide and create the space for stories, visions and dreams.

## “More communication among the board members”

FRIEDA WERDEN, CANADA, PRESIDENT 2005–2007

I first got involved with IAWRT because of my friendship with Mal Johnson, who was IAWRT’s UN Representative. Mal kept telling me I ought to go to an IAWRT conference, so when my radio project WINGS received an unexpected grant, I decided to use it to go to India with Mal. I knew just a couple of other people there, but I met so many interesting women; it was a fascinating time. The film and video aspect seemed quite dominant at that meeting. However, Mal and I got together with the Women’s Media Circle women from the Philippines and Jai Chandiram as an interviewer, to produce a combined video and audio recording with women at the event, in collaboration with the International Women’s Roundtable.

Two years later, I was invited to be a radio juror for IAWRT in Berlin and attended that conference. Being a juror was really a peak experience. The next conference was in Ghana, and there radio was much more prominent.



**“I didn’t really want to see IAWRT change from a friendship organisation to a mass organisation”**

### IAWRT Chapters

Another important thing that took place in Ghana was that Mal drafted and got a resolution passed to develop protocols for formal chapters of IAWRT. This had been a dream of hers. It was obvious first in India, but especially in Ghana, that there was potential for national chapters to offer needed support and training, especially in the countries of the South. Mal felt that the organisation needed to grow in order to be self-sustaining, and she saw chapters as a smart way to grow. It seemed inevitable that the organisation was going to grow, and I supported Mal in wanting to have an

orderly infrastructure in place. However, I didn't really want to see IAWRT change from a friendship organisation to a mass organisation where internal politics would become more prominent as a feature. Once I was on the board, I attended face to face board meetings once a year, in addition to the meetings at the conferences. One of the things we had to deal with on that board was responding to the evaluation process that had been carried out by our primary funder, FOKUS. That document too, pointed to a desire among the membership for more information between conferences and more perception of transparency.

During that first term on the board, I attended two face to face board meetings, one in Cape Town, South Africa, which was intended to be the venue of our next conference, and one in Gothenburg, Sweden. From Gothenburg on my way home, I visited the women's archive in Amsterdam and viewed some of the van der Goot papers related to the early history of IAWRT. Those were really fascinating, and I came to see that some of the same problems had plagued the organisation since its inception – problems like regional differences in expectations and hopes, and also how to transmit small amounts of membership fees around the globe without them losing their value.

That the Cape Town conference did not materialise had to do with the fact that Nicky Newman, as a freelance video producer, had no kind of infrastructure backing her to bring the conference together. We were finding ourselves highly dependent on FOKUS/Norad funds, which were very much earmarked for use by and for the South.

When the Cape Town conference plan fell through, Mal made a heroic effort and put together an IAWRT conference in Williamsburg, Virginia, for the same budget amount that had been allocated for South Africa. She did this work nearly single-handed in a very short period of time, and while in severe pain from a foot operation. I don't think anyone really knew what it cost her in personal effort to bring this event about for us.

## My Presidential Aims

I was nominated to be President, and I was very surprised to find that I was also chosen by the nominating committee to head the slate of officers. My first ambition for my tenure was to try to get more communication going among the board members between meetings and distribute the work more among the board. My second ambition was to try to improve visibility of the membership to one another and make collaborations and post-conference keeping in touch more feasible. My third ambition was to get a US chapter formed and possibly also a Canadian chapter.

The first goal was somewhat met. I did initiate a board listserv (a web-based mailing list), which was extremely useful, and to the best of my knowledge it's still going strong. I also relied on and sent information to Nicky Newman, who was editing the website, and encouraged others to do the same. I also tried to set up a monthly conference call among the board members. We had the remnants of institutional support at NRK, Swedish Broadcasting, and Olya Booyar, then employed at SBS in Australia, all of which had systems for doing conference calls. We used all of these in turn – planning our meetings for time zone compatibility with the World Clock meeting-planner utility. The downfall of the conference call system however, was primarily the fault of the global digital divide. People in less-developed countries (the majority of the board) had tremendous difficulty getting and staying connected to these calls. Often we ended the meetings with only the board members from developed countries still able to stay on the line.

In terms of the third ambition, I sent Mal a letter authorising her to form a US chapter, but unfortunately she became ill and then died before this could be got off the ground.

Having mentioned Nicky's lack of an institution as a problem, I should add that this was a very serious problem for me as President as well. As a part-time employee and part-time independent producer, I became seriously burned out by the end of two years in the presidency. Others were a lot of help, but the stress of it definitely falls

on a President. Gunilla Ivarsson, as Secretary, was then still employed by the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation and was able and willing to carry a significant part of the load of project organisation and bureaucracy. Olya Booyar, as Vice President, was willing to carry a great deal of work in grantwriting and conference planning and report-writing. Elizabeth Roxas as Treasurer did a huge job of work, especially around the conference in Kenya in 2007.

### **The Bright Side**

Among the happier parts of the job of the board was to award grants and scholarships. I think we did a good job with these, granting scholarships to those who could get good value out of the relatively small amounts of money we were able to give. Likewise with the regional events and production projects.

Still under debate when I left the job, were issues of the relationship of chapters to the international organisation. I am very sorry that Mal Johnson has now passed away, because her sense of organisational structure and discipline would have continued to come in handy.

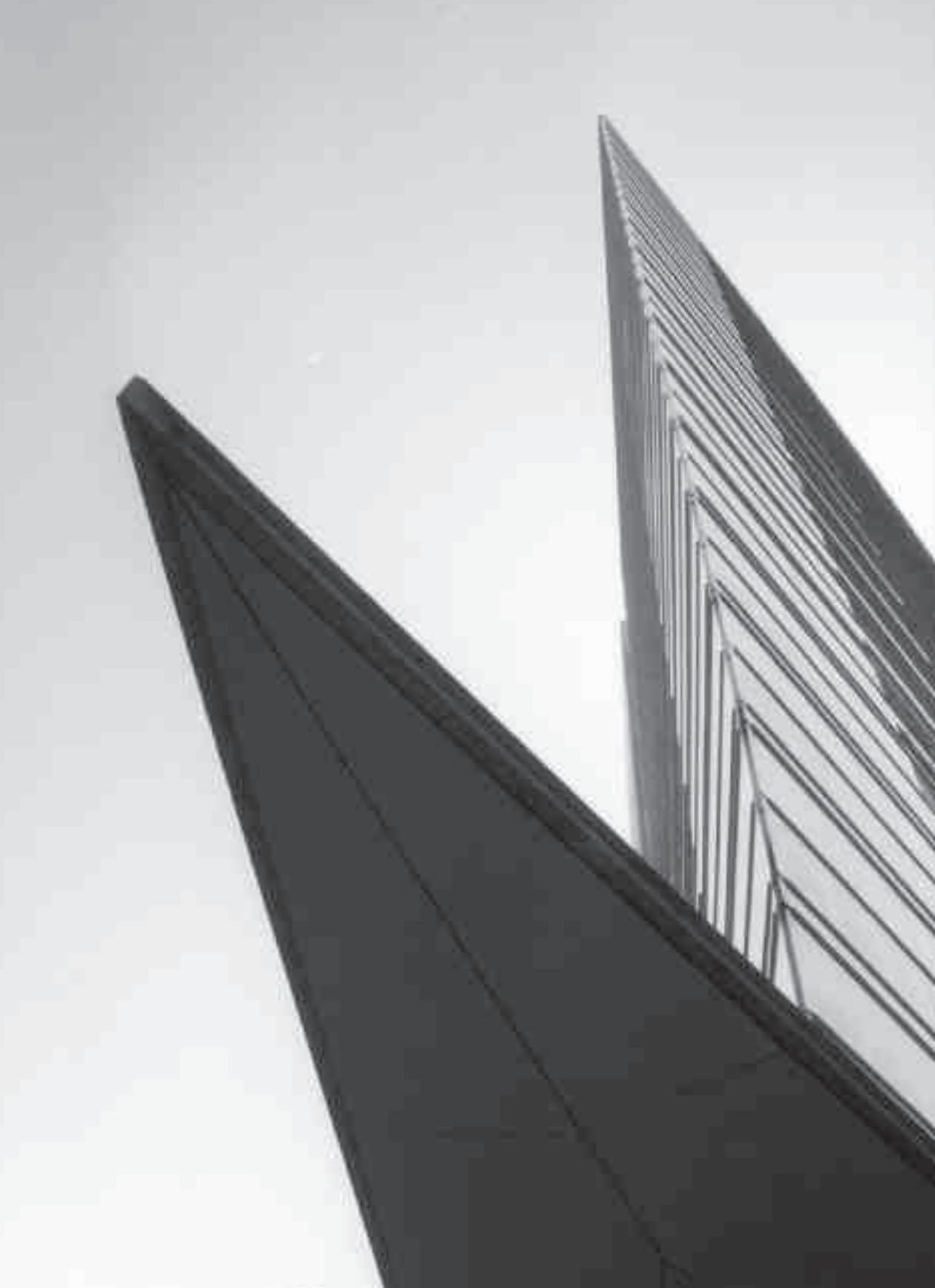
As in world politics presidents come and go. In the beginning the IAWRT founders aimed at having three presidents at a time, representing different parts of the world. (See chapter Digging in the Archives)

It never came to more than two and after the first five years of its existence, the association settled for one president to head the organisation.

In this chapter some of the persons that have led the association have told their stories, or have had others to tell about them and their presidential time.

**UP TILL WHEN THIS IS WRITTEN IAWRT HAS HAD 15 PRESIDENTS:**

Lilian van der Goot, Holland and	
Dorothy Lewis, USA	1951–1956
Dorothy Lewis, USA	1956–1961
Betty Barzin, Belgium	1961–1966
Dorothea Kempa-Rohne, Germany	1966–1970
Gerd Mellvig Ahlström, Sweden	1970–1974
Helen Rapp, Great Britain	1974–1976
Elizabeth Kirkby, Australia	1976–1980
Sirppa Sivori-Asp, Finland	1980–1984
Felicity Kinross, United Kingdom	1984–1988
Klára Poór, Hungary	1988–1992
Christina Ruhnbro, Sweden	1992–1997
Gundel Krauss Dahl, Norway	1997–2001
Jai Chandiram, India	2001–2005
Frieda Werden, USA/Canada	2005–2007
Oolya Boyar, Australia	2007–



**CHAPTER 4**

# **Conferences**

# Conferences

## The backbone of the association

### A Record with Comments

Thanks to the collections of conference bulletins since 1968, it is possible to show some characteristic features of IAWRT as well as decisive changes. President Dorothea Kempa-Rohne (Germany) writes in her report on the 1968 conference: “For the first time... our conference in Zürich was billed under a central theme, and a theme which stands in an immediate relationship to the daily work of all who nowadays plan and produce radio and TV programmes: *The new Learning-World Education by Radio and Television*”. A bit further on she refers to the association’s aims: “The desire for mutual stimulation, to learn from one another, to exchange new opinions and to revise old ones, is something which binds us all. On this point we have remained true to the fundamental precept which in 1951 motivated Lilian van der Goot to found this association: Real fraternity comes from a shared profession.”

### To Look for a Theme

Looking at the themes of subsequent conferences, one notices that only a few were rather concrete such as the above mentioned one or in 1986, *Women and Work*. Subtheme *Women and Technology* and in 2001 *Journalism in Conflicts, War and Peacemaking – A Gender Perspective*. Mostly participants were offered several fields of



The Nairobi conference, 2007.

interest as for instance *Media and the Arts, Education, Child-Female Emancipation* in 1978. And there also were very widely framed themes such as *The Position and Portrayal of Women in the Media and their Contribution to Peace and Development* in 1988 and *Facing the Future – Media Women Count* in 2005.

Having served on the board for twelve years all together I do remember very well, how diffi-

cult it was always to find a theme that would be interesting to colleagues from radio as well as television, freelancers as well as fully employed reporters and producers,



those preoccupied with media politics and those being more occupied with either gender or development issues. Sometimes the compromise led to a certain arbitrariness of contents under any given title.

### Learning From Each Other

Until the mid-nineties viewing and listening to participants' productions were the most important conference activities. Usually there were three speeches at the most – printed in the 1994 conference Bulletin in full length – followed by viewing/listening and discussion in plenary or working groups. From the fact that several different ways of organising the discussions were tried out, one can see how important this learning from each other was to members. In Sofia (1978) for instance, all participants viewed four programmes for and about children and afterwards split up into five groups to discuss along identical questions, all relative professional aspects such as structure of the programme, means of transporting its message, use of music etc. It is reported that “The discussions were openly critical of many facets of the programmes and this in itself generated even more discussion.”

Four years later in Oslo, different groups discussed different programmes all of them listed in the bulletin along with the respective group report. Yet another

approach was to give groups several programmes from different countries to learn from comparison.

When in 1994 the Award was introduced – first TV and then radio – viewing and listening in a way were left to the juries. In Manila for the first time there were ten workshops discussing different aspects of the main theme *Women, Media and the Changing Role of the Family*. Subtheme *Media and Violence against Women* without any programme input. The advantage of this proceeding lay in very clear statements and demands as regards output of the workshops, but at the expense of shared visual and acoustic stimulation. At later conferences the interest in participants' practical work diminished further and further, except for the Award winners', but they again, were often neither conference participants nor IAWRT members. The peak of doing nothing by doing everything was reached when in Accra/Ghana all 19 radio and 25 TV entries were presented with a two minute excerpt.

### Resolutions

Several meetings passed resolutions concerning issues in very different fields. To me the most remarkable was that of 1974 when it was decided to demand:

- That all radio and TV stations do everything they can do to further the aims and reflect the activities of the UN International Women's year 1975 – both by producing new programmes and through the exchange of programmes.
- That the planning and production of such programmes should not be restricted to the departments traditionally dealing with women's programmes.  
In this way, it will be made clear that there is no section of society where women do not have a part to play – since whatever decisions are made affect women as much as men.
- That we urge every broadcasting corporation/company to instigate an inquiry into the relative position of women in its organisation.



Manila, 1994.



Prague, 1988.

That such an inquiry includes in terms of reference

- Equal pay
- Equal opportunity for promotion, especially to decision-making positions
- Similar terms and conditions on retirement.

President Helen Rapp (1974–1976) sent letters and the resolutions to Director Generals and got 24 answers – unique in the association’s history. Among them the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Belgische Radio en Televisie, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Thames Television, Australian Broadcasting Commission, NRK and of course the BBC where Helen Rapp worked. Interestingly enough the BBC in those early days had gender segregated statistical data which many companies even today do not bother to collect. (See Resolutions p 108)

### Participants Lists

The conference Bulletins not only document what happened but also who was there. Until 2001 participants (between 15 and 50) and observers were carefully listed. The entire membership was named in the Bulletins until 1988. Thereafter separate Registers were printed until the website took care of this information.

Comparing participants lists over the years, one sees some interesting differences. Until the conference in Prague 1988, it strikes one immediately that German participants were by far the largest group, even at far away sites like Kingston/Jamaica. The explanation lies in two specific features, 1) the federal structure of the country and its public broadcasting system and 2) the total exclusion of the country from international contacts due to World War II. Intellectuals especially seized every opportunity to regain confidence and friendship across borders and so did women working with radio and television.

As early as 1954 there were five members from Germany and usually all of them



Harare, 1997.



Washington, 1990.

came to conferences with the full financial and idealistic support of their employers. When this generation retired, only a few were replaced, either because the company had lost interest, or the women themselves had other priorities as for instance an active membership in the national League of Women Journalists, founded in 1987.

The further away conferences were held, plus the fact that companies withdrew their financial support, the more difficult it got to find new German members for the international association, especially since colleagues from countries in the North, have hardly any chance to get sponsorship. This also holds true for other European countries. It is one of the reasons for having lost European members. The other is that the association's interest moved away from Eastern and Western Europe.

### Conference Sites

When during the 1990's conference sites were chosen in Asia and Africa and European sponsors came into the picture, the meetings took on a different aspect. There were more participants from Asian and African countries whose employers would not or could not have sent them to other continents. More and more local journalists were invited – as in Manila, Harare, New Delhi and Accra. Quite a number of them became members but never attended another conference. Whereas the association for many years had been a guest at national broadcasting corporations/companies, in later years conferences increasingly took place at other sites. This sometimes intensified the working atmosphere though it brought a loss of visibility within the media.

To me the comparison of the two conferences that I coordinated in Cologne and Berlin gives a clear picture of the changes. In 1986 the association was a guest of Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne, welcomed by the Director General in its most prominent venue. Programme directors and members of the public advisory bodies were guests at the farewell buffet. Radio and television reported. Four foreign members were sponsored by the German government, including a trip of several days after the meeting. Fifteen years later in Berlin none of the three broadcasting corporations hosted the conference. The editor in chief of Sender Freies Berlin gave the keynote speech and the Berlin tour ended with a meeting at Radio Berlin Brandenburg. That was it. Partners and sponsors were two donators, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (HBS). FES even hosted a full day including the Award ceremony.

### Training

Learning from each other was for many years, mainly done through viewing and listening and most important, critically discussing the making of a piece and its content. With upcoming new techniques, the request for training alongside conferences became strong. As a result in New Delhi Worldview initiated a three-day

digital camera workshop given by two IAWRT-members. It was recognised as a “parallel activity” that had to be fitted in alongside the “regular programme”. In Berlin, another training concerned The Tools of the Trade, using the Award’s material, and at the next conference in Accra there was a mini-disc workshop and one with new video equipment.

### Personal Remark

After having gone through all the Bulletins, remembering all those wonderful colleagues and friends, sometimes even hearing their voices and laughter, walking through cities and landscapes, smelling flowers and spices, I would not want to miss one of them. And that is just why I also venture to end with a request for the future. Conferences hardly ever touched on the current realities of the country where they took place, be it cultural, political or economical. I am not sure whether this shows a lack of interest or of courage or a misinterpretation of distanced “objectivity”. To me curiosity is the fundamental characteristic of a journalist and this we should have with us where-ever we go. I hope that future conferences will encourage more in-depth discussions and thereby learning about the place we are visiting.

INGE VON BÖNNINGHAUSEN



Stockholm, 1992.



## CHAPTER 5

# Activities

# Activities

## Challenges and Goals

### ■ The Nepal project – a lesson learnt

The Nepal project, initiated in 1983, was an ambitious undertaking with the aim of supporting low income rural women in Nepal by giving them access to various information channels and thus make them aware of their rights and worth in their own societies. It was based on a co-operation between IAWRT and the media organisation Worldview International Foundation (WIF) which had established media training centres in several countries, among them in Nepal. A pre-study undertaken by a communications expert initially resulted in a far-reaching and costly plan to establish a full Nepali Women's Communication Centre. It was clear that this was much more than we could possibly cope with, and a more manageable proposal – the IAWRT/WIF Interactive Radio Project – was worked out. Here we were to link in with an ongoing development programme which the Women Section of the Nepali Government was undertaking.

But the Nepal project never reached its fruition.

After a long and in many ways frustrating process in which key people both within WIF and the Nepali Women Section had left their posts and there was reason to believe that the necessary stability could no longer be guaranteed at WIF Nepal, the conclusion was drawn that it would be hazardous to carry through the plans for the IAWRT/WIF Nepal Project.

That is the short version. But both the background and the implications of the Nepal Project is a story worth telling.

The idea that IAWRT should make better use of its network and the expertise of its members to support women in developing countries had been aired for some time. So when at the Oslo conference in 1982 Arne Fjørtoft, director and founder of Worldview International Foundation, invited IAWRT to co-operate with WIF in an effort to train women from developing countries in the use of media, the time was ripe and the idea relevant. Worldview had established media centres in several South Asian countries and had moved from pure training towards working for development as such, making use of media to that end. But the organisation felt that it was too male dominated and would welcome nearer co-operation with IAWRT. A committee was appointed and as a result a workshop was arranged in Katmandu in Nepal – prior to the WIF annual meeting to be held there. Elisabeth Kirkby and Gundel



Mountainous Nepal.

Krauss Dahl took part from IAWRT and the workshop gathered some 12 to 14 women from different parts of the world, all with experience from developing countries and media. The aim of the workshop was to see how the combined resources of WIF and IAWRT could be put to use and whether we should in fact suggest a definite project to go ahead with.

Out of this workshop came a proposal that IAWRT/WIF should go in with media support to ongoing projects to reach low income rural women in Nepal – or rather that we should initiate a study to find out what were the needs and how best to meet them. To that end Dr Bella Mody, Indian born assistant professor in communication at Stanford University, and a participant at the workshop, was asked to do a feasibility study. Funding for a pilot study was applied for and granted by the Norwegian development agency, Norad. Bella Mody made a thorough research in Nepal and came back with a far-reaching and costly proposal. She was convinced that an IAWRT/WIF project in Nepal must be independent of ongoing government projects, that a longterm – up to 15 years – perspective must be adopted and that facilities must be provided for the production of women-oriented audio, video and print material. She recommended the establishment of an independent Women’s Communication Centre in Nepal. This was not what we had asked for and far beyond our capacities, apart from the fact that it would be unrealistic to apply for funding for such a costly project. Moreover it would move our organisation in a direction we had not planned.

At this stage – the conference in Budapest in 1984 – we felt that we had three options: Call the whole thing off, take a middle road with practical training on an individual basis and at the same time compile a register of women willing to take part, or – as the third alternative – to investigate the possibilities of a smaller more realistic project for rural women in Nepal.

It was decided to look into this third alternative. But we had learnt from the previous process that IAWRT should not launch its own independent project but work in close cooperation with existing local organisations who could take care of the administrative set-up and share the economic responsibility. Our contribution



must be on the professional side, through advice, training and production assistance.

### Scaling Down

So, in co-operation with WIF Nepal and the Women's Development Section of the Nepali Government a new proposal was worked out. The Women's Section was currently undertaking a development programme in 32 districts of the country and we were asked to go into two of them with media support. It implied a combination of air-time bought from Radio Nepal, local listening groups, the production of audio cassettes for field workers, and person to person communication. It seemed a project in line with our aims and capacities. Norad agreed in principle but asked for more details and a scaling down of expenses. Perhaps it was just as well that the wheels of bureaucracy move so slowly, for in the meantime we were becoming more and more anxious that developments in Nepal and within WIF made the basis of the project uncertain. WIF had meanwhile also signed a contract with the Canadian Development Agency, CIDA, for a project very similar to our own, and there was a danger that the two would overlap and that the resources of both WIF and the Nepali Women's Section would be overstretched. Moreover the key person at the Women's Section – Ms Chandni Joshi with whom we had had close and productive contact, left her post. (She later became UNIFEM's Regional Director for South Asia.) Also at WIF Nepal key persons we had relied on disappeared and we felt that the necessary stability in our cooperation with Worldview was no longer ensured.

In December 1985 – three years after the initial contacts were made – the Nepal Project was called off.

So what could we say came out of it?

### Network

On a concrete practical level the Nepal Project led to the establishment of "Network", the register of media women available for assignments in developing countries. (See chapter on Network) Perhaps more important, it gave us a clearer idea of what kind of an organisation IAWRT is – its potentials and limitations and the direction in which it must move. It had indeed been a learning process, not only in the time-consuming business of preparing proposals, applying for funding, negotiating, but it taught us that IAWRT, with its network of professional women but without a broad organisational build-up, could not and should not administer a development project of its own. We were not a development organisation, but as the then president, Felicity Kinross, added in her message to the membership: "Above all we stay committed to working for women in the Third World."

## I “Network”

### **An Index of Professional Women for Media Projects**

The impulse to set up an international register of media women, qualified and willing to take on assignments in developing countries, sprang out of the Nepal project and the experiences and lessons learnt there. At first it was seen as a possible supplement to the plans to establish an independent IAWRT/WIF project and later as an alternative, when the conclusion was drawn that IAWRT could best support women in the third world by offering the expertise of its members on an individual basis to women-oriented media projects.

In 1985 a request went out to members to fill in a questionnaire listing their qualifications, and to spread it beyond the membership to colleagues and institutions which might be interested. Women with skills within journalism, management or technical issues related to radio, television, film, video or print were asked to sign up and state their willingness to take on, for example, training or production tasks in developing countries.

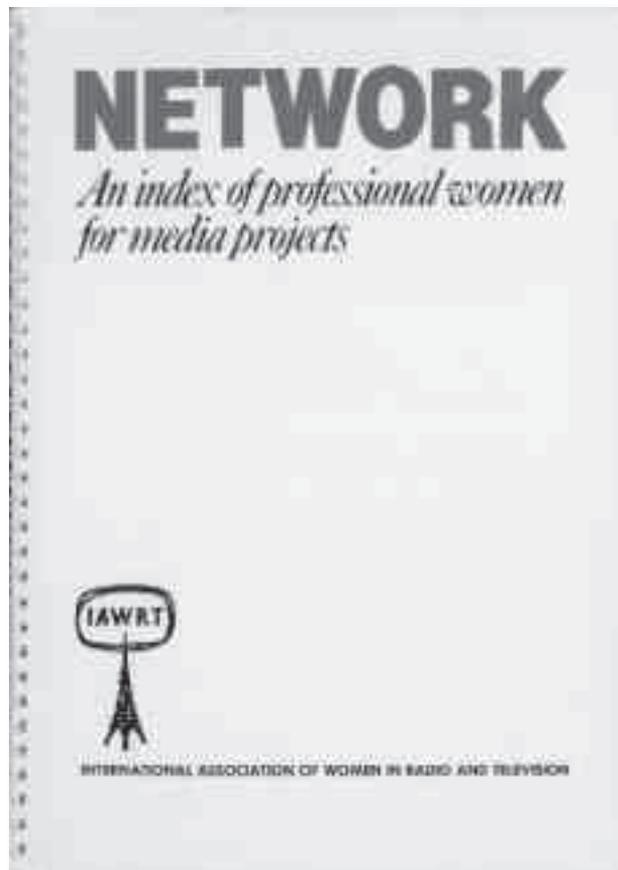
The result was a comprehensive register which was published both on paper and later computerized. NRK, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation supported the project and helped with design and production. The printed version was designed on the same principles as today’s data set-up with a menu and search alternatives for geographical areas, type of media, special skills etc. Quite advanced for its time.

The index started off with some 40–50 entries and was sent out to organisations and institutions working with and for women. It was also sent to broadcasting stations in need of professional assistance in particular geographical areas. At the conference in Hungary in 1988 it was decided to expand and update the register and in 1991 a new printed version came out with financial support from UNESCO.

There is no documentation to show whether and to what extent the register came to practical use. And it is a fact that in the following years Internet professional registers took over more and more and made a printed register designed in the 1980’s seem somewhat outdated.

But again there are interesting historical perspectives to be drawn: The establishment of an international register was one of the very first activities taken on by the International Association of Radio Women, the forerunner of IAWRT, in the 1950's. And what is more, it was undertaken on request of and through funding from UNESCO.

From the year 2008, IAWRT is establishing a new online interactive database directory which should serve to facilitate collaboration and co-productions within the network. So – in different forms and with varying initial aims – IAWRT has sought to visualise the resources and skills this global network of media women represents.



## IAWRT Awards of Excellence for Radio and TV documentaries

From 1994 the IAWRT Awards for radio and TV documentaries have been an important and integral part of the IAWRT international conferences. At a board meeting in Zürich it was decided to try to establish an IAWRT film festival, a competition for programmes made by women about women. Mette Janson, TV producer from Norway, had been inspired by the European Prix Egalia competition and together with the then IAWRT president, Christina Ruhnbro, they set about to develop the idea further.

The first year the competition was only for TV documentaries, accepting entries in two categories, factual and fiction. However, Christina Ruhnbro, being a radio journalist, strongly advocated for a radio award to be included. And at the IAWRT Awards in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1997 radio programmes were included in the competition. The first years Mette Janson, in cooperation with Christina Ruhnbro, organised the Awards. In 2003 Gerd Inger Polden, Norway assisted Mette Janson, and took over as coordinator in 2005.



Honourable mention for TV, Liz Miller, Canada.

The work with the competition has always been very comprehensive, from sending out invitations, collecting the tapes, bringing them to the conferences, choosing juries and organising Awards nights. However, Internet, e-mail, and the new formats, CD and DVD, have made the work a lot easier through the years. To secure a broad representation in the juries, members are chosen from all continents, and the host country as a rule has the jury chair. The juries have been chosen by the IAWRT board after a proposed list from the Awards coordinator, who invites the Chapters and members to nominate jury members.

The Awards work is facilitated and sponsored by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation and FOKUS. Because the FOKUS grants should only be used for members from the South, jury members



Berlin, 2001.

from the South got their travel expenses covered, whereas that was a problem for jury members from the North. Since 2005 FOKUS has accepted to cover expenses for all jury members, making it easier to organise the jury work, which is done some days before the conference. To begin with the prize was a specially made IAWRT prize and a diploma, but from 2007 money prizes of NOK 5 000 have been introduced, along with the diploma, for the two winners. The honourable mentions still only get diplomas.

Each year a theme is chosen for the Awards, often this theme is close to, or the same as the theme for the IAWRT conference. From the start the Awards have provided capacity building at the conferences. The viewing/listening and the discussions have professionalised the jury members' ability to analyse programmes. The juries have held workshops screening programmes from the Awards and sharing their discussions and analysis with the participants at the conferences. In this way the IAWRT Awards have become an important part of the professional input at the conferences. And of course, Awards night with the prize winning ceremony and banquet is the highlight of the conferences. As Musi Khumalo, longtime member from Zimbabwe, puts it:

“The radio and television awards – at the end of the Conferences – are the icing



Berlin, 2001.



Accra, 2003.

on the cake. The ladies and the invited guests dress to kill as they majestically walk the ‘red carpet’ to the award ceremony. The suspense about the winners will be at fever pitch. For competition participants, it is a nerve-wracking experience and for the jury working behind the scenes, it is a daunting task. I was privileged to be a member of the Radio jury during the New Delhi Conference. We painstakingly went through hundreds of radio programme submissions from women broadcasters operating from all corners of the globe. The different format – drama, documentaries, features, musicals – demonstrated the women’s creative capabilities. I was truly inspired by the inventiveness in the programmes. The exercise strengthened my long held belief that I had made the right decision in 1976 when I joined the broadcasting field.”

Since 2003 regional IAWRT film festivals have been held where some of the IAWRT Awards entries have been screened. Jai Chandiram in India was the first to start a regional festival and Cristina Sarbu in Romania followed her example. The entry form for the competition now asks permission for the documentaries to be screened on regional IAWRT non-commercial festivals. These festivals and the biennial Radio and TV Awards have collected a large number of programmes on different themes but there was no archive to house them and no active use of the material. Former president Jai Chandiram has tried to set up a Women’s Media Archive in corporation with UNESCO in India, to make active use of the material. So far this has not succeeded, partly because of copyright problems.

The IAWRT Awards with themes, winning programmes and number of entries can be found at the back of this book.

## Means of communication

### Newsletter and [www.iawrt.org](http://www.iawrt.org)

It is an odd truth – or at least a hearsay – that people of communication, often are the least skilled in communicating between themselves. From the association’s earliest times, there has been a plea for a Newsletter in order to keep members updated

The first sign was an information to the members from Lilian van der Goot in the 1950’s, where she told about plans for a monthly newsletter with “feminine information on a world scale”. In the chapter “Digging into the Archives” the story is told. No trace of that newsletter has been found.

It is not easy to pinpoint so to say “official” communication from boards to members, as newsletters seem to have come and gone.

What we know is that for a long time Ruth Brändli in Switzerland was in charge of a newsletter, followed by Felicity Kinross and Inge von Bönninghausen. After



them Christina Ruhnbro inherited the task, and the Newsletter became a more regular edition; mainly due to the fact that Swedish Broadcasting covered the printing and mailing costs.

Initially the Newsletter was a piece of clipping and pasting, duplicated on a copying machine. But with technical progress and the editor's growing ability, the Newsletter got a rather decent appearance – still mailed so to say by hand.

Pretty soon a paper newsletter was outdated. IAWRT went online.

With that shift also a shift in IAWRT terminology occurred. Up till then “Newsletter” was the inbetween conference information to the members. The “Bulletin” was the report from a conference. The online member information is thereafter called “e-mail bulletin” – perhaps a bit confusing, but knowing the history it might not be a problem.





### [www.iawrt.org](http://www.iawrt.org)

In the Newsletter for June 2000 web-editor Ingrid Gavshon could proudly announce that we were online. The IAWRT website was established with Ingrid, independent TV producer from Johannesburg, South Africa, as its first editor.

The need to establish an IAWRT website had been discussed for a long time and after the conference in New Delhi in 1999 things happened quickly. Ingrid was keen to get the members to use the page. She wrote: “Need to contact a member from Nantucket, Tibet or Timbuktu, this will be in our private members’ room with its up-to-date list of all members details and the possibility of adding a short summary and details of your current projects. Want to introduce a new member, find the forms on the contact page. Need a back copy of a newsletter, visit our archive page. Need information about education and training opportunities, visit our links page. Won an award, tell us all about it. We have a pin board where visitors to the page can post messages and discuss relevant issues.”

It was an ambitious set-up. But as everyone knows it is not easy to keep, develop and up-date a website in the midst of a full and stressful workday. The editor Nicky Newman from South Africa developed the page further, and in 2008 the site was redesigned and updated to make it more interactive.

The IAWRT website has been and is even more so now, a vital tool for our far-flung international organisation as it continues to bring us closer, quicker, more often.

## Sharing Knowledge – Training and Scholarships

One of the aims of IAWRT is to provide opportunities for members to develop professionally and to extend their knowledge and understanding of the role they play as media women. In the early years this was achieved mainly through discussions and workshops during the conferences. Gradually these workshops became more specific, for example with hands-on training sessions on new technical equipment and new journalistic methods. There were also workshops on ethics, communications theory, the role of community radio and the potentials of radio in a TV age.

The rapidly changing technology and the digital revolution has made it hard for many to keep track and the fear of new and unfamiliar equipment has hindered many in advancing in their profession. To overcome this fear and learn from each other



“In the lush garden” in New Dehli, Nicky Newman demonstrates the technique of “hands-on-camera”.

practical workshops on new technology have been on the agenda at almost all conferences and regional workshops during the last decade. Video journalism has been one of the skills which has been given special attention.

At the end of the 1990’s a revolution started with the new small digital cameras holding broadcast quality. These cameras made it possible for journalists themselves to do the shoot-

ing, opening up for a new method of TV feature journalism where you can get closer to the person you are interviewing. Some members from all continents were quick to pick up and experiment with this new tool, and at the conference in New Delhi in 1999 three of them, from three continents, organised video workshops, for beginners and also for more experienced video journalists.

### Important Luggage

In the lush garden at the conference centre in Delhi, Sharmini Boyle, Sri Lanka, Nicky Newman, South Africa and Gerd Inger Polden, Norway, held workshops where enthusiastic participants experienced the fun of mastering the new cameras. “Now I myself can master the camera we have been given and I can focus on the themes I think are important. The knowledge about how to use the small digital camera is the most important luggage I take home from this conference,” said

Muyunda Chilwesa from Zambia at the end of the New Delhi conference.

Another arena for sharing knowledge and gaining new insight has been the extensive discussions within the juries for the radio and TV competitions. (See chapter on IAWRT Awards) The juries' analysis and reflections around the creative use of “the tools of the trade” – often in low-cost productions – have been shared with the conference participants in plenary sessions.

Practical training over a longer period as well as opportunities for further education have been high on the list of priorities for a long time. The first of these was met when in 1999 the media organisation Worldview International Foundation (WIF) offered IAWRT members practical internship at its production company Young Asia Television in Colombo, Sri Lanka. YATV produces and broadcasts a variety of magazine programmes on issues such as human rights, women and children's issues and democracy, and the interns were invited to take part in the various sides of the production process. YATV offered to host two IAWRT members at a time for a period of three months in an ongoing programme over two years. From the year 2000 to 2003 members from India, Lithuania, the Philippines and Malaysia received practical training at YATV's studios in Sri Lanka.

The second priority – scholarships for further education – is now a regular feature on the IAWRT annual programme. It is financed through the FOKUS funding and is reserved for members from the South. Among the criteria for receiving an IAWRT scholarship is that the area for study must be “for professional development and will help the applicant to maintain and strengthen her journalistic integrity”. Since 2003 13 members, mainly from Africa, have been granted IAWRT scholarships.



The art of interviewing – Jai Chandiram talks to Frieda Werden.



FOKUS group discussions at Nepalguni, Banke district, October 2008.

### Pregnant and Barefoot

It is interesting to note that even before the association received outside funding, a special effort was made to grant scholarships to young members. In 1980 at the conference in Jamaica, the first scholarship was announced. It went to Jean Marant from Jamaica and enabled her to take up an appointment at the BBC. Another early scholarship holder was Maureen Nkandu-Mundea from South Africa who became a well known war reporter and covered numerous battlefields all over the African continent. Early in her career the IAWRT scholarship gave her encouragement and an important push forward. In a later article in the Newsletter in 1999 Maureen wrote: “The challenge for me has been to go out there and try and report about the other story, which we do not normally get in the news... But my biggest challenge, however, has been making my mark as a female journalist in a predominantly chauvinistic and male-dominated field. I am a mother of two... It has been extremely difficult, especially in my society where women are still expected to be Pregnant, Barefoot and in the Kitchen. But for as long as I can strike a balance between caring for my family and excelling as a professional woman, I will continue with what I have started.”

To give backing, skills and confidence to women like Maureen is what IAWRT training and scholarships is all about.

## Regional Workshops and National Chapters

The international conferences which have been held every other year have always been the organisation's main activity, in some sense the only activity which has drawn members into active contact with the international network. What is more, only a very limited number of members have had the means and opportunity to attend. So the need for more activity and visibility between conferences has been voiced again and again. So much enthusiasm and energy and so many ideas came forward during the hectic conference days, but somehow much of it ran into sand when the daily chores took over and the new contacts seemed so far away – in those pre-email days.

The first concrete proposal for regular regional groups to generate more local activity came up at the conference in Zimbabwe in 1997. The initial idea was that each board member should build a group in her own area as a way to channel ideas and information to and from members, bring up local issues, and not least act as a support- and reference group for lonesome board members who were often the only IAWRT members in their area and could find it difficult to keep up the energy and enthusiasm in a void. At the outset it was envisaged as informal groups since the statutes did not allow for a decentralised structure with local chapters. The very first



Intensive listening at the first IAWRT workshop, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1999.

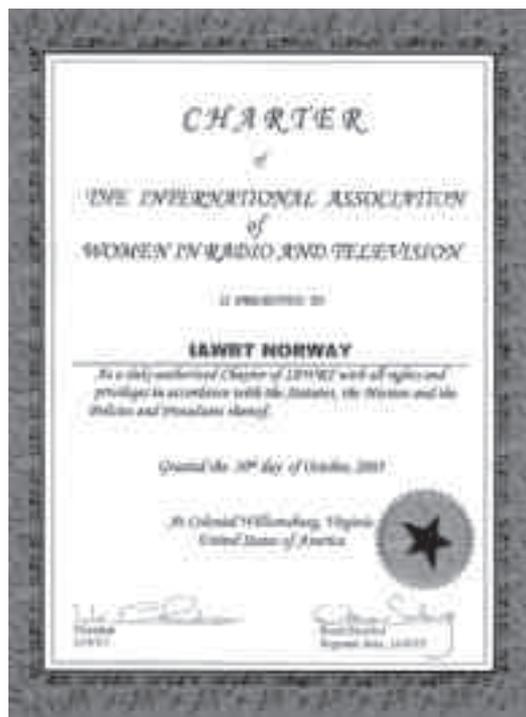
national group was actually established in Norway as far back as in 1998, and for a very down-to-earth reason: Norad, the Norwegian development agency, had funded a number of scholarships for IAWRT members from the South to attend the conference in Zimbabwe, but the agency made it quite clear that further funding would have to go through a Norwegian organisation. They advised us to form a local IAWRT group and seek membership in the Norwegian umbrella organisation FOKUS which channels funding from Norad.

### Visibility on the Ground

Regional workshops had been arranged from time to time in the early years too, but after the Zimbabwe conference in 1997 this became a regular feature. The idea behind these meetings and activities was to make the organisation more relevant and meaningful to its members in the context where they live and work. Regional meetings should not be initiated or administered by IAWRT centrally. The whole point was that this activity should be run by members locally, that they should set up a programme which would appeal to colleagues in the area and that they should make an effort to find funding locally. It was an aim of course to make the organisation more visible and effective on the ground and, not least, to recruit new members.

Through the FOKUS funding IAWRT centrally was able to offer seed money for basic administrative costs.

How have the good intentions worked out? Since 1997 regional workshops have been arranged in Zimbabwe, India, Cameroon, Norway, Nepal, Uganda, Ghana, South Africa, Moldova, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Thailand. (See Appendix) The geographical spread has been good and the initiative has been taken by ordinary members as well as by board members. Also, the issues taken up have been based on local priorities and in some cases have given IAWRT good coverage and visibility in the local media.



Facsimile of official chapter certificate.



Mal Johnson, long-time member and source of inspiration.

### Mal Johnson's Dream Came True

But perhaps the most important gain has been the incentive to form more permanent national chapters. For parallel with the effort to encourage more local meetings and activities, IAWRT has worked to build up a more decentralised structure and revise the statutes to allow for national chapters. Central in this work to re-structure the organisation was our longtime member Mal Johnson from the US. She had extensive experience from international and national organisations and knew what was needed to structure an organisation and make it reach out to its members. Mal saw the establishment of national chapters not only as an isolated internal IAWRT development but also as a means to collaborate with other media- and women focused organisations in the different areas. Her many skills came to good use and in 2005 the criteria for the establishment of national chapters were adopted, the statutes were revised and the first chapters were ceremoniously given their official charters.

At the same time the establishment of national chapters has had another far-reaching effect: According to the rules adopted, a considerable share of the membership dues belong to the local chapters, thus giving them a small measure of freedom to arrange their own activities and finance travel to the international conferences. While this leaves the central organisation next to nothing in self-financing and makes IAWRT totally dependent on outside funding, this is still, in my opinion, an important step towards a more democratic and decentralised IAWRT.

## ■ A new Generation of IAWRT Media Projects

In 2006 the opportunity arose for IAWRT to make more direct use of the media skills of its members in practical project work. The opening came when FOKUS, the Norwegian umbrella organisation where IAWRT Norway is a member, won the annual Telethon, a TV campaign organised by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation. This is a nationwide effort which each year brings in millions of dollars to a chosen organisation and theme. The theme chosen this time was the fight against violence against women, specified through four subtitles: Domestic Violence, Trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation, and Women in War, Peacekeeping and Post Conflict. With the funds collected FOKUS could now invite member organisations, among them IAWRT, to apply for project money.

Till then the funding through FOKUS had gone to the running and activities of the association as such. Now the opportunity arose to initiate projects in which individual IAWRT members could join forces with local NGOs and take care of the media related aspects of the project applied for. IAWRT sent out an invitation to members, 18 applications were received, 10 were recommended by the IAWRT board and four projects were given the go-ahead. These were:

– A one-year project to combat Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon, run by IAWRT members Madeleine Memb and Olivia Tumanjong. They organised



Illustration from Ananya Chatterjee Chakraborti's film on trafficking "A journey".

seminars, produced a radio series and staged a TV talkshow and a docudrama which was broadcast on the national TV net in Cameroon.

– From Kashmir/India IAWRT member Iffat Fatima applied for funding for a human rights project together with the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons. The project aimed to shed light on the plight of the so-called “Half Widows”, women whose men have been missing for up to twelve-fourteen years but who are not recognised as widows and have no rights. Iffat Fatima has produced a video documentary and four video magazine programmes on the subject.

– Two applications for projects on trafficking were received from Nepal and from India. They were sent in by Subhadra Belbase from Nepal in co-operation with World-view Nepal and from Ananya Chatterjee Chakraborti from India who was to cooperate with local women. The two projects were similar and they were asked to join forces and cooperate.



Madeleine Memb.

These new projects are all anchored in the local IAWRT chapter, which makes the chapter leader responsible. But the final responsibility lies with the IAWRT board and the Norwegian chapter which is the formal contract partner with FOKUS.

All the projects which are based on funding from the TV campaign are short term projects and come to an end in 2008/2009. But new opportunities have arisen for IAWRT to make use of the professional skills of its membership. In line with the international trend to organise projects in clusters around a specific theme and within defined geographical regions – so called programmes rather than isolated projects – IAWRT is now being invited to contribute with media input to the various activities. And since our association is a global network with members around the world, and since media skills are sought after regardless of the theme or the specific activity, IAWRT can come to play a more significant role than the number of members or the size of the organisation would indicate.

But these prospects belong to the future and are not – as yet – a part of our history.

I remember being in Berlin for a conference and everyone stood up and introduced themselves

Members believe in the role they play to fight for women's rights,

IFFAT FATIMA, INDIA

MADELEINE MEMB, CAMEROON

**Twin souls all over the world...**

NICKY NEWMAN, SOUTH AFRICA

But the Delhi IAWRT conference in 1999 woke me up... this was where I felt I truly belonged.

BANDANA RANA, NEPAL

**My undying love**

GERD INGER POLDEN, NORWAY

**for IAWRT...**

MUSI KHUMALO, ZIMBABWE

**IAWRT  
seems like  
an inter-  
national  
family.**

RUTH BRÄNDLI, SWITZERLAND

I loved to host the board members because here on the terrace or beside the fireplace we really became friends and were able to very vividly exchange professional experiences and weave new ideas for the association

## CHAPTER 6

# Members' Memories

# Members' Memories

## Snapshots and reflections from around the world

### RUTH BRÄNDLI, SWITZERLAND:

As a treasurer/secretary I was on the board for the longest time, more precisely from 1977 until 1997! There was an unspoken agreement among members that the money – although it never was very much – should be kept in a Swiss bank and not wander around with changing treasurers. I not only attended all board meetings during this time but quite a number of them took place in my home in Zollikon/Zürich. I loved to host the board members because here on the terrace or beside the fireplace we really became friends and were able to very vividly exchange professional experiences and weave new ideas for the association. And there were quite controversial discussions at times. But of course not all meetings were held at my place. The respective boards always met for several days before conferences, stayed afterwards and met at least once during the year in between conferences. The location of course depended a bit on the president's home country and travelling opportunities. When Lis Kirkby from Australia was president it was more difficult than with Christina Ruhnbro from Sweden or Felicity Kinross from the UK.



During my active time the association was much smaller than today so that we could communicate with letters and sometimes expensive phone calls. And of course the Newsletter was very important. Today I sometimes have to remind younger colleagues that letters and Newsletters were copied or printed on paper, got a stamp and then were taken to the post office. For many years I was in charge of the Newsletter and Lilo Thelen from Swiss Radio, who had been the IAWRT's first treasurer, gave me the hint to use the company's facilities. My TV boss, Dr. Eleonor Staub, who had taken me to the Munich conference, agreed because this was a little compensation for the fact that I was never supported financially whereas many European broadcasting companies paid fees and travel expenses for their IAWRT member.

For many years I worked for the TV women's programme "Tips for you". It was

the 1970's and 80's when women's liberation was the big issue all over the world. From the international conferences I took home many ideas for our Swiss audience to whom we gave courage and help especially in the process of getting back to work and not only doing unpaid social work in the community beside their family duties. It was really good for our programme to be able to report on best practical examples in other countries like for instance in Scandinavia.

And then of course there were the highlights of crossing the Iron Curtain. In Sofia and also Budapest I realised that the conference was not only important for us journalists from the West and for our hosts but for many other Eastern colleagues, for instance from Poland or Russia, who could go to Hungary but not let's say to Norway.

In a way the enlargement of the association in the South led to a similar phenomenon. Although there are no legal restrictions to come from India to a conference in Africa or vice versa, it is the lack of money that keeps members restricted to their own country and away from face to face communication at conferences. I cannot yet foresee what that may mean to IAWRT in the future. What I know is that without the association I would not have had, and still have, friends around the world.

#### MUSI KHUMALO, ZIMBABWE:

##### **My undying love for IAWRT...**

My love affair with IAWRT dates back to the early 1990's in Thailand when I went to Bangkok to attend the International Communications Conference. During a tea break, I wandered over to the notice board where I caught sight of a poster from IAWRT. The name of the organisation "talked" to me. This was an association of women in "radio" and "television" and that was my field. I asked myself why I was not part of that fraternity! I immediately contacted IAWRT upon my return to Harare. I must confess, the waiting period was nerve-racking as I didn't know whether people from "my part of the world" qualified for membership. The response was immediate and positive. The rest, as they say, is history.



The association has, over the years, become a close friend both at the professional and social levels. Professionally, I find the biennial conferences a great source of

strength and expertise for women in the broadcasting field. Women of different age groups and different levels of experience come together to share experiences in a very cordial, sometimes, heated atmosphere! The meetings are not a “Talk Shop” as they have, over the past few years, become practical. Production issues and training are tackled in an informal, yet effective and professional manner – not forgetting the knowledge and skills transfer from the “senior” broadcasters to the “incoming” colleagues and vice-versa. This has now become the norm at these conferences.

The conferences had their hilarious moments as well, like in the Philippines when I got lost in a Manila market two hours before a scheduled live television broadcast in which I was supposed to be a member of the panel! When I finally arrived at the hotel, I was whisked away like a celebrity by fellow IAWRT members. I barely made the broadcast.

Networking is another strong point for IAWRT. This is an important tool in our line of work. For instance, organising my first trips to Europe, Asia and even in my own continent, Africa, turned out to be much easier than I had originally anticipated. I just contacted a member resident in that locality to assist with resource contacts.

With IAWRT I have discovered the world. I attended biennial conferences held in New Dehli, Manila, Accra and hosted one in Harare. And talking about education, IAWRT, through its scholarship programme, got me started on my PhD programme with the University of Kwa-Zulu in South Africa. This has opened doors for me, especially in my current life.

So you see, for me, IAWRT may have broadcast journalism as its core focus, but it really empowers women broadcasters to broaden their understanding and appreciation of themselves – first as human beings and of course as broadcast journalists.

#### IFFAT FATIMA, INDIA:

The IAWRT membership card that I carry in my wallet is an assertion of my identity and relationship with the organisation. My first impression of IAWRT was the Delhi conference in 1992. I had just finished my graduation and was embarking on my career in the media. At the meeting, I was impressed by the bonhomie and enjoyed being part of the collective of colourful, vivacious, laughing women doing serious business.



I felt drawn into a support system that has proved crucial for the development of my professional career. In 2000 Jai Chandiram who was then the president asked me to apply for the IAWRT training programme with Young Asia Television, which produced in Sri Lanka. I applied and a week later I found myself in Sri Lanka amidst young Sri Lankans producing alternative programmes for South Asians. Sri Lanka took my fancy. I lived and worked there for six years. In 2001 on an Asian scholarship programme, I produced a research document “Education and Intercommunal Relations – The Sri Lankan experience” which has been widely published. In 2005 I made a documentary film “Lanka – the other side of war and peace” which explores the history of overlapping conflicts in Sri Lanka. This led me to the project “Half Widows” on enforced disappearances in Kashmir. This project is part of the IAWRT FOKUS supported programme. To me this organisation is not an institution, although it has a structure and a body, but more of a movement. An association of women who can network together and move forward. In this globalising world which gets more and more harsh and structured, IAWRT seems like an international family.

**MADELEINE MEMB, CAMEROON:**

The mention of my relationship with IAWRT each time provokes emotions and memories. Almost all of my interaction with the association, the group or the individuals, opens up for joyful images and good memories. The best of all must have been opening my e-mail two years ago to find the message announcing that our project on FGM



(Female Genital Mutilation) in Cameroon would be fully sponsored. Or many years back when I was selected to attend the biennial conference in New Delhi.

If asked to say what I think about the association, I would simply say I am grateful to the group of women who have given me the opportunity to practice my professional know-how.

Also I would say I am proud to belong to a group whose members are not only modest, but always eager to help their colleagues in the audiovisual media sector to excel.

I decided to join IAWRT when I met Inge von Bönninghausen in 1997 during an internship in Germany. At that time I hadn't the faintest idea about what the

association stood for. It was at the New Delhi conference in 1999 that I was able to understand the importance of the group whose members really put into practice the idea of sisterhood.

The little known announcer and producer on Radio Cameroon at that time was highly impressed but honoured to be part of the family of celebrated feminine audiovisual media practitioners, and thanks to the useful contacts, I have maintained some female icons in the audiovisual domain in many countries around the world.

The association has also given many of us, especially from the developing countries, the opportunity to visit so many countries around the world, which is the best exposure to cultures and experiences for some of us from a very poor background.

For members coming from contexts where there are no voluntary policies aiming at promoting women in the media or simply offering them opportunities for training or other capacity building programmes, IAWRT has filled the “gaps” in their professional and personal lives – and I’m one of the privileged.

IAWRT enjoys credibility at the level of various international organisations and this is advantageous to the promotion of women and their activities in the media. Among its valuable capital is the interaction between female professionals from the North and from the South, a process which provides innovative ideas.

Members believe in the role they play to fight for women’s rights, a role they could play better if they had more resources.

#### BANDANA RANA, NEPAL:

In my two decades of experience working in the media and women sector, I have had the opportunity to attend several media conferences. There are many instances where I have really felt to be a misfit or a passive learner/observer. But the Delhi IAWRT conference in 1999 woke me up... this was where I felt I truly belonged. For the first time in an international conference I was amongst colleagues and friends who had been through similar struggles and experiences. It provided a forum to learn from each other and build a bonding as an IAWRT member that could strengthen you collectively and individually. I admired all those who made the presentations and showcased their TV and Radio work and wished that I could share the work and



messages of IAWRT with my other Nepali sisters. Today my dream has come true. With support from IAWRT friends, I am now the Vice President of IAWRT and have also established a Nepal chapter. I am happy that through IAWRT I have been able to reach out to many media women beyond boundaries and backgrounds. I am truly proud to be an IAWRT associate.

**NICKY NEWMAN, SOUTH AFRICA:**

My relationship with the IAWRT goes back to my first film, "As Large As Life." It was a half hour film about the relationship between the way women are portrayed in the media and eating disorders and body image. I was invited to show the film and speak about it at an IAWRT conference in Manila.



It was an amazing experience. I felt that the work had been properly seen for what it was and that it and I were taken seriously. There was a fantastic response to the film and a debate afterwards.

I met so many interesting women working in the media that were part of the IAWRT that I promptly joined the organisation and have been a member, a board member and the Vice President. I now co-ordinate the website and am continually encouraged by how the network is growing and thriving.

Over the years the organisation has provided me with wonderful support, friendships, insights.

On a personal level, being part of the association felt like I was part of a large extended, warm family, which at its heart is a mutual respect and desire to help each other grow, develop and learn. And that's a great feeling, to be part of something that has such wonderful aims and objectives.

The commercial world of television and media is by its very nature competitive, so to find an organisation with aims that are totally the opposite is wonderful. And that's what is at the heart of the IAWRT for me, caring, sharing, mutual growth and as a result, making the world a better place.

I remember being in Berlin for a conference and everyone stood up and introduced themselves, said what country they were from, what they did and I was so amazed at the huge variety in that room. The collective experience and know-how was incredible.

I was doing some training for a group of women who had had very little technical

experience with cameras. In fact, they were downright intimidated by all the knobs and buttons. Within an hour, they were filming, and filming well. It was such a pleasure to see the light go on in their eyes when they realized that they could indeed film. And if they know how to film, they have a voice that can be heard by many other people. Video is a very powerful tool that can help to show not only injustice but the incredibly positive work that so many women are doing, without witnesses, without accolades.

The IAWRT is an organisation with heart.

When you are in production, it's so important to know who you are working with. When you work outside of your own country, you don't know who is who. With the IAWRT, I know that I can land in most places in the world and someone will be there to pick me up, I will have somewhere to stay, they will open their filofaxes and pass on their production contacts to me.

And I will do the same for them. There is strength in unity.

Mal (Johnson) and Mette (Janson) were two of the elders, the veterans, the wise women who have now passed away. I have an image of Mette in Ghana, with a colorful IAWRT banner draped around her shoulders dancing in the midst of everyone, so happy (and funky!). She had such a spirit, such a great way of seeing things and articulating things.

And Mal, well she was the most connected and experienced woman I know. And so generous with her time, energy and knowledge. They are and will be missed over the years to come but have left us with much to cherish.



Mette Jansson, Norway.

**GERD INGER POLDEN, NORWAY:****Twin souls all over the world...**

The warm night envelopes me as I walk out in the garden with my welcome drink. The place is Zimbabwe, the year 1997, and this is the first night of my very first IAWRT conference. All around me women are greeting each other, meeting old friends and colleagues from earlier conferences. As I walk, a little uncertain, towards a group of Indian colleagues, a light hand touches my arm: "Oh hello, I just wondered who the fourth Indian lady was". This is my first meeting with Jai Chandiram and I instantly feel at home and included. As Rinki Bhattacharya, Jayalakshmi, Jai and I have a good laugh at the mistake, Nonee Walsh from Australia joins us, greeting Jaya, a good friend from the last conference. The talk between us flows easily, as the tropical night grows cooler, and I realize that as women and colleagues we agree on so many things and share many similar experiences. To meet twin souls from the other side of the world is an extraordinary thing the first time. It is not going to be the last.



As the conference goes by, I am impressed by the many talented, knowledgeable and courageous colleagues from Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe. And when Rinki screens her fiction film about domestic violence I see in the faces of the audience that this concerns us all. The situation in the host country, Zimbabwe, is already deteriorating, and the talks with a very young Violet Gonda make me realize that this beautiful country is heading the wrong way at full speed. As we talk, none of us know that eight years later Violet will be in exile in London, stripped of her Zimbabwean citizenship, and I will be announcing her the winner of the 2005 IAWRT AWARD of Excellence for Radio for her innovative programmes interviewing people inside Zimbabwe by mobile phone from London.

Five days of intensive learning, and I am hooked. I need to be a member of this organisation, and I enter my member's application there and then.

Since then I have attended every conference but the one in 2007. I have friends and colleagues from all continents, and the world is not the same as before. It has come closer, the news, good or bad affects me differently, I have friends there. I care.



# APPENDIX

## CONFERENCES AND PRESIDENTS

### PLACES, PRESIDENTS AND THEMES (WHEN GIVEN)

- 1951** First meeting. Eight women met in Amsterdam. They came from Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, USA and Canada and founded the organisation.
- 1952** IARW – International Association of Radio Women met in Amsterdam. Two presidents Wilhelminen Hendrika Posthumus-van der Goot, Netherlands for Europe and Near East and Dorothy Lewis, USA for America.
- 1953** Paris at Unesco headquarters. Presidents as before.
- 1954** Brussels. Presidents as before.
- 1955** Paris. Unesco headquarters. Presidents as before. 23 delegates from 11 countries.
- 1956** London. President Posthumus-van der Goot steps back. Interim President Dorothy Lewis.
- 1957** Paris. Unesco headquarters. President elected: Dorothy Lewis. Decision to meet biennially.
- 1959** Cologne. President Dorothy Lewis. President elected: Betty Barzin, Belgium.
- 1962** Paris. President Betty Barzin.
- 1964** Vienna. President Betty Barzin.

- 1966** London.  
President elected: Dorothea Kempa-Rohne, Germany.
- 1968** Zürich. President Dorothea Kempa-Rohne, Germany.
- 1970** Brussels. President Dorothea Kempa-Rohne.  
President elected: Gerd Mellvig Ahlström, Sweden.
- 1972** Stockholm. President Gerd Mellvig Ahlström.
- 1974** Helsinki. President Gerd Mellvig Ahlström.  
President elected: Helen Rapp, Great Britain.  
Themes: The Position of Women in View of International Women's Year 1975  
How to Deal with Crime  
Old People in a Changing Society
- 1976** Munich. President Helen Rapp.  
President elected: Elisabeth Kirkby, Australia.  
Themes: Women and Mass Media – What are our Priorities?  
Education
- 1978** Sofia. President Elisabeth Kirkby  
Themes: Media and the Arts  
Education  
Child-Female Emancipation
- 1980** Kingston. President Elisabeth Kirkby.  
President elected: Sirppa Sivori-Asp, Finland.
- 1982** Oslo. President Sirppa Sivori-Asp.  
Theme: From a woman's Point of View – A symposium of programmes  
about some important issues of today

- 1984** Budapest. President Sirppa Sivori-Asp.  
President elected: Felicity Kinross, Great Britain  
Theme: The Role of TV and Radio in Social Development
- 1986** Cologne. President Felicity Kinross  
Theme: Women and Work.  
Subtheme – Women and Technology
- 1988** Prague. President Felicity Kinross.  
President elected: Klára Poór, Hungary  
Theme: The Position and Portrayal of Women in the Media and their Contribution to Peace and Development
- 1990** New York and Washington. President Klára Poór
- 1992** Stockholm. President Klára Poór.  
President elected: Christina Ruhnbro, Sweden  
Theme: Women on the Move
- 1994** Manila. President: Christina Ruhnbro  
Theme: Women, Media and the Changing Role of the Family.  
Subtheme: Media and Violence against Women
- 1997** Harare. President Christina Ruhnbro.  
President elected: Gundel Krauss Dahl, Norway  
Theme: Women in the Media – What next?
- 1999** New Delhi. President Gundel Krauss Dahl  
Theme: Cultural Diversity – a Media Challenge

- 2001** Berlin. President Gundel Krauss Dahl.  
President elected: Jai Chandiram, India  
Theme: Journalism in Conflicts, War and Peacemaking – a Gender Perspective
- 2003** Accra. President Jai Chandiram  
Theme: Looking Back, Moving Forward – Broadcasting for Change
- 2005** Williamsburgh. President Jai Chandiram.  
President elected: Frieda Werden.  
Theme: Facing the Future – Media Women Count.
- 2007** Nairobi. President Frieda Werden.  
President elected: Olya Booyar, Australia  
Theme: Women Building Peace.

## List of IAWRT Radio and TV Awards

### 1994 Manila, the Philippines (TV only)

Theme: “To provide insight into the situation for women today”

Winning programme: “Here come the Lesbians” by Inge von Bönninghausen, Germany.

Honourable mentions: Eve Demumieux for “Das les masques: Violences conjugales et familiales” and Sagari Chabra, India, for “Now I will speak”.

Number of entries: 17

### 1997 Harare, Zimbabwe (Radio included)

Theme: “Woman Power”

Winning TV programme: “Dry Days in Dobbasunta” by Napur Basu, India.

Winning radio programme: “A Journey with Eija” by Maria Repitsch, Swedish Broadcasting Corporation.

Honourable mentions for radio: Cecilia Mora, Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, for “I thank God for the Time I Lived”, Mary Dhelan, RTE, Ireland, for “Blue Rinse and Starch”, Lainet Mawire, ZBC, Zimbabwe, for “Women and Rape” and Vicky Lofquist, USA, for “Leading to Beijing: Voices of Global Women”.

Honourable mentions for TV: Gerd Inger Polden, Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, for “The Concubines”, Mai Masiri, Republic of Palestine, for “Hanan Ashrawi”, and One World Group of Women Broadcasters for “Television Trust of the Environment, Beijing and Habitat spots”.

Number of entries: For TV: 28 full length, plus 70 short under ten minutes productions.

For Radio 16 entries.

## 1999 New Delhi, India

Theme: “Women and Human Rights”

Winning TV programme: “The Cruel Ritual – Circumcision of Young Girls” by Ariana Vucovic, Germany.

Winning radio programme: “Shifting Sands – the Last Voice of an Ancient Tongue” by Sharon Davies, Australia.

Honourable mentions for radio: Maitreyee Jagirdhar, All India Radio, for “Oh God, Once Be a Woman”, Florence Bonabaana, Radio Uganda, for “The Challenge” and Yasemin Sokmen and Saadet Bekar TRT Radio, Turkey, for “Candy Microphone”.

Honourable mentions for TV: Dominique Torres, FT2, France, for “The Life of Slaves in France”, Siba Schakib, WDR, Germany for “Afghanistan under Taliban Rule” and Gargi Sen, Magic Lantern, India for “Imagine Kalpana”.

Number of entries: 48 TV documentaries and 27 radio programmes.

## 2001 Berlin, Germany

Theme: “HERstory changing History”

Winning TV programme: “Shocking Truth” by Alexa Wolf, Sweden.

Winning Radio programme: “Circumcision at the Kitchen Table” by Helmi Slings, Netherlands.

Honourable mentions for radio: Elvira Marteles, RNE, Spain, for “Federica Montseny”, Anna Parkinson, BBC, for “Free” and Birgitta Tollan, Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, for “Women of Music Emerge”.

Honourable mentions for TV all went to BBC: Fiona Lloyd Davies, for “Licence to Kill”, Giselle Portenier, for “Condemned to Live” and Sarah McDonald for “A family Affair”.

Number of entries: 56 for TV and 41 for radio.

### 2003 Accra, Ghana

Theme: “Reflecting Change”

Winning TV programme: “Child Brides of Ethiopia” by Torill Svaar, Norway.

Winning radio programme: “The Tent” by Michelle Ernsting, Netherlands.

Honourable mentions for radio: Kristina Henschen and Kajsa Norell, Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, for “Talking About that Horrible Thing”, and Frances Byrnes and Jenni Mills BBC, for “Metropolitan Women”.

Honourable mentions for TV: Elizabeth Miller, Nicaragua, for “What a Soap” and Samina Mishra, India, for “Things I Never did before”.

Number of entries: 24 for TV and 28 for radio

### 2005 Williamsburg, USA

Theme: “Living the Dream – Women Empowerment”

Winning TV programme: “Suzana – I have a Dream” by Maria Rinaldo, Sweden.

Winning radio programme: “Arise! Zimbabwean Women speak out” by Violet Gonda, Zimbabwe/UK.

Honourable mentions for radio programmes: Melinda Tuhus, USA, for “Granny D for Senate”, Anna Landelius and Ida Lännerberg, Sweden, for “Hülyas corner – My Rosengård in the spotlight”.

Honourable mentions for TV: Vasudha Joshi, India, for “Girl Song”, and Inga Wolfram, Germany, for “The Pianist of Theresienstadt”.

Number of entries: 30 for TV and 17 for radio.

### 2007 Nairobi, Kenya

Theme: “Women building Peace”

Winning TV programme: “Missing” by Sharmini Boyle, Sri Lanka.

Winning radio programme: “Back to Sarajevo” by Belma Kratovic, Sweden.

Honourable mentions for radio programmes: Mariane Fry, USA, for “Africa’s Iron Lady”.

Honourable mentions for TV: Gabriella Neuhaus, Switzerland, for “1000 Women Had a Dream”, Mai Masri, Lebanon, for “In the Eye of the Storm” and Nicky Newman, South Africa. “Not Just a Number”.

Number of entries: 31 for TV and 13 for radio.

## National Chapters as per 2008

CAMEROON

GHANA

INDIA

NEPAL

NORWAY

PHILIPPINES

KENYA

**In 2008 initiatives were taken to form chapters in:**

TANZANIA

USA

THAILAND

CANADA

ZAMBIA

PALESTINE

## Regional Meetings and Workshops

<b>1999</b> – Harare, Zimbabwe	General discussion: Portrayal of Women – a Case for Zimbabwe. Training
<b>1999</b> – New Dehli, India	General discussion: The role of Radio
<b>2000</b> – Oslo, Norway	General discussion: New Media
<b>2000</b> – Douala, Cameroon	“Empowering Women through Community Radio”
<b>2002</b> – Moldova	“Women in Electronic Media – Impact of Communication in a Transition Area”
<b>2002</b> – Kampala, Uganda	“Media Portrayal of Women in East Africa”
<b>2003</b> – Colombo, Sri Lanka	“Conflict reporting”
<b>2004</b> – Cape Town, South Africa	Evaluation workshop
<b>2004</b> – Kathmandu, Nepal	“Making Women Visible”
<b>2004</b> – Nairobi, Kenya	Communication Strategies on HIV/AIDS
<b>2005</b> – Ramallah, Palestine	General discussion
<b>2006</b> – Nairobi, Kenya	“Media trends and New Technology”
<b>2007</b> – Kathmandu, Nepal	“Women Building Piece”
<b>2008</b> – Cape Town, South Africa	Strategy for Chapter Activities (Meeting of the Board and Chapter Heads)

## Resolutions

From boards and conferences IAWRT has now and then raised its voice. It has been done by commenting actual courses. The association has called upon the United Nations, broadcasting stations, presidents like Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe and Valdimir Putin in Russia.

The subjects have varied, but have always been in defending a good course, be it equal conditions of the profession, prosecution of journalists, freedom of the press. Here follow some IAWRT'concerns.

### The Stockholm conference in 1972:

- 1) ... we call upon the United Nations and all Broadcasting stations within their influence to redouble their efforts to expose the danger of pollution throughout the world. This can be done in the following ways:
  - ... by extending the practice of broadcasting the atmospheric pollution count in conjunction with the daily weather forecasts
  - ... by exchange of programmes on the subject
  - ... by emphasizing the urgent need that children should understand the dangers of pollution
- 2) that we seek to further a better understanding of the need to integrate the tradition male and female role in order to achieve a common society
- 3) that we seek to establish better contacts with women colleagues in Africa, Asia and Latin America...
- 4) that, we believe that problems facing the world as a result of overpopulation are of paramount importance, we ask the United Nations to urge all member states to regard contribution to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities as a first priority.

**The conference in Helsinki in September 1974 passed three resolutions: (See also p 60)**

1. That the IAWRT should continue to make every effort to strengthen our ties with colleagues in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and South America.  
To this end, the Board will try to ensure tht as many delegates as possible attend the next Conference and redouble their efforts to obtain financial assistance for those who may require it.
  
- 2.a) That all radio and TV stations do everything they can to further the aims and reflect the activities of the U.N. International Women’s Year 1975 – both by producing new programmes and through exchange of programmes.
  
- 2.b) That the planning and production of such programmes should not be restricted to the departments traditionally dealing with ‘women’s programmes.’  
In this way, it will be made clear that there is no section of society where women do not have a part to play – since whatever decisions are made affect women as much as men.
  
3. That we urge every broadcasting corporation/company to instigate an inquiry into the relative position of women in its organisation.  
That such an inquiry includes in the terms of reference:
  - i) Equal pay.
  - ii) Equal opportunity for promotion, especially to decision-making positions.
  - iii) Similar terms and conditions on retirement.

**In Bulletin no 11, June 1975, Dr Helen Rapp, the then president, reported back to the membership:**

“In response to my letter enclosing our three resolutions which were sent out at the end of December we have had a very encouraging response. The greatest number of replies hav concerned Resolution Two which relates to International Women’s Year (IWY)...

The number of letters reffering to IWY specifically and outlining broadcasting stations’ programmes for the year total 24. Of these a great many did not give details but assured us that their programmes throughout the year would reflet the aims of IWY...

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for instance has sent us an impressive four page report on their programme for the year... CBC French TV network are producing nine one-hour specials for their ‘Femme d’aujourd’hui’ series. Programmes

in the English network will include plays by women, a series of half hour programmes under the working title ‘Some of my best friends are Men’ and in the entertainment field a ‘special’ starring outstanding Canadian Women performers.

Belgische Radio en Televisie are producing four programmes about women in society today, and their news department is covering among other things the official opening of the Women’ Year in Belgium.

Herr Voth of Bayerische Rundfunk states in a letter:

‘I agree with your opinion that women have to play a more important role in society, and need more chances to make their contributions to public life’.

He goes on telling that IAWRT member Lore Walb has been appointed to ‘promote information and activities of our various departments to help avoid restricting the subject to the women’s programmes’.

From the BBC is reported that a commission has been set up to look after the women’s programmes.

... The Director General of the BBC, Sir Charles Curran replies ‘On equal pay, as you know, there is no question in the BBC. It has been the practise from the very beginning. On equal *opportunity* for promotion, there is equally no question. ....”

### **The conference in Munich, September 1976 passed the following resolution (among others):**

1. In view of the fact that women comprise fifty percent of the population, we urge broadcasting organisations:
  - a) to recognize that women have special expertise, knowledge and understanding of human affairs.
  - b) to emphasise the importance of womens place in society by representing women and their views more widely both in radio and television programmes by involving more women at policy making levels.

### **THE MUNICH CONFERENCE ALSO SENT TELEGRAMS TO MRS BETTY WILLIAMS AND MISS MAIREAD CORRIGAN, WOMEN’S PEACE MOVEMENT, BELFAST AND WOMEN’S PEACE MOVEMENT, DUBLIN, STATING AS FOLLOWS:**

“The International Association of Women in radio and television admires and appreciates the courage of the women of Ireland and declares its solidarity – as professional women – with their aims”.

These telegram recievers were later the same year to become Nobel Peace Prize laureates!

### **In 1999 IAWRT addressed President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe:**

“Women journalists attending the 28th conference of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television in New Dehli, India,... express their serious concern about the situation for journalists in Zimbabwe.

During the last few months there has been an increase in the harassment and torture of journalist by the State.

In January this year two journalists from an independant newspaper were detained and tortured by the military police after writing a story about an attempted coup in Zimbabwe.

Barely a month later a story was written about a Zimbabwean soldier who died in the Democratic Republic of Congo, only his head was returned to his family. This resulted in the arrest by the Zimbabwean Police of another group of journalists, including the women who was the author of the story.

When Ms Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, came to address the IAWRT conference in New Dehli, her attention was drawn to the Zimbabwean journalists’ predicament. She expressed her concern and promised to look into the matter and alert other international Human Right groups.

The International Association of Women in Radio and Television wishes to express its solidarity with the journalists in Zimbabwe.”

### **COPIES OF THIS RESOLUTION WERE SENT TO:**

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights’ Watch, International Federation of Journalists, IFEX – International Freedom of Expression Exchange, CPJ – Committee to Protect Journalists and other relevant organisations.

**From the Berlin conference in 2001 a letter was sent to President Vladimir Putin in Kremlin, Moscow:**

“Women journalists attending the 29th conference of International Association of Women in Radio and Television--- express their anxiety about the developments in media in Russia.

We are concerned that recent actions are a threat to the freedom of the press.

We point to the attempts to use financial unrest around ‘Media-Most’ and NTV for political purposes. NTV has been widely recognized for its critical journalism.

As professional journalists we oppose the discontinuance of the weekly ‘Itogi’ and the daily paper ‘Sevednya’, and the attacks on the radio station, ‘Echo of Moscow’.

The uncertain future of media journalists has caused concern in the democratic international media community.

We applaud a democratic Russia, in its struggle for free flow of information.”

**COPIES OF THIS RESOLUTION WERE SENT TO:**

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights’ Watch, International Federation of Journalists, IFEX – International Freedom of Expression Exchange, CPJ – Committee to Protect Journalists and other relevant organisations.

## Statutes Then and Now

### EXCERPTS FROM THE FIRST STATUTES:

#### “International Association of Radio Women

At a meeting convened in October 29th 1951 in Amsterdam, Holland, a group of radiowomen from the following countries founded the organization: Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, Paraguay, U.S.A., New Zealand, The Netherlands.

A two year period was set aside for organisation purposes and action was taken on the following matters:

#### PURPOSES:

- To promote exchange of experience between radio women of various nations so as
- to extend their knowledge of radio- and television techniques to improve methods of contacting and serving their listeners;
- to extend the range of program content, to include feminine (sic!) ideals and standards.

#### OFFICERS:

Three coordinating Presidents were appointed to develop the organization and build up membership:

Lilian van der Goot	– Europe and Middle East
Dorothy Lewis	– North & South America
(to be selected)	– Far East

#### DUES OR FEES:

For the organization period the fee will be: 10 Dutch guilders for non-dollar countries and \$ 7 in dollar countries.

#### MEMBERSHIP:

Any woman of executive standing who is responsible for or has given proof of sustained interest in radio+and television programs for or by women, shall be eligible to active membership. Her eligibility shall be subject to review by coordinating presidents for the first two years until a committee on membership is set up.”

STATUTES ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 2nd, 2005  
COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA USA

## IAWRT STATUTES

### MISSION

The Mission of the International Association of Women In Radio and Television is to advance the impact of women working in the electronic media and in allied fields. IAWRT is dedicated to encouraging initiatives to ensure that women's views and values are an integral part of electronic programming.

IAWRT provides opportunities, shares strategies and contributes toward the development of women in broadcasting by exchanging professional and technical knowledge and experience.

IAWRT offers professional skills training with a focus on gender perspective in programme production, development issues and management.

IAWRT acts as resource for members and the industry.

### ARTICLE 1

#### The Organisation

International Association of Women In Radio and Television is the name of this non-profit organisation, and is also referred to as IAWRT.

IAWRT is a media organisation with worldwide membership of professional women actively engaged in radio and television programme production, broadcasting, management, research in the electronic media, and in fields closely allied to broadcasting.

IAWRT is a non-government organisation (NGO) in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). IAWRT is represented at the United Nations in New York City by an appointed member of IAWRT.

**ARTICLE 2****Goals**

IAWRT aims to work worldwide to promote the entry, development and advancement of women working in the media in order to broaden their perspectives and raise the quality of radio and television programmes by:

- supporting the professional development of members through exchange of ideas, experience and technical knowledge;
- raising awareness of the privilege of free speech and of the responsibility it entails in the profession;
- utilizing media skills to ensure that the points of view of women are respected and their needs are recognized;
- utilizing member access to media in support of women in developing countries;
- supporting the full integration of women within all areas of society.

**ARTICLE 3****Membership**

## VOTING MEMBERS

Members actively engaged in programme-production and management in the electronic and allied media. Dues of voting members must be current. Each voting member is entitled to one vote.

## NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- Women actively engaged in fields closely related to the broadcast media.
- International or domestic media organisations and individuals of such organisations with comparable professional relevance.
- Men actively engaged in comparable professional electronic media work.
- Students actively engaged in studies leading to careers in the field of broadcasting or fields closely related to broadcasting. Such members shall be eligible to become voting members upon employment in the broadcasting industry or its allied fields. The goals and aims of such members must be in concert with the stated goal of IAWRT.

## HONORARY MEMBERS

The Board may elect Honorary Members who have contributed significantly to the electronic media or toward the stated goals of IAWRT.

Honorary members are not voting members.

Applications for Regular Membership, Associate Membership, Student Membership and Honorary Membership shall be approved by the Board.

**ARTICLE 4****Board of Directors**

The members of the Board shall consist of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and three members-at-large. Two additional members may be co-opted by the newly elected Board.

An elected member of the Board may serve no more than three 2-year terms. However, any member of the Board who is elected President, may serve up to two 2-year terms as President.

The President is the official representative and spokesperson of IAWRT and shall interpret the aims and goals of the organisation. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall preside. Where possible, members of the Board shall represent the geographic regions of the world.

**ARTICLE 5****Standing Committees**

The Board may appoint any Standing committees as deemed necessary to carry out the functions of the organisation.

A Nominating Committee shall become a Standing Committee whose responsibility shall be to present a slate of candidates for election to the board at each biennial conference. The Nominating Committee of at least three members shall be elected by the membership at each biennial membership meeting following the election of the board. The new Nominating Committee may elect its own chair.

The Nominating Committee shall be charged with the responsibility to select candidates with geographical diversity as a criteria.

**ARTICLE 6****Country/Regional Chapters**

Country/regional meetings and activities where IAWRT members reside may be organised to provide opportunities for members and potential members to share information, media experiences, interact and exchange ideas of country and regional interest. Members participating in such meetings and activities may organise themselves into IAWRT Chapters.

Establishing country/regional Chapters shall be governed by the rules as outlined in the IAWRT Statutes, the Policies and Procedures and the Procedures for Establishing IAWRT Chapters. Country or regional Chapters shall be approved by the Board. Chapter programmes shall reflect the goals and objectives of IAWRT. Board members shall be assigned to collaborate with such chapters in organising events and meetings.

Upon approval, each established Chapter shall be presented with a Charter confirming its IAWRT Chapter Status, signed by the President and an appropriate Regional Board member.

**ARTICLE 7****Governance**

The Board and members shall adhere to and be guided by the IAWRT Policies and Procedures as set forth in IAWRT Statutes attachment, Policies and Procedures.

**ARTICLE 8****Voting Rights**

All members whose dues are current shall have the right to vote in all elections and matters requiring a vote for approval. Majority vote of all accredited members in attendance shall rule in all official matters pertaining to IAWRT.

By approval of the Board, a referendum vote may be solicited by post or e-mail.

Voting privileges at biennial meetings are not granted to absentee members by proxy or by absentee ballot. One vote only shall be granted to each member.

**ARTICLE 9****Dues**

The amount of dues for regular, associate and student members shall be recommended by the Board and approved at the biennial members meeting.

Dues are renewable on January 31st annually.

**ARTICLE 10****Amendments to the Statutes**

Proposed amendments to these Statutes must be submitted to the Board three months in advance of the general meeting.

Amendments to the Statutes shall be approved by 3/4 vote of the members in attendance at the general meeting.

**ARTICLE 11****Dissolution**

Dissolution of the organisation shall be voted upon at the general meeting or by a referendum vote by post or e-mail and shall be determined by a 3/4 vote of the membership.

The Board shall appoint a committee to close the business and the financial books of the organisation, and dispose of existing funds and records. The Board shall approve the manner for distribution of funds and distribution of records.





