

WOMEN "OWNING" RADIO A Case Study of KAKAMMPI's Radio Experience

Jean Francis Barcena

Abstract

This article aims to document the radio experience of KAKAMMPI, both as part of a commercial radio organization and as an independent media source or body, in tackling women's issues by focusing on the radio program, *Babaeng Migrante*, *May Kakampi Ka*; identify the elements of success as well as challenges in using radio as medium to air women's issues; analyze KAKAMMPI's use of the concept of "voice" in its media work; and, provide recommendations for KAKAMMPI that may be helpful in further improving its media work.

According to Feminist International Radio Endeavor (FIRE), which began as a shortwave radio program in Costa Rica in 1991, now also broadcast live over the internet, radio is the women's medium because it gives space to women's voices. Citing studies from the Latin American magazine *Dialogue for Communications*, women feel that "radio listens to them", making it a "space that women have owned intuitively" (Collective Journeys 1999). FIRE adds that media, particularly radio, have the capacity to assign power, give equal opportunities to and include women. Radio is also an experimental site which has allowed women to organize others to lobby for policy reforms in Costa Rica and beyond. FIRE has integrated the gender perspective in its daily on-air discussions of relevant issues and has aired live broadcasts of women's conferences like the U.N. Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993, the U.N. Population and Development Conference in Cairo in 1994 and the U.N. Social Development Summit in 1995. One of its significant gains was in 1994 when it interviewed and dialogued with the U.N. conference participants regarding women's reproductive rights, and presented

itself as an alternative source of information to the commercial media present that time. As a result, the education and empowerment of women and girl children were included as major policies of the conference's Plan of Action (FIRE 2009; Suarez Toro 1996). FIRE has appreciated radio, among its other advocacy tools, as "giving voice to the voiceless."

There have been several strategies in the past that women have used to gain voice and give it to others, one of which has been through women's radio. 'Women's radio' refers to both the establishment of stations ran by women, and the women's groups' use of mainstream formats and programming to address "a distinctive sector of the audience with particular interest and needs for whom a particular style of address and communicative format were needed to produce a feminized discourse by women for women" (Scannell 1994 as quoted by Mitchell 2002).

Birgitte Jallo in *Women on the Air: Community Radio as a Tool for Feminist Messages* (Jallo 1996, 201-210) recognized that there was difficulty in gaining access to national broadcasting companies to change perceptions about women. Because of this, European feminists have decided that developing their own communication channels or producing women's radio would enable them to reach out to all women and inform them of issues that concerned them. According to Jallo, those who ran the radio programs generally attempted to "organize experiences of individual women into a collective unit of experience." Articulating the stories of the women facilitated a collective understanding of their situations which could lead to them to choice and then, to action. Jallo, in her study of women's radio stations from France, Holland, Great Britain, Norway and Denmark that were operational in 1980s (given that these types of stations come and go depending on the need) concluded that the use of community radio was effective in providing opportunities for women to speak out. However, these women's radio stations struggled to stay on-air because of change in government policies regarding community or alternative radio, financial problems and personnel burnout due to assumption of multiple tasks. It was also a debate whether a structure within the radio station or the lack of it was helpful. Jallo posed the challenge to women's radio groups to keep their standards high so as to reach a wider audience and at the same time, be grounded in their mission to get across relevant and significant messages about women and the women's movement.

To have higher visibility through the media, several feminists proposed steps for the women media practitioners to take. Mileva Ross, Helen Baehr and Michele Ryan recommended more training for female employees in different sectors of radio. Anne Karpf suggested the production of a broader range of programs that tell 'truths' of women's lives, specifically, giving feminist-influenced programs fair opportunities to be heard. She was particularly against daytime radio programs that were tailored for women listeners and dominated by male presenters, where men, in effect, defined women's space. She pushed for women creating their own stations and actively putting women's say into the mainstream programming agenda of commercial radio stations (Mitchell 2002).

In the Philippines, one of the organizations that found access through mainstream means so that women's causes will be heard is KAKAMMPI. Kapisanan ng mga Kamag-anak ng Migrang Manggagawang Pilipino or KAKAMMPI is an organization of overseas Filipinos workers (OFWs), migrant returnees and their families that aims to protect their rights and welfare and effectively respond to the problems of labor migration of the country. Among its integrated family development program intended to facilitate empowerment are building child learning and development centers, that is, support shelters for single mothers and abandoned wives of OFWs and alternative childcare shelter for their children, a family wellness program, and a gender responsive program. The last focuses on addressing issues of reproductive health and women's rights.

For seven years, from 2000 to 2007, KAKAMMPI has successfully penetrated commercial airwaves through its three weekly radio programs, *Babaeng Migrante*, *May Kakampi Ka* on Radio Veritas, *Kalinga sa Iyong Pag-Alis at Pagbalik* on Radyo ng Bayan, and *Kakampi ng OFW* aired on short wave by Radyo Pilipinas. Although all these programs touched on gender, the first one particularly covered issues on reproductive health and was intentionally formatted to address women's issues. It has received citations from organizations such as the AIDS Media Awards (AMA).

Among the subjects that KAKAMMPI has discussed in these radio programs were family planning, gender justice in international criminal courts, cervical cancer, violence against women (VAW), sex trafficking and HIV/AIDS. The organization has formed chapters in Metro Manila, Rizal, Pampanga, Benguet, Zambales, Pangasinan, Bataan, Ifugao, Bicol, Cagayan, Tarlac, Tacloban, Iloilo, Cebu and Zamboanga, some through actual or

hands-on community organizing and, interestingly, some were through the help of the radio programs.

Listening to KAKAMMPI's Story

This article aims to document the radio experience of KAKAMMPI, both as part of a commercial radio organization and as an independent media source or body, in tackling women's issues; identify the elements of success as well as challenges in using radio as medium to air women's issues; analyze KAKAMMPI's use of the concept of "voice" in its media work; and, provide recommendations for KAKAMMPI that may be helpful in further improving its media work.

For the purposes of limiting the study to how women's concerns are gaining media access, it only focuses on the radio program, *Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka*. It also documents KAKAMMPI's alternative media initiatives for the women after the said program went off air in the middle of 2007. It assumes KAKAMMPI's point of view because of time constraints although she hoped she could have dealt with KAKAMMPI's radio partners in greater length. Being able to document this pioneering and innovative experience will hopefully allow other women's groups to explore their media options and consequently, open doors to their causes. This hopes to encourage visibility of women and their voices on issues through popular media, thus, widening the discourse on women in our society.

What follows is a case study which uses purposive sampling, singling out KAKAMMPI as its subject as well as its main source of information. The case of KAKAMMPI is a critical case since its story is integral to the general problem, that is, women's groups' access to media. Focus interviews with KAKAMMPI staff were done as well as a general review of pertinent documents such as project report, KAKAMMPI's brochure, sample radio program scripts, website and YouTube comments. Website research was done to verify some of the data that were gathered by the researcher.

Women's Medium, Women's Ally

History

Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka was launched on the Human Rights Day of 2000 on DWIZ 882 Khz. It was a one-hour weekly show with

a magazine-talk format. It included the following segments: a news segment on OFWs; “Rights Mo, Rights Ko”, a discussion of migrant workers’ rights; “Trabaho Patrol”, job postings on-air; “Mission: Impossible”, segment on paralegal counseling and assistance where callers were welcome to consult; “Chikahang Buhay”, interview with resource persons from government and non-government agencies, covering issues of women, health and rights (“Kababaihan, Kalusugan at Karapatan”).

The radio program later moved from DWIZ to DZRM Radyo Magasin in 2004. From 2005 to 2006, the same program also aired on a different timeslot on DZRV Radio Veritas 846. Wanting to find their own voice and airing it on their own terms, KAKAMMPI members decided in August of 2007 that it was time to explore other options other than commercial radio. Hence, *Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka* discontinued airing.

Program Objectives

Among the objectives of the radio program was to organize communities of women OFWs who have returned to the country and their families, as well as to supplement existing community organizing work being done in some communities in Metro Manila and other areas in Luzon. The program also aimed to inform and equip OFWs about their rights; extend public service to relatives of OFWs through paralegal assistance, counseling, and referrals; and, in the long run, to empower women to assert their rights.

Topics Covered

Some of the topics discussed in the program were reproductive health (RH), VAW, migrant labor and OFW laws and rights. The most popular and controversial topics, gauged by the number of text messages and phone calls received while these were being discussed, were sexuality and relationships. These were apparently concerns of OFWs and youth, men and women alike, who had a venue to ask questions and share their predicaments, mainly about sexual behavior. On the other hand, the least popular and equally controversial topic was RH, which is not remotely related to the former. Aside from being restricted by one station to not talk about RH, the program also received opposing comments from its audience when RH, specifically contraception as a family planning method, was tackled.

Audience Profile

Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka's target audience were women OFWs who have returned and/or were planning to go back to working abroad, their families, advocacy groups on migrant labor and reproductive health, and recruitment agencies.

Based on an in-house survey that KAKAMMPI conducted among their chapter in Tondo, Manila in 2006, those who actually listened to the radio program were women, mostly mothers, OFWs in general, and their families, including their husbands. Some young people also listened regularly and a few men who texted when the program talked about relationships. Radio served as a companion to the wives while they went about household chores. In the same survey, some wives said they listened with their husbands.

KAKAMMPI estimates that the age range of the majority of their listeners is between 40 to 60 years old. They belonged to lower middle income to low income families or households, mostly urban poor. Most of them have reached or finished high school. There were a number of partners from non-government organizations (NGOs) and government agencies, such as the Philippine NGO Council, the Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights), the Kanlungan Center Foundation, and the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) who also listened to the program.

Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka had a following in KAKAMMPI's chapters in San Andres and Tondo, Manila and in Mabalacat, Pampanga. The chapter in Pampanga was formed through this radio program.

Gains and Impact

KAKAMMPI Chairperson and *Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka* main anchor Fe Nicodemus feels that the program has reached the audience that they originally had in mind and that it had met most, if not all of its objectives. KAKAMMPI was able to offer legal counseling and assistance through the program and successfully connected audiences with the right agencies such as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to locate and know the status of their OFW loved ones.

Through *Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka*, two KAKAMMPI

chapters were organized in Mabalacat, Pampanga and in Zamboanga. KAKAMMPI mentored these groups after they expressed that they wanted to formally start an organization together and provide services to their members. Nicodemus said that the radio program prepared the ground for actual community organizing. After hearing inputs from the radio program, certain communities became more responsive and easier to mobilize. In the case of Tondo, KAKAMMPI held on-site broadcasts of the program, bringing radio equipment to the community and teaching them about organizing and basic radio production skills. It then followed them up with actual organizing work until regular community meetings were held and community initiated-projects such as a daycare center were started.

As for the Mabalacat chapter in Pampanga, families of OFWs who were frequent listeners of the program learned about how they can be members of KAKAMMPI and later, applied as one community. Membership to the organization meant they would be visited, organized and mentored in organizing others. After it formally became a KAKAMMPI chapter, the Mabalacat bloc began running a mini-grocery store for its members.

There are, more or less, two women’s radio programs that are initiated by women’s groups and have existed side by side with *Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka – Aksyon Kababaihan* on DZRH, produced by the Coalition against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific (CATW-AP) and *Krus na Daan* on DZRJ-AM, produced by Sarilaya. *Aksyon Kababaihan* is still airing. With this, it can be said that women’s issues have been put forward through popular media, thus, increasing the potential of reaching and serving more women from the grassroots.

Challenges of Commercial Radio:

1. Buying Blocks of Time

Being a block timer, or one that buys an airtime slot in a commercial radio station, KAKAMMPI had to shell out as much as P20,000 per one hour of airtime. In cases where the station requires and assigns one to two co-anchors to join the program, the organization had to add up to P5,000 monthly on top of the airtime cost. The rates also went up gradually for some of the stations. According to Nicodemus, it is very expensive for a non-profit organization to maintain a radio program, even in “smaller” radio stations like DZRM and DZRV.

KAKAMMPI sourced out funding from various international agencies that have funding bias for media initiatives. However, to fill in some of the financial gaps from time to time, it had to tap sponsors, mostly from government agencies such as the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), PhilHealth, and the Department of Tourism. There were instances when some of the sponsors were not able to remit their donations, making it hard for KAKAMMPI to keep up with the payments.

Because one hour was all that KAKAMMPI could afford, the organization felt limited in what it could accomplish.

2. Conforming to the Station's Identity and Policies

The presence of co-anchors on DWIZ and DZRV as part of the stations' policy regulated and censored the content of the program. At the same time, Nicodemus and others from KAKAMMPI felt they often stayed in the background because of the setup, even as producers of the program. A Catholic radio station, DZRV, as expected did not allow discussions on RH. In addition, specifically on DWIZ, *Babaeng Migrante*, *May Kakampi Ka* was only promoted on its time slot and not on other programs because it was one of the station's policies for block timers. On DZRM, KAKAMMPI was allowed to be the main anchors and to handle the console, giving its members greater freedom and flexibility.

3. Ratings Game

The stations evaluated the program monthly to every two months. The program producers from KAKAMMPI were aware that they had to maintain competitive ratings to continue airing and, fortunately, were always told that they were performing satisfactorily. DZRM showed them the rating sheets that proved this while DWIZ did not, but KAKAMMPI was confident about the loyalty of its audience base. The number of people who came to the stations seeking assistance through the program was taken as one proof.

4. No 'Individual' Communicator

To understand the context of KAKAMMPI's limitations is to see how it exists and functions as a part of a media organization, not as an "individual communicator." Liesbet van Zoonen, reinforcing Dennis McQuail's idea, says that because of the complexities of the relationships, practices and other

layers that one faces inside a media organization, he or she finds it difficult to become independent in expressing his or her stand on certain things.

“[In] a deeply social and collective nature of media production, in which a range of factors influence the decision making process [,] there seems to be no such person as the ‘individual’ communicator. She or he has to cooperate with colleagues, has to take the specific needs, routines and traditions of the organizations into account, and is limited by the embedding by the social, economic and legal embedding of the media institution” (van Zoonen 1994).

Although constraints were a reality, KAKAMMPI’s being a block timer on different radio stations allowed its staff to acquire experience and hands-on training in production work. Moreover, Nicodemus and KAKAMMPI as an organization gained exposure to and became well-versed on migrant and women’s rights.

Finding Voice On-Air

‘Voice’, according to Lana Rakow and Laura Wackwitz, is a concept that is political, meaning, it assumes that certain groups such as women, “through monopolies of words, talk and media, are denied identities as full speaking subjects and denied full and equal participation in family, community and political life.” Finding or gaining it points toward a communal and political setting where all community members are heard. They define voice as “the means and ability to speak and to have one’s speech heard and be taken into account in social and political life.” They add that voices could be articulated through language, talk and stories. Not all talk, however, turns into voice but communication technologies such as commercial radio could be a means to accomplish that (Rakow and Wackwitz 2004).

Ananda Mitra and Eric Watts, while agreeing that the powerful mutes the voice of the weak, expound on the concept of voice as not just a “property of the autonomous subject or as effect of the text but a phenomenon...a dialogic event.” Voice is not owned by anyone and finding it is an event, collaboration or transaction which happens when it is acknowledged by the public or a reader (Mitra and Watts 2002).

Using these standpoints, it can be said that while in commercial radio, women’s voices through KAKAMMPI were frequently muffled and

mutated by the existing policies and roles inside the media organizations, KAKAMMPI's own economic limitations, and the unpopularity of some of the topics discussed in the program *Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka*. Nonetheless, voice was found because the program was able to reach a specific audience where it created places for dialogue via its feedback mechanisms. An indication for "hearing" that voice would be the exchanges, the relationships with individuals and communities, both mediated and face-to-face, that were formed. A concrete response to that voice was the setting up of local KAKAMMPI chapters.

The Birth of KAKAMMPI Online

Because of the big and rising cost of commercial radio airtime as well as being not quite able to own the medium in pursuing its goals, KAKAMMPI reconsidered its media options in 2007. Nicodemus said they in KAKAMMPI had thoughts about stopping media work altogether and instead allocating the available funds to direct service and organizing. They doubted the impact that their radio programs were making. They then decided to pull out their programs but regularly submitted their press releases to a newspaper for a time to maintain their media presence.

In August 2007, they discovered the possibility of still airing while not spending as much, thus, giving birth to KAKAMMPI Online, KAKAMMPI's internet media arm. Using its own equipment and an internet connection, KAKAMMPI started hosting online a live radio as well as issue-based canned webcasts on its website. The webcasts include various coverages of press conferences, mini-documentaries, talk shows and radio drama. About 34 of the 392 webcasts it posted on YouTube are about women. Some of these topics are violence against women, reproductive health, rights of OFW women and women's health.

Ingenuity

Nicodemus asserted that setting up KAKAMMPI Online was not easy, given the organization's limited resources. She said that they had to use a digital voice recorder to record program episodes. Then, they uploaded these voice files as video webcasts on YouTube (www.youtube.com), a free video hosting site. They added the documentaries, both video and for radio, that they had on file. This encouraged certain partner organizations like Amnesty International, National Commission on the Role of Filipino

Women (NCRFW) and Department of Tourism to contribute their short yet informative videos and documentaries on OFWs and women. They also made webcasts in partnership with organizations such as Center for Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse (CPTCSA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Population Commission.

The earlier episodes were mere voices, without visuals. Later, KAKAMMPI staff incorporated pictures, transition effects, music and eventually, video footages. Because they made visual adjustments, the hits and views, or the number of times a page is visited, increased. The webcasts without visuals have seven to more than 200 views, with one exception – a webcast on the Reproductive Health Bill having 1,165 views. The webcasts with visuals have as much as 5,951 views. So far, the most viewed and most discussed video is a documentary of an OFW in Saudi Arabia named Jessica. Produced by a partner organization of KAKAMMPI, it has generated 42 comments. Among its self-produced materials, KAKAMMPI's webcast on the Reproductive Health Bill is the most viewed and most discussed.

Some YouTube members began subscribing to KAKAMMPI videos. A few websites such as <http://www.perfspot.com> and <http://video.aol.com> from other countries also linked and some others hosted the videos.

Ingenuity coupled with good research opened doors in the World Wide Web for the organization and its causes, without having to spend a considerable amount of money. Rather than buying a bigger disk space for the KAKAMMPI website that could hold all its webcasts, KAKAMMPI Online opted to use YouTube as its video host and was able to save on subscription costs. Aside from purchasing and maintaining basic radio equipment and monthly internet connection dues, they are paying minimal fees, mainly for domain hosting which has a yearly going rate of about 9 to 15 US dollars or P 500 to P 700, according to popular websites. Moreover, through consultations with YouTube's technical support team and other webmasters, KAKAMMPI's information technology (IT) staff and webmaster were able to extend the ten-minute limit for uploading videos to up to one hour.

YouTube makes way for easier feedback gathering and monitoring through its comments box. On the other hand, it also possesses a regulating power on which comments to approve and post. To address this, a forum section with one page per webcast or topic was set up. It has a portion for press releases. In addition to the forum page, a web log or blog is in place and

both function as online bulletin boards – instant and interactive feedback mechanisms for KAKAMMPI Online.

KAKAMMPI Online's live internet radio, although without a program lineup at the moment, is another product of research because a little known low-cost procedure was tapped to put it into operation. Without having to pay much, it sees to it that it also conforms to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines to make its operations allowable in the internet community, according to IT staff Benhur de Leon.

Same Services, Bigger Reach

The webcasts' target audience, and eventually the online radio's, are OFWs and their families, women in general, and key persons of authority working with OFWs – from embassies in different countries, OWWA, DFA and so forth. Nicodemus said that there have been instances where OFWs and welfare officers found KAKAMMPI Online and sent inquiries to them after visiting their website.

Because webcasts are accessible to more OFWs and women globally, and one can easily link and refer the site to other OFWs, the same assistance that KAKAMMPI has been offering through its radio program and direct services are now being extended online to benefit more people. Although it is still in its budding stage, the potential for expanding KAKAMMPI Online's audience base and future members is also growing.

In 2004, in a study of 100 OFWs, it was found that 24% of them use the internet. With Inq7.net, ABS-CBN News, Philippine Star, and PinoyCentral being the most popular websites among them, the study may imply that KAKAMMPI Online is a promising source of news and information for OFWs in the near future (Toral 2004).

Good Networking

KAKAMMPI's networking with international organizations and embassies is becoming more manageable and the exchange of information, faster with the internet. Being linked online to and acknowledged by other organizations, such as the UNFPA portal, further promotes KAKAMMPI Online and KAKAMMPI as an organization. Also, KAKAMMPI Online is part of the board of trustees of the recently formed national chapter of the

International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT).

Dedication to the Vision

Although the organization recognizes the big role of media as a site of struggle towards empowerment and emancipation, and a channel by which issues can be heard, KAKAMMPI stays just as focused on its grassroots work and what it wants to achieve for the people that it serves, with or without the media.

Finding Voice Online

With the internet, those whose voices have not been heard can speak up, engage others and share a common voice with them virtually. Mitra and Watts say that "the notions of voice, agency, discourse and space can now be combined to claim that cyberspace is created when voices gain the agency to speak in, and to, the virtual public."

'Voice' in the internet or cyberspace challenges the traditional and real-life dominant sources of "speaking" power. According to Mitra and Watts, the internet can be a venue to alter stereotypes that the powerful traditional media organizations are able to portray or promote about those who are in the margins. The marginalized can also ask for a response from those who hold power. Moreover, the internet can reach the global audience in the same capacity as the established media organizations. Thus, it has the potential of distributing voice and power by "flattening hierarchies" (Mitra and Watts 2002).

Women's voices through KAKAMMPI Online bear a bigger capacity for agency and for dialogue with dominant and marginalized voices alike. KAKAMMPI Online has the capacity to accommodate others' voices anytime through the internet's on-the-dot and interactive feedback mechanisms. Its capacity to store previously aired materials preserves the organization's voice on women's issues as well as allows it to stay open for engagement with others anytime.

'Legitimacy'

KAKAMMPI's media experience and its members' growing expertise on OFW issues, more than the regulations set by the government and within

media institutions, legitimize the existence and practice of KAKAMMPI Online as an independent media body. Although they intend to apply later, none among KAKAMMPI staff who has gone on-air have licenses from *Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster ng Pilipinas* (KBP). Somehow, the absence of formal government recognition as a traditional broadcasting body makes its staff not fully confident about their authority. However, they have gained credibility not just in their field but also among some media people.

Top media organizations like GMA-7 easily pick up KAKAMMPI's press statements and air them or write about them. From 2006 to 2008, www.gmanews.tv has cited in 31 of its online news stories statements and interviews that were released through KAKAMMPI Online webcasts and blog.

Some of its partner organizations, government and non-government alike, contact KAKAMMPI Online to cover press conferences and other media events, expecting it to operate as a specialized media body or organization. These agencies include the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Philippines against Child Trafficking (PACT) and Women's Legal Education, Advocacy and Defense (Womenlead Foundation, Inc.).

With the advent of the internet, ownership of information and the legitimacy of its sources have been put to question by the creation of new and independent media groups like KAKAMMPI Online. As postmodernist Jean-Francois Lyotard puts it, "forms by which knowledge and procedures gain or claim legitimacy has collapsed..." (Storey 1993). This is an opportunity for the new "intellectuals" to speak out against the oppression that they witness and experience, according to Angela McRobbie (Storey 1993). Lyotard adds that the traditional intellectuals "have been losing their authority" through different forms of popular culture (Storey 1993). Still, according to McRobbie:

Postmodernism has disenfranchised a new body of intellectuals: voices from the margins speaking from positions of difference: ethnic, gender, class, sexual preference, 'the new generation of intellectuals' – often black, female or working class... They engage in postmodernist pla(y)giarism, not as an end in itself but to construct compelling critiques of the everyday racism [and other forms of oppression] of the society. (Storey 1993)

Using a postmodern lens and the notion of 'voice' as coming from the margins, it can be said that KAKAMMPI Online and similar attempts by other organizations, especially using the internet, challenge the dominant and "legitimate" structures on two grounds – as an equally legitimate alternative and nontraditional media organization and, as a mouthpiece that confronts and brings to the surface the oppression of women and other marginalized groups.

Empowering Others

While still on commercial radio, the KAKAMMPI staff felt empowered that they could articulate their advocacies through media. They desired to train those in the communities, especially women, to participate in the work that they were doing or to lead their own media work. However, they were constrained with the limitations posed by commercial radio. Now that they have KAKAMMPI Online where they have flexibility and much less cost, they feel more empowered to put their desires into action. KAKAMMPI is inviting other women's groups to buy affordable time slots on its live internet radio so that they too could be heard. KAKAMMPI Online as an alternative radio station presents space for other groups that have difficulties in going mainstream.

Challenge: Enhancing KAKAMMPI's voice

To support the programs of KAKAMMPI and for KAKAMMPI Online to become sustainable, the organization is tapping sponsors for its webcasts and live web radio. Now that its airtime is no longer limited, it is faced with the problem of how to fill the airtime with programs. Nicodemus said they plan to air from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

As KAKAMMPI's website is bound to have an increasing number of visitors, it should work on having a more systematic way to monitor its stats, or the visitors' details. Because it does not have clear data on the cost effectiveness of its media initiatives, it should assess KAKAMMPI Online's reach and "returns" in terms of audience viewership as against the cost of running its media programs.

Next to YouTube videos, blogs are currently the most viewed sites in the internet. KAKAMMPI's blog and forum section, if taken full advantage of, are as potent and rich as its internet radio and webcasts. The blog should

be packaged with more pictures that will invite responses and questions from visitors. Teasers of its current content could be displayed on KAKAMMPI's homepage so that it is made more accessible, visible and catchy. Currently, KAKAMMPI is working on linking its website to its page on Facebook, the most popular social networking site in the internet. This is a strong move that could open numerous possibilities.

In future training sessions on radio that KAKAMMPI will conduct among communities, it should ask a certain number of audiences, both from among the communities and their OFW relatives, to commit to listen to and blog about their opinions on assigned episodes. This is what advocate Gang Badoy did through her radio program, Rock Ed. Rock Ed was an issue-based radio talk show at DWNU 107.5 that uniquely appealed to the younger audiences. Rock Ed went beyond the radio program by holding discussions with the youth in schools across the country and organizing cause-oriented concerts. It partnered with college social science classes by requiring them to listen to an episode and blog their thoughts on it. This organizing approach introduced, promoted and in time, strengthened an audience base. Gathering feedback from them becomes much easier as well (Badoy 2007).

The website could also include links to DFA, OWWA, POEA and other organizations and agencies, and ask these organizations to also link KAKAMMPI in their websites. This will hopefully increase the organization's exposure and direct more OFWs to the resources that are available to them through various offices.

As for the internet radio, KAKAMMPI could revive *Babaeng Migrante, May Kakampi Ka* to continue what it has started for its women listeners. New programs could include updates from the different KAKAMMPI chapters, a public service program that would reconnect OFWs and their relatives, another public service program that could connect OFWs and Philippine embassies and/or other government offices in their area, a magazine talk show featuring the online communities for OFWs, and another program with a talk or magazine format honoring the stories of women OFWs.

Breaking New Grounds

KAKAMMPI's experience could be counted as a best practice in engaging the media and in pioneering media work among women's groups. Especially in terms of ingenuity and commitment, KAKAMMPI's efforts

have been remarkable. Its story proves that there are alternatives to keeping up with commercial and policy restrictions of mainstream media, and that women and other groups whose issues are usually pushed to the margins can find their places and voices in these alternatives. Nicodemus asserts, "We should prove to the bigger, highly commercial media organizations that we do not approve of their overpriced deals. They may have the audience reach but we can also access the same audience if we start with what we have."

As KAKAMMPI's pioneering example through KAKAMMPI Online is beginning to reap its fruits, it should continue to find more and new ways to gain access to and engage the media and get across women's issues. Mitra and Watts (2002) suggests that for a voice to remain persuasive in the internet, it needs to be eloquent, meaning it "can address the reader's emotion and create a 'proper feeling about [an] issue", as well as responsible and ethical. The challenge applies to other women's groups, most of which have not fully explored commercial radio, the internet and media in general. Women must always claim their place and voices in every medium possible to empower and bring other women together.

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