WORLD SOCIAL FORUM – INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
ABUJA, 31/03 – 3/04 2008

Report of the Communication Commission

FROM GDA TO BELEM... AND BEYOND

The IC communication plan approved in Berlin was divided into two parts:

GDA - Global Day of Action
- The short term plan has been implemented fairly successfully given the circumstances
- 9 "functional" working groups were created and can be extended for the mid term plan

Mid term communication plan (until mid 2009)
It's objective is to support the communication in WSF as a continuous process
and to provide a coherent set of tools for the three levels of communication: Internal to the IC – Intra among participants – external.
After the GDA, the work of the IC Com.com. will be in coordination with Belem OC communication and methodology groups

GUIDELINES AFTER ABUJA
The communication strategy is considering the World Social Forum as a continuous process, driven by the will of its participants to intercommunicate and find forms of creating alliances and acting efficiently towards another possible world.

The most prominent "forms" that are being defined for this process (big events such as Belem forum, with connections worldwide in 2009 or a GDA in 2010) are the most visible and we can use them to make the WSF known worldwide, but the horizontal visibility is also vital to strengthen the process, inclusion and participation.

After the IC meeting in Abuja, the Communication commission will organise a seminar in June 2008 (venue and date has to be yet decided) to work on the tools, guidelines and coherence and build up team spirit with all the people involved.

The results of the strategy seminar in Abuja will be used as a basis to work on a more focused communication plan. Decisions on what forms the WSF process will take, which will be its main events and targets, how it will try to involve new movements, strengthen alliances, etc. are necessary and most useful in order to have clear guidelines and forms to rely on for the information and communication planning.

MAIN DECISIONS – GUIDELINES IN ABUJA
On the basis of the recommendations made (see the following pages), the IC approved to go on implementing the communication plan and requested more time and information to be dedicated to communication in the next IC meeting.

The wsf2008.net Global day of action site should become permanent (changing its name and improving it) and a call to use it as a visibility tool for agendas of organisations participating in wsf process will be issued.

The openfsm.net has been adopted for working groups of IC (to replace the IC lists with a more open and coherent platform) and for the decentralized online preparation of activities in Belem.

Keep the communication working groups active and expand their participation.

Communicate on the connected and interlinked formula of Belem 2009 decided in Abuja – with a form of "Global participation/interconnection Day". A working group has been proposed to work out a new call before the next IC.

COMMUNICATION COMMISSION WORKING GROUPS

WG Related to participants

1. **Webteam** (web strategy and wsf websites support)
2. **WSF internet training** (stimulating local training programs)
3. **Live space for IC internal communication** (help desk)
4. **Streaming at events** (how to coordinate and stimulate it)
5. **Intercommunication** (support-promotion of connections)
6. **Reporting** (stimulate and collect feedbacks / memory)
7. **Practical info content** (WSF newsletters, etc.)
8. **Translation** (stimulate translations of IC related contents...)
9. **Promotion** (share logos, banners, etc.)

WG Related to media

1. **Alternative media** (networking media activists - org./collect.)
2. **Press** (decentralised press conferences –press kits
3. **Journalists** (stimulate journalist network)
4. **Radio** (radio forum exchange)
5. **Video** (platform, exchange, network, satellite distr.)

For each working group, a description of current achievements and recommendations for next period follows.

As announced in Abuja, organisations present in the IC are welcome to contribute with fresh energies from their staff or volunteers in all those working teams. Each group should have at least 2 referent people to facilitate and stimulate the work.

To contact the Communication commission: com@lists.openfsm.net

WORKING GROUPS RELATED TO PARTICIPANTS

1) WSF PROCESS WEBSITES

As of today, the following websites are promoted / managed by the IC

www.forumsocialmundial.org.br   **-**   Institutional site, information on wsf
wsfprocess.net --> *openfsm.net*   -   Space for working groups and networking
wsf2008.net --> (new name)   **-**   Mobilizing, mapping actions/events (social networking...)
wsftv.net   **-**   Video exchange hub
worldsocialpedia.org *(to come…)* **-**   Collective construction of wsf knowledge base

Recommendations
- Use openfsm.net for IC internal communication and preparation of activities for Belem
- Change name and continue wsf2008.net as a visibilization tool for action stemming in/from wsf process Towards Belem connected WSF 2009 and 2010 GDA
- Start wsfradio.net as a platform welcoming audio recording similar to wsftv.net [to be discussed]

WEBTEAM - SITE SUPPORTING
INTERCOMMUNICATION TOWARDS BELEM

Belem OC has started developing a site focused on the event
IC communication webteam wg has started preparing a process collaboration site (openfsm.net)
An IC larger working group " methodology and websites" is created and will monitor this issue

Recommendations
- Use a process site using an existing sustainable free software project : openfsm.net
- Have a simple linking between the two Belem event site and the process site, tailored by a common working group between Communication commission and the Belem OC
- Use next version of wsf2008.net site to make actions and interlinks around Belem visible

WSF INTERNET TOOLS SUPPORT
GDA has shown the great potential of using internet tools for mobilization and at the same the need of there being real people assisting users. The set of tools is growing and becoming more user friendly

Recommendations
- Have a "helpdesk" group supporting the users and giving them practical information on how to use the site according to their goals and needs, and feedback to webteam. The "core" of the helpdesk group should be at the Wsf Office.

2) LOCAL "WSF INTERNET" TRAINING SESSIONS
GDA allowed locally rooted organisations to make themselves visible, provided they had access to internet.

Recommendations
- Have a working group in contact with organising committees to **stimulate local "wsf internet training"** (eg. Mexico OC has started worskshops for this purpose)
Goal of this training: empower local civil society actors to step into the virtual wsf space, discover its international dimension and diversity, make themselves visible and start participating in it

3) LIVE SPACE FOR IC INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The evolution of wsf process provides a tool that can be used by IC and commission to facilitate their work in an open and self organized way (collaborative editing, mailing lists, document sharing)

Recommendation
- Develop usage for each IC commissions and working group of a collaborative space to exchange and build documents together (in openfsm.net)
- Stimulate and facilitate the usage of this space: specific role for the WSF Office and Liaison group

4 - STREAMING

Online video streaming have been successfully experimented. Streaming is a very cost effective way to have a distributed "webtv". Meetings and intervention of speakers can be done from a distance, also with economic advantage.

Recommendation
- Provide webcast of IC meetings and other significant events related to process facilitation
- Streaming server(s) and website hosting can be optimized by having 1 server per continent to mirror and distribute hosting the websites and tools.

5 - INTERCOMMUNICATION

On occasion of GDA over 50 intercommunication by collective video chat took place, enabling "face to face" discussions between two groups of people from different part of the world. Forms of intercommunication can also be by audio, by chat, by commenting documents, by collaborating in a common "space " in a website.

Recommendations
- Promote and support experiences of direct horizontal intercommunication between WSF actors
- Stimulate the set up of spaces equipped for collective video chats and integrate those scheduled video chats as activities in the program of Belem 2009.

6 -NEWSLETTER(s)

This was a core element of the plan for wsf2008, but also started very late. Much work went into making coherent newsletters with a balance in editorial / practical content.
November '07 – March '08: 9 issues altogether, in 4 languages to approx. 200.000 people. A few went in other 8 languages.

Recommendations:
- Focus on informative content and the empowerment of participants through the use of wsf related tools
- Create a shared database of participants contacts with language / country management (in cooperation and used by the various local, national, regional, thematic OCs)
- Start the monthly OC/facilitators newsletter (see Berlin communication plan)
- Languages: increase the number ensuring continuity

7 - REPORTING

Although only partially planned in advance, the sharing back and memory of the activities done worldwide has been implemented with both a centralised collection and reorganisation of the reports in various forms and formats (and languages). The support team is stimulating people to edit their "action space" on the wsf2008 website, comment on the blog, add images, audio, video, etc. The collective reports have been organised by country and offer a general overview of the GDA, from which everyone

can have a better knowledge of how the Call of action worked. All reports are being posted on the website.

Recommendations
- Promote direct reporting by participants in wsf2008.net
- Encourage analysis work on the material collected
- Extract themes and modes of actions to inform the strategy

8 -TRANSLATION
For the newsletter and website of the GDA we worked with Babels network. It went well at the beginning, but in January only a few translators participated with continuity – which made the translation work harder and more time consuming.

Recommendations
-This essential function must be well thought out, with a process involving more actors and a permanent operational team working to ensure/stimulate the translation and dissemination of documentation in more than the 3-4 "official" languages of the IC.
-The workgroup should concentrate on finding the best methods to ensure the above.

9 -PROMOTION
This has probably been one of the weaker parts of our communication effort. Though a "logo" and a very simple design were created for the GDA website, promotional materials have come in late during the process. Partially due to the fact that there was no political decision to have a "centralised" design/er – and that high resolution graphics from the wsf previous editions was very difficult to obtain – so it had to be re-elaborated.

Recommendations
- The Wsf image/design issue should be cleared and professional work should be budgeted accordingly, though not developing a "corporate" image.

MEDIA RELATED WORKING GROUPS

1) ALTERNATIVE MEDIA
For the GDA, Ciranda worked on contacting and stimulating the independent media. There was a good response in Latin America, somewhat less in the other continents. A report on the results of this activity is available – most of the collected articles are online both in Ciranda and on the wsf2008 site.

Recommendations:
- Set up the media center space in Belem to allow maximum cooperation of alternative media (tv forum, radio forum, exchange of the copyleft materials….)
- Before wsf 2009, stimulate production and interlinking of media coverage at international level
- During wsf 2009, stimulate connections with media around the world in a similar way as GDA
- After wsf 2009, stimulate activities of reporting by media in an organised way

2) RADIO
Approximately 100 radios where involved – directly or through the Amarc, Panos, Radio Forum and other networks. Some covered events live, others contacted people in different places around the world, giving an idea of the international dimension. A common jingle was created and adapted in different languages. The Amarc and Radio forum websites collected transmissions and did streaming as well. A "clocked" radio starting in Asia and unfolding during the event was broadcasted on satellite (mir radio net).

Recommendation
- Build up the radio working group from the commission, including as many radio networks as possible
This medium has a very high potential and should be a central element of the communication/media strategy
- Develop the radio forum before, during and after Belem 2009
- Start a more specific www.wsfradio.net site [to be discussed]

3) PRESS POOL
This has been one of the most successful coordinated-decentralized activities.
23 press conferences where held on the 22nd of January in 4 continents in a totally decentralized way – but with common press releases, locally adapted. The time to prepare them was very short, but the group worked well. A common press kit was produced, which can be a useful basis for the future.

Recommentations:
- It is fundamental that this group continues to work with regular meetings and expand to include press people from other networks, Ic members, organising committees.
- Press clippings are being collected to document the work

4) INTERNATIONAL AND MASS MEDIA
Ips worked on the coverage for mainstream media (press agencies, journalists, columnists service) and with its Terraviva coverage. The effort was limited for many reasons, yet important for future work.
A report on results is available.

Recommendations
- This important part needs to be strengthened and coadiuvated with a more coherent strategy on the involvement of public figures, well known activist from as many countries as possible, etc. and a pro-active message.
- International media agencies and outlets need to be targeted carefully and more consistently

5) **VIDEO AND SATELLITE DISTRIBUTION**

More than 80 videos have been collected on the Mobilisation week in January - and others are being added. High quality videos for broadcast have been produced in several countries and edited for the Worldfeed of Eurovision, which was distributed via satellite to over 300 public tvs. A partial collaboration with Al Jazeera and Telesur, together with Arcoiris.tv made it possible to cover some of the most relevant events. Other televisions (such as Mexican and Brasilian state and commercial tv) covered local events. A new website for video exchange was set up in a short time: **www.wsftv.net**

Public screenings of events around the world have been done thanks to the possibility of downloading videos. This is also a visual memory tool.

Recommendations:
- Strengthen and expand video team
- Collect video memory of wsf
- Relaunch the campaign for 1 minute video towards Belem.
- Stimulate public screenings with wsftv.net video bank to communicate about wsf and towards/during Belem
- Work on satellite distribution

CURRENT INITIATIVES IN IC COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

1 - OPEN FSM

As from the general communication plan, a website has been created with tools to help networking inside the WSF process. IC Commissions, working groups and other initiatives may use it to work and communicate together, edit common documents, store files, create mailing lists, forums, etc.

People get together in spaces that they open with different purposes. To help people interested by a common objective to know each other better, to prepare an activity etc..

Here are a few images of the site's preliminary version: it is possible as of now to register on the site and create spaces for working groups, for joint initiative between several organisations, for the preparation of activities towards Belem, etc….

Step A
Register as participant: entering the site as a person, mentioning affiliation to organisations

http://openfsm.net/join

WSF2008 | WSF2008 | Create an account

OpenFSM

People   Projects   Start A Project

OpenPlans ▾

sign in   create account

Create an account on OpenFSM

Username
Full Name   (optional)
Email
Password
Confirm password

Join

Becoming a member means…

- You can join and participate in existing projects
- You can create your own project and invite others to join
- You can share information about yourself
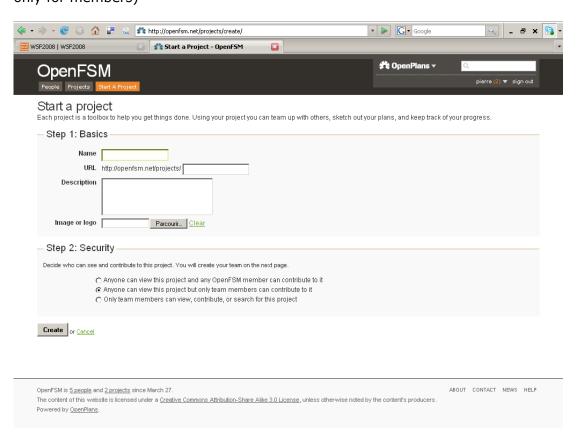
Already a member?

Sign in

We will not share your email with anyone. Ever.

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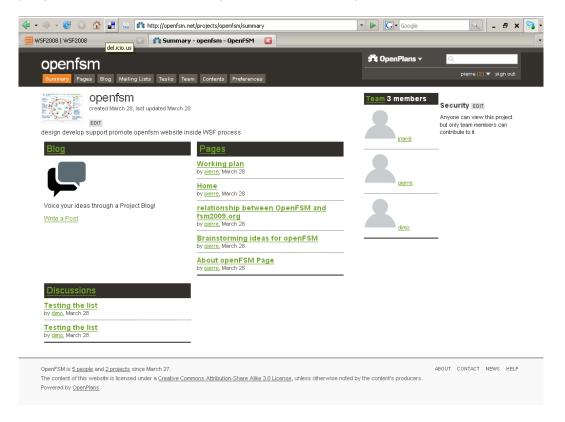Powered by OpenPlans.

ABOUT   CONTACT   NEWS   HELP

Step B
Join or Start a project (space)
Choice of space name - Choice of space scope/focus- Choice of space accessibility (public, semi-public, only for members)

http://openfsm.net/projects/create/

WSF2008 | WSF2008 | Start a Project - OpenFSM

OpenFSM

People   Projects   Start A Project

OpenPlans ▾

pierre (2) ▼ sign out

Start a project
Each project is a toolbox to help you get things done. Using your project you can team up with others, sketch out your plans, and keep track of your progress.

Step 1: Basics

Name
URL   http://openfsm.net/projects/
Description

Image or logo   Parcourir... Clear

Step 2: Security

Decide who can see and contribute to this project. You will create your team on the next page.

○ Anyone can view this project and any OpenFSM member can contribute to it
◉ Anyone can view this project but only team members can contribute to it
○ Only team members can view, contribute, or search for this project

Create or Cancel

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ABOUT   CONTACT   NEWS   HELP

Step C
Interact in a space
Each Space has blog, wiki (collaborative editing), task list and several mailing lists (that can reach people that are not necessarily members of that space

2 - FORUM DAS AGUAS

A communications project on and about WSF Belem 2009 in the Amazon, with a fully equipped boat traveling up and down the Amazon river to reach out before the event (promoted by Luiz Arnaldo – see specific presentation document).

3 - E-JOUSSOUR

A site for civil society in the Arabic countries
(promoted by Alternatives and Oxfam)