



(COMMUNAL IMAGE ASSOCIATION)

Once one understands the importance of media in social life, one will notice that education must incorporate elements which will enable people to express themselves in a wide range of ways. With this in mind, Associação Imagem Comunitária (AIC), a not for profit non-governmental organization from Belo Horizonte (Brazil), promotes **workshops of media education, researches and advisories** on the area of **communal communication**. It also produces **communal educative audiovisual products** and organizes **meetings and conferences** to discuss issues related to the **democratization of communication**. Finally, it tries to foment the creation and establishment of communal medias.

AIC works with socially disadvantaged groups essentially. It was born 12 years ago, in a project called **TV Sala de Espera** (Waiting Room TV): an experience of communal television in the northeast of Belo Horizonte. The idea was to produce, with the community, a television program that was shown in the health centers' waiting rooms of the region. The experience happened from 1993 to 1997, involving the local community, the founding group of AIC, a university (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) and the City Hall of Belo Horizonte.

Ever since, AIC develops workshops and creates **publicly accessible means of communication**, with the participation of numerous groups: homeless, mental health service users, slums' inhabitants, schools and NGO's, as well as communitarian groups that struggle for human rights and promote cultural and mobilizing projects.

In addition to that, AIC has promoted **courses** in the areas of TV, radio and video throughout the state of Minas Gerais/Brazil. It also integrates the project **Comunidade em Cena** (Community in Scene), model experience that articulates several NGOs, broadcasting, nationally, via Canal Saúde (Health Channel – within the Ministry of Health/ Oswaldo Cruz Foundation), television programs about health education.

Belo Horizonte's youngsters have been AIC's most important partners in the development of projects that aim media's democratization. With them, AIC promotes Young Web of Citizenship (**Rede Jovem de Cidadania**), a net of communal communication that produces television and radio programs, a newspaper, a webzine, a website and a press agency. These actions involve the entire state of Minas Gerais, reaching more than 500 thousand people.

Associação Imagem Comunitária is also responsible for **Cuco – Youth, Culture and Communication**, which is formed by a group of multipliers that implant local communal radio stations on the nine administrative regions of Belo Horizonte. This project's goal is the empowerment of social movements and schools. The institution also promotes **Rádío São Rafael** – an internal radio station situated on Instituto São Rafael, whose producers are blind adolescents from the whole city. Furthermore, AIC foster Youth and Human Rights Project (Projeto Juventude e Direitos Humanos), an initiative through which youngsters who participate from social movements in Belo Horizonte make communitarian communication products to promote and discuss citizenship rights.

ASSOCIAÇÃO IMAGEM COMUNITÁRIA in numbers

- The communal communication workshops have involved more than three thousand users.
- More than 250 productions in several types of media.
- Productions are broadcasted, weekly, through medias that reach the entire state (more than 500 thousand spectators).
- Partnership with around 250 institutions (including non-governmental organizations, cultural centers, communal groups, cultural centers, and public and educational institutions).

MORE INFORMATION

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CURRENT PROJECTS

Rede Jovem de Cidadania (Young Web of Citizenship)

Through Rede Jovem de Cidadania, project developed since 2002 and sponsored by Petrobras, adolescents that belong to cultural and social movements from the nine regions of the city of Belo Horizonte (Brazil) create communicational products, which reach large audiences. The proposal is developing **spheres of expression** so that **youth movements**, which usually have scarce visibility on conventional media, make their ideas public.

The youngsters produce a weekly **television program** (broadcasted by Rede Minas de Televisão, a public, educational and open channel), a weekly **radio program** (broadcasted by local educational stations), a **newspaper** (freely distributed, every three months, in the public schools of Belo Horizonte), a **website** (www.redejovembh.org.br), a **webzine** (www.aic.org.br/rede/webzine) and **news agency** (that sends weekly bulletins to conventional media and NGO's)

Cuco – Juventude, Cultura e Comunicação (Youth, Culture and Communication)

Fostered since 2004, and financially funded by Instituto Credicard, Cuco is a project in which **young multipliers** implant, through a partnership with popular movements and public schools, experiences of **communal radio stations** spread over the whole city of Belo Horizonte. The experiences vary from school radios until web-radios, including also mobile stations and programs to be transmitted on already existing local communitarian stations. More information can be found at: www.aic.org.br/cuco/planoideacao.

Rádio São Rafael (São Rafael Radio Station)

Supported by Instituto Ester Assumpção, this project takes place on Instituto São Rafael, an educational institution dedicated to blind people from Belo Horizonte. Since the beginning of 2005, a **group of blind youngsters** are passing through an educational process in which they create **radio programs** to be broadcasted on an internal communal station. The programs will also be distributed to other communal stations. The main goal is promoting a discussion about the social inclusion of this public.

'Juventude e Direitos Humanos' – Youth and Human Rights

Started in February 2005, the project involves creating an **educational campaign for Human Rights promotion**. Such campaign is produced by members of youth movements from every region of Belo Horizonte and includes **television documentaries, radio spots, websites and CD-ROMs**. These communication products are created in communitarian communication workshops and will be distributed for social movements throughout the country. Supported by the Ecumenical Service Coordination – CESE, the project intends to contribute for young people to assume an active role in constructing citizenship rights.

RECOGNITION

AIC was the winner of **Hague Youth Video Festival - International Video Festival Youngsters for Peace** ("My vision of a world without war", USA/ Netherlands, 1999), with the video "Briga entre Escolas" (produced on the project TV Sala de Aula — Classroom TV).

Due to the strong emphasis on human rights defense through popular communication performed by youngsters, AIC has also received the **Human Rights Award 2003** for the Journalism category, which is conceded by the Special Secretariat for Human Rights (SEDH) and the Brazilian Presidency. Also in 2003, an international research classified AIC **between NGO's with the best practices for youth social inclusion in Latin America**.

Rede Jovem de Cidadania has received an **honors mention** at the **International Betinho Award for Communication 2003**, an eminent award in communal communication and citizenship areas promoted by a net of institutions from 29 countries. Also in 2003, Banco do Brasil Foundation (Fundação Banco do Brasil) and Unesco acknowledged the project as a "**social technology**". In 2004, it has been awarded with **Prêmio Marketing Best de Responsabilidade Social** and two **national awards of digital inclusion**. In 2005, Rede Jovem de Cidadania has been selected by the program "**Se Buscan! Searching for Good Ideas and Best Practices in Local Content Production and Distribution in Latin America**", from **Unesco**. Finally it is important to highlight that the project's television productions have been selected to several **international and national festivals and exhibitions**.

