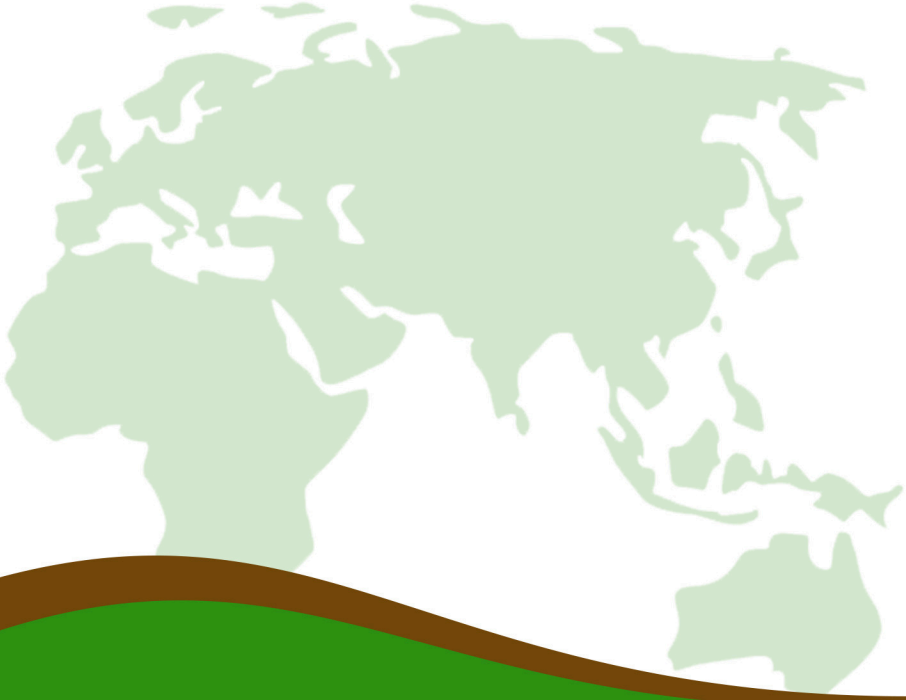
Asian Media Information and Communication Centre

Asian Voices Images

The AMIC Laureates (2006-2025)



Asian Media Information and Communication Centre

ASIAN VOICES, ASIAN IMAGES:

The AMIC Laureates (2006-2025)



Asian Media Information and Communication Centre

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Asian Voices, Asian Images: The AMIC Laureates (2006-2025)

They introduced media and communication discipline in their countries, rediscovered Asian communication theories and paradigms, advanced development communication and development journalism in their Asian communities, advocated for media and communication reforms. These are but a few of the significant contributions made by 26 individuals honored in this slim volume entitled, Asian Voices, Asian Images: The AMIC Laureates (2006-2025)

Winners of the prestigious Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Inc. (AMIC) Asia Communication Award established in 2006, the laureates are mostly Asians, except for three who were not born in Asia but have a heart for Asia.
The book not only seeks to honor the contributions of these individuals but also to showcase that Asians can stand tall among the world's leading communication scholars and practitioners. It is a treasure every Asian communication student and professional should have, to remind them of their illustrious forebears.

The stories captured also serve as an inspiration to young Asian communicators to continue the laureates' commitment to enriching Asian communication theory and practice and, equally important, to help nurture — through communication and media — an Asian society characterized by freedom, justice, social equity, and democracy.

Most of the articles in this volume are the citations presented to our laureates when they received their respective awards. Since written full citations began only in 2014, the articles on the earlier winners were written by the laureates themselves, by their close colleagues, or by the AMIC Secretariat based on research.

We need not wait for the next collection of inspiring stories of AMIC icons to continue our quest for a truly Asian communication and media that we all deserve — free, inclusive, pluralistic, and viable.

We commit to doing our part now and always.

Ramon R. Tuazon
Secretary-General



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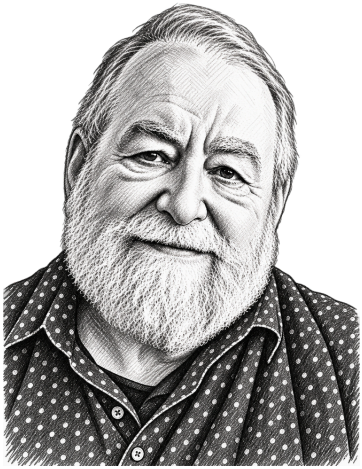

DR. JOHN A. LENT (USA)

An American Communication Scholar with a Lasting Impact on Asia

2006 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Prof. John A. Lent taught journalism and mass communications from 1960 to 2011, including stints in the Philippines, where he designed and taught the first mass communications courses at De La Salle College, in 1964-1965; in Malaysia, where he founded, organized, and directed the country's first university-level mass communication school at Universiti Sains Malaysia, from 1972-1974; in Canada, as the first Rogers Distinguished Professor in 2000; in China, as visiting professor at four universities, as well as one each in Taiwan and Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan). He was Professor Emeritus at Temple University.

Dr. Lent pioneered in the study of development communication, critical media studies, media and freedom of expression, mass communication and popular culture in Asia (since 1964), mass communication and popular culture in the Caribbean (since 1968), and comic art and animation. Many of the 92 books he authored/co-authored/edited were the first in their respective fields.

In addition to the books he authored, Prof. Lent has written dozens of book chapters or forewords for other volumes, edited four book series, with Westview, Hampton, and Palgrave, and compiled many bibliographies, including the world's largest on comic art. He has given lectures in at least 72 countries, and founded and chaired Asian Cinema Studies Society (1994-2011); Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group of the Association for Asian Studies (1976-1984); Asian Popular Culture Section of Popular Culture Association (1996-), Comic Art Working Group of the International Association for Media and Communication Research, 1984-2016; Asian Youth Animation and Comics Contest, and Asian-Pacific Animation and Comics Association, both from 2007 to 2017.

He has received awards for his service from groups in the U.S., Colombia, China, Cyprus, Peru, and Spain, two festschrifts, a biography written by a major Chinese cartoonist, and prizes in his name with the Popular Culture Association, International Comics Art Forum, and Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group. His books have been awarded by the International Institute of Asian Studies, Popular Culture Association, multiple times, and the broadcasting industry, with two Broadcast Preceptor Awards. His books have also received three Eisner Award nominations.

He founded and edited, for long terms, the *International Journal of Comic Art*, since 1999; Asian Cinema, 1994-2011; Berita, 1975-2001, and *WittyWorld*, 1987-1998.



DR. EDDIE C. Y. KUO (SINGAPORE)

A Visionary Leader with Scholarly Excellence in Communication, Multiculturalism, Identity, and Social Change

2007 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Professor Eddie C. Y. Kuo was Founding Dean and Professor Emeritus of the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. He passed away on 23 March 2026 at the age of 85.

Professor Kuo played an important role in the early development of WKWSCI. As Founding Dean from 1992 to 2003, he helped establish the School's academic direction and programmes and laid the foundations for its subsequent growth in communication and media studies in Singapore and the region.

Before joining NTU, Professor Kuo headed the Department of Mass Communication at the National University of Singapore from 1990 to 1992. NTU established the School of Communication Studies in 1992 and appointed him as its Founding Dean. He later served as Founding Interim Dean of NTU's School of Humanities and Social Sciences from 2003 to 2005.

In 1990, Professor Kuo and AMIC Research Director Dr Anura Goonasekera founded the Asian Journal of Communication. The journal began publication in 1991, with Professor Kuo serving as its founding editor. It remains jointly owned by AMIC and NTU and is published by Taylor & Francis.

Professor Kuo's scholarship spanned media and communication, language, culture and society. His research interests included multilingualism, cultural policy, identity, new media and globalisation. Over more than five decades, he contributed to scholarship and public discussion on multiculturalism and social change.

Born in Fujian, China, in 1940, Professor Kuo grew up in Taiwan. He earned a BA in Journalism from National Chengchi University, an MA in Sociology from the University of Hawaii, and a PhD from the University of Minnesota. He began his academic career in the United States before moving to Singapore in the 1970s.

Professor Kuo also had a longstanding association with AMIC, serving as Chairman from 2003 to 2004 and Honorary Chairman from 2004 to 2015. He received the AMIC Asia Communication Award in 2007.

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DR. NORA C. QUEBRAL (PHILIPPINES)

Mother of Development Communication

2008 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Dr. Nora Cruz Quebral, revered as the “mother of Development Communication,” was a visionary scholar whose pioneering work established a new academic discipline that continues to shape communication and development practice worldwide.

Born in 1926, she graduated *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of the Philippines Diliman in 1950. She pursued graduate studies abroad as a Rockefeller Foundation scholar, earning her MS in Agricultural Journalism from the University of Wisconsin (1957) and her PhD in Communication from the University of Illinois (1966).

She began her career at the UP College of Agriculture, later heading the Office of Extension and Publications, and the academic units that evolved into the College of Development Communication (CDC). On December 10, 1971, Dr. Quebral presented her seminal paper, “Development Communication in the Agricultural Context,” at a symposium in Los Baños.

This laid the foundation for the world's first full-fledged degree program in Development Communication at UPLB, offering a distinct alternative to Western theories of communication and development.

Her scholarship and mentorship nurtured generations of development communicators who went on to establish programs, shape policy, and influence practice across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and beyond. Today, more than 36 higher education institutions in the Philippines, alongside universities worldwide, offer devcom programs inspired by her work. International organizations such as the World Bank, FAO, UNICEF, and WHO have also institutionalized communication units, affirming her conviction that "there is no development without communication."

Dr. Quebral's contributions were recognized with numerous prestigious awards, including an Honorary Doctorate by the London School of Economics (2011), Honorary Professor at the University of Queensland (2009), UP Alumni Association Lifetime Distinguished Achievement Award (2013), Asia Communication Award (2008), and Hildegard Award for Women in Media and Communication (2007). Earlier honors include the Outstanding Filipino Women Research Managers and Scientists in Agriculture and Natural Resources (2001) and the Distinguished Service Award from the Philippine Association of Communication Educators Foundation Inc. (1995).

Dr. Quebral passed away at age 94 in 2020. Her work remains profoundly relevant in today's digital, borderless, yet unequal world.



DR. FLORANGEL ROSARIO-BRAID (PHILIPPINES)

The Visionary Communicator and Innovator

2008 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Florangel Rosario Braid is a complete communicator, having worked across all platforms—print, broadcast, theater, and canvas. She has used each of these platforms to advance messages highlighting peace, children's and gender rights, education and literacy, environmental protection, and sustainable development. She has assumed multiple roles—as journalist, teacher, artist, advocate, constitutionalist, and even street activist.

Dr. Braid co-founded the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) in Manila in 1980. She served as professor and senior researcher at the University of Hawaii East-West Center and the University of the Philippines, and taught in several other universities. She has compiled an extensive body of work: over 20 publications on communication, some 30 published articles in local and international publications and journals, over 50 research studies on communication, and over 1,500 columns in the *Manila Bulletin*.

She pursued the integration of Development Communication as a critical component of governance. Dr. Braid served as consultant to multilateral and bilateral agencies – the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, The Asia Foundation, Delegation of the European Union, and various national and local government agencies. She was a pioneer in alternative learning systems through the Metropolitan Educational TV Project of Ateneo de Manila University. She managed the UNESCO-supported National Distance Learning Program and was a World Bank consultant on distance education in Sri Lanka.

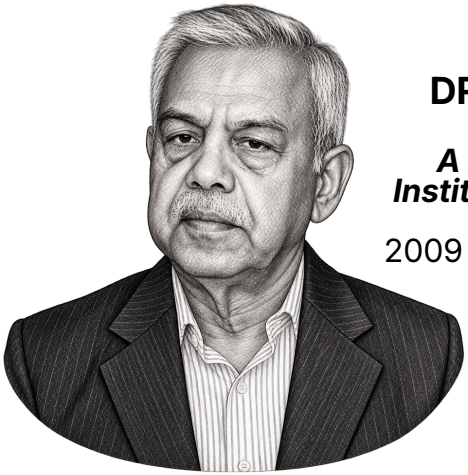
She was chair of the Cooperative Foundation of the Philippines. She introduced cooperative ownership in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, of which she was the first president and a co-founder. She authored the cooperatives provision in the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

As a member of the Constitutional Commission, she sponsored provisions on media, culture and arts, non-government organizations, education, human rights, and participated in crafting provisions on social justice, and protection of sovereignty and natural resources.

She represented the country as a delegate to several UNESCO biennial assemblies in Paris and was elected to two UNESCO councils --the International Programme for the Development of Communication and the Information for All Council.

As TV program director of the Philippine Broadcasting System, she produced pioneering public affairs programs, and later became board member of the government-owned People's TV Network. She was a founding trustee of Ang Pilipino Star Ngayon and publisher of The Filipino Entrepreneur magazine. Braid has been active in peace research and advocacy, authored Commonalities Between Muslims and Christians and co-edited two books dealing with the future of children, and safety of Filipino journalists. She was a trustee of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Dr. Braid received eight international and national awards including most prestigious recognitions in the fields of communication, education, and public service. She received her AMIC Asia Communication Award in 2008.



DR. BINOD AGRAWAL (INDIA)

A Distinguished Scholar, Institution Builder, and Mentor

2009 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

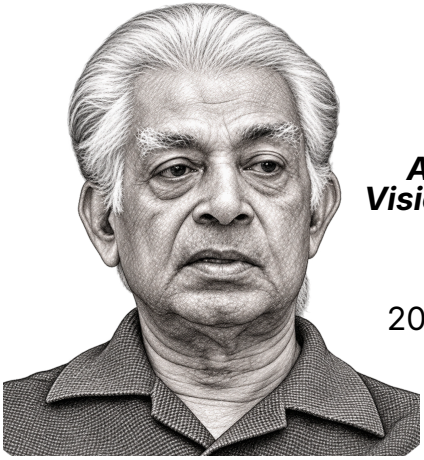
Dr. Binod C. Agrawal was a distinguished scholar, institution builder, and a mentor whose contributions to the fields of Anthropology, Communication, and Development Studies left a lasting impact on all of the Social Sciences, in India and beyond. Born in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh, North Eastern India, he pursued his doctoral studies in Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin--Madison, earning a doctorate degree in 1970. Over four decades, he emerged as a leading figure in the study of Communication for Development, blending rigorous qualitative and quantitative research with a deep understanding of social processes.

Dr. Agrawal began his professional journey with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), where he worked at the Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad from 1973 onward. As a rural sociologist, he played a pivotal role in evaluating and shaping the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), a landmark initiative in the use of satellite technology for education and development. His contributions earned him the Distinguished ISRO Service Award in 1976. Over time, he rose to the position of Chief Scientist and Group Director, continuing to advise on the social applications of communication technologies.

An institution builder at heart, Dr. Agrawal served as the Founding Director of the Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA), and later as the Founding Vice Chancellor of Himgiri Zee University (formerly Himgiri Nabh Vishwavidyalaya) in Dehradun. He also founded the TALEEM Research Foundation in Ahmedabad, where he worked extensively on Communication, Education, and Development initiatives. In his later years, he was associated with the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) as a professor and Mentor, continuing to teach and mentor students.

Beyond his impressive professional achievements, Dr. Agrawal was known for his generosity, humility, and unwavering commitment to mentorship. He guided generations of scholars, encouraging intellectual curiosity and inclusivity in thought. His approach to mentorship was deeply personal and enduring, marked by thoughtful engagement and a genuine interest in the growth of others.

Dr. Agrawal's legacy lies not only in his scholarly contributions but also in the lives he shaped. A devoted teacher, supportive colleague, and compassionate friend, he exemplified the values of kindness, openness, and lifelong learning. His influence continues through the many students, researchers, and professionals who carry forward his vision of Communication as a tool for social understanding and change.



DR. K. E. EAPEN (INDIA)

A Professor who pioneered a Vision for Modern Communication Technology in Developing Societies

2009 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Prof. K.E. Eapen, a pioneer in journalism and communication education in India, was actively associated with journalism for over 50 years, having set up three university departments of journalism and communication. He played a pioneering role in India and established the first professional journalism course at Hyslop College, Nagpur, and was subsequently involved in establishing a number of journalism and communication schools in the country. Professor Eapen was Vice-President of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) from 1988-1992. He was recognized for his profound contribution to the establishment of journalism education and communication studies in India and around the world.

As an experienced scholar and an institution builder, he devoted his skills and energy to teaching new generations of media scholars the art and philosophy of journalism in the service of society. While his pedagogical activism and academic leadership were keenest felt in his native India, as the local press and so many of his colleagues have affirmed, he also touched the lives of many others around the world.

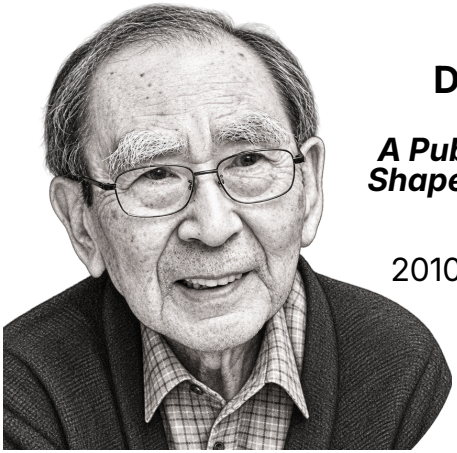
One of the pioneers of Communication Education in India and also a proponent of Development Communication, Prof Eapen had a vision on how to utilize modern communication technology in the developing societies of India and other countries. He was involved in Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) Communication research in India in 1975-77.

Anyone who had something to do with Mass Communication teaching and research in India knew him even without having met him. His presence was stamped on the teaching, research and policy-making bodies of Journalism education in India for over four decades.

He belongs to one generation of Indian scholars who gave a new perspective to issues of development communication and challenges of technology in a poor setting.

He was critical of the prevailing attitudes and strategies of Western fly-by-night researchers. They arrive in a hurry with vast resources, gather data, and then vanish never to be heard of except via scholarly journals from abroad or through books published in the West. He added to this that with all their claims about media that could solve the problems of poor countries, Western social scientists had not been able to propose how media should be used to solve the problems in their own societies, such as the use of drugs among young people.

He was truly dedicated to the field of journalism and media studies, and to improving the practice of journalism and public communication in his beloved India. He had an ability to cut through abstract rhetoric to the reality of the situation in his home country time and again. He made a positive and lasting difference in our field and in his home country.



DR. HIDETOSHI KATO (JAPAN)

A Public Intellectual Who Helped Shape Communication and Media Studies in Japan

2010 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Dr. Hidetoshi Kato was one of Asia's pioneering communication scholars and a highly respected public intellectual. He is remembered as one of the leading figures who helped establish communication and media studies as an academic field in Japan. In Asia and beyond, Dr. Kato made significant contributions to the development of communication research, media studies, and intercultural communication during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Born in Tokyo in 1930, Dr. Kato graduated from the Tokyo University of Commerce (now Hitotsubashi University) and earned a PhD in Sociology. Throughout his distinguished career, he served in several important academic and public positions, including Associate Professor at Kyoto University, Professor at Gakushuin University, Executive Director of The Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, and Chairman of the Japan Student Services Organization.

Dr. Kato's scholarly work focused on mass media and social change, communication and modernization in Asian societies, popular culture as a field of academic inquiry, intercultural communication, and communication policy and media development.

He was among the first scholars in Asia to systematically examine the relationship between communication systems, culture, and development in postwar societies.

Among the notable publications that he authored, edited, or co-edited are Media no Hassei (Onset of Media) (2009), Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture (1989), Essays in Comparative Popular Culture: Coffee, Comics, and Communication (1984), Works of Hidetoshi Kato, Volumes 1-12 (1980), Communication Policies in Japan (1978), Japanese Research on Mass Communication: Selected Abstracts (1974), and Japanese Popular Culture: Studies in Mass Communication and Cultural Change (1973).

Beyond academia, Dr. Kato actively participated in public discourse through his contributions to Seiron, a Japanese monthly opinion magazine published by the Sankei Shimbun. Established in 1973, Seiron serves as a forum for discussions on political, social, historical, and cultural issues in Japan.

Dr. Kato worked closely with the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) and was among the distinguished scholars who helped strengthen communication scholarship and regional cooperation in Asia. His pioneering research advanced understanding of the interactions among media, culture, and development, while his studies of Japanese society, media, and consumer culture enriched both Asian and global communication scholarship.

Through his scholarship, leadership, and international engagement, Dr. Kato left a lasting legacy that continues to inspire generations of communication researchers, educators, and practitioners throughout Asia and the world.



DR. GEORGETTE WANG (TAIWAN)

An Advocate for Asian Ethos in Communication Research: Fostering Dialogue with the West

2011 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Professor Georgette Wang is noted for promoting the Asian ethos in communication research while fostering dialogue with the West.

She argued that thought is the foundation of human civilization, and that research is thought in action. She also warned that inbreeding in research would only lead to the fossilization of thought, but that dependence was not the solution, as it would eventually alienate research from thought and become irrelevant to its cultural context. She suggested that theoretical dialogue across cultural paradigms can be effectively established through sound methodology.

Georgette Wang is Honorary Chair Professor, College of Communication, National Chengchi University in Taiwan.

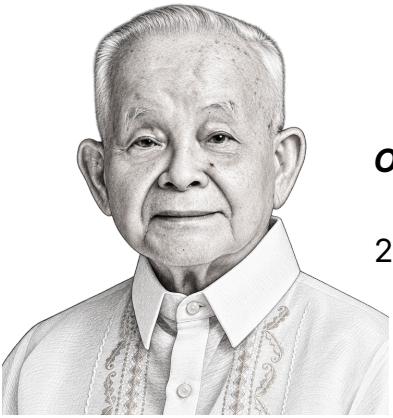
Professor Wang received her Ph.D. degree from Southern Illinois University and has worked as Research Associate at the Communication Institute at East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In 1982, she returned to Taiwan to teach, and in the following years she took on various administrative positions besides research and teaching. These include Dean of Social Sciences at National Chungcheng University in Taiwan, and Dean of the School of Communication at Hong Kong Baptist University. From 2001 onward she served as Chair Professor at National Chiaotung University and National Chengchi University in Taiwan, Hong Kong Baptist University in Hong Kong, and at Nanyang Technological University (visiting) in Singapore.

She also served as President of the Chinese Communication Association in Taiwan, and member of the board of Chinese language and international journals and academic associations.

Professor Wang's areas of interest include media studies, telecommunications policy, and indigenizing communication research. She has won several awards, including the AMIC Communication Award in 2011.

Professor Wang retired in 2010, but her most important works on issues surrounding the development of communication research in the non-Western world were published within ten years after her retirement.



DR. CRISPIN MASLOG (PHILIPPINES)

One of AMIC's Founders and a Prolific Scholar-Writer

2011 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Dr. Crispin C. Maslog steadfastly championed the cause of community journalism, acknowledging its influence on community as well as national life.

He served as the first full-time director and professor at the Silliman University School of Journalism and Communication (now the College of Mass Communication), the first journalism school outside of Metro Manila, established in 1966.

His equally important area for advocacy and practice is science communication and science journalism.

His pioneering efforts have ultimately borne fruit, as his work now serves as an inspiration for journalism students and communication professionals, even in the face of existential challenges from cyber journalism and artificial intelligence.

Maslog graduated *magna cum laude*, Bachelor of Literature in Journalism, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, and earned his master's and PhD in Mass Communication from the University of Minnesota in the United States.

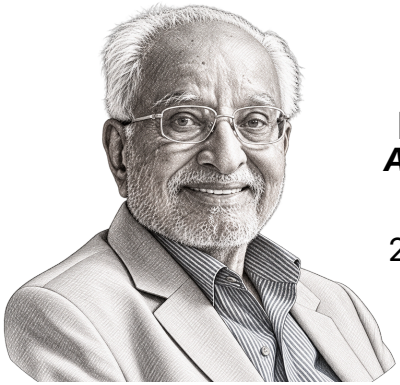
From Silliman, he went on to serve as professor of Development Communication, University of the Philippines Los Banos. Later he joined the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) as vice president and senior consultant.

Dr. Maslog also served as a visiting professor and lecturer at several universities abroad, namely, the University of North Dakota, Nanyang Technological University, Minnesota State University, and American College of Norway.

He is co-founder of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Inc. (AMIC), and has served as Chairman of the Board since 2015. He is also co-founder of the Philippine Association of Communication Educators (PACE), and in 1966 assisted in the development of the Philippine Press Institute Community Press Awards to celebrate excellence in community journalism.

Dr. Maslog has received prestigious awards, including The Outstanding Filipino Award (TOFIL), the AMIC Communication Award, and the Outstanding Thomasian Award.

A prolific author, Maslog published his autobiography, Mni Luzahan: Memoirs of a Pinoy Journo Guro, in May 2026, and his 50th book, Science Communication in Asia, in September 2026.



TAN SRI DATO' L. KHRISHNAN (MALAYSIA)

A Trailblazer of the Early Malay Film Industry

2012 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Tan Sri Dato' Lakshmanan Krishnan was born in Madras, India, in 1922 but raised in Penang, Malaysia. He studied at Bukit Mertajam High School, where he completed his school-leaving certificate in 1941. After the end of World War II in 1945, he went to India and learned the filmmaking trade before going to Singapore to work at Shaw Studios. As a filmmaker and director, he collaborated with famous artistes in the Malay film world (including the legendary P. Ramlee), beginning in 1948.

After learning the filmmaking trade and techniques from an Indian filmmaker at a small studio in Ampang Road, Kuala Lumpur, he wrote, produced, and directed more than 30 movies in Bahasa Melayu/Bahasa Malaysia. Later on, he opened his own Merdeka Studios in Petaling Jaya.

Tan Sri Krishnan directed many notable films, including those featuring popular actor P. Ramlee. Among them were "Bakti" and "Takdir Ilahi" in 1950, "Penghidupan" in 1951 and "Antara Senyum dan Tangis" in 1952. These popular films were based on the early Hindi and Tamil films of song, dance, and drama routines and have enjoyed hundreds of reruns on Malaysian TV channels. While the early films were in black and white, his later films were in color.

He was also a pioneer in the fledgling Malay film industry as he produced and/or directed the then new genre of Malay horror movies. These included box-office hits such as "Orang Licin" in 1957 and "Orang Minyak" in 1958. Tan Sri Krishnan's works, especially in producing/directing 30 films in both genres of Malay movies, inspired subsequent generations of actors, directors, producers, and screenwriters in the growing Malaysian movie industry.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the Malaysian film industry and also his social work, Tan Sri Krishnan received numerous accolades and awards. These include the Asian Communicator Award at the AMIC 2012 Annual Conference at Shah Alam, Malaysia. In 2016, he received the Merdeka Award for outstanding contribution to education and to the community. The Malaysian government has also recognized him by bestowing the honorary titles of Dato and Tan Sri.

In October 2022, a still spry Tan Sri Dato L. Krishnan celebrated his 100th birthday with his second wife in Chiengmai, Thailand, stating that "we are not born for death, we are born to live."



DR. MUHAMMAD ALWI DAHLAN (INDONESIA)

Transforming Indonesian Communication Curriculum into a Communication Science

2013 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Alwi Dahlan (1933-2024) was a leading figure in transforming communication from a mere technical skill into a rigorous academic discipline in Indonesia. Often referred to as the "Father of Indonesian Communication Studies," he dedicated his life to building a theoretical framework that captured the unique socio-political dynamics of Southeast Asia.

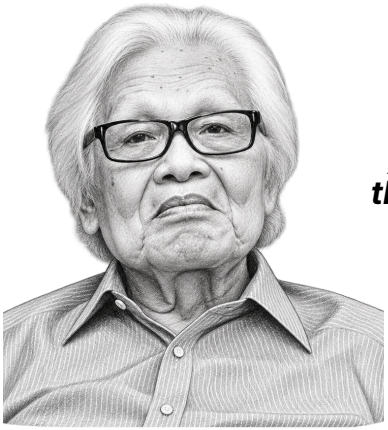
Alwi Dahlan's journey was rooted in a profound intellectual pursuit. He made history as the first Indonesian to earn a doctorate in Communication Studies, studying under the field's founder, Wilbur Schramm, at the University of Illinois (1967) after completing degrees at American University and Stanford. This world-class education enabled him to bridge Western academic traditions with the development needs of a developing Asian nation.

Upon his return, Alwi Dahlan led significant changes at the University of Indonesia, shifting the curriculum from the outdated "Publicistic" model to the modern, multifaceted "Communication Science." As a professor, he not only taught, he institutionalized the field, introducing important sub-disciplines such as Political Communication, Environmental Communication, and Social Marketing. His influence extended to the highest levels of government, where he served as Minister of Information in 1998, working to steer the country's transition to a more open media landscape.

His versatility was also remarkable. Long before his academic fame, he was a renowned screenwriter for classic Indonesian films like “Tiga Dara”, proving that his understanding of "message" and "audience" was as practical as it was theoretical. This unique blend of creative intuition and scholarly rigor defined his leadership in organizations like the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), where he became a staunch advocate for regional collaboration.

The AMIC Asian Communication Award was presented to Prof. Alwi Dahlan for his role as a mentor to a generation of scholars. He did more than just report the news or run a business; he provided the intellectual lens through which the entire nation now understands how information shapes society.

Source: Fakhri Amrullah in Tempo



DR. JAKOB OETAMA (INDONESIA)

A "National Teacher" who used the power of the press to comfort the poor and remind the prosperous

2013 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Dr. (H.C.) Jakob Oetama (1931-2020) was a towering figure in Southeast Asian media and a visionary who redefined the role of journalism in nation-building. As the co-founder of Kompas Gramedia, Indonesia's largest media conglomerate, his career spanned over six decades, leaving an indelible mark on the landscape of communication, education, and culture in Asia.

Born in Magelang, Central Java, Jakob Oetama initially pursued a career in education. This background profoundly shaped his approach to journalism as a form of "public teaching." After transitioning to the press in 1956, he partnered with Petrus Kanisius Ojong or P.K. Ojong to launch *Intisari* magazine in 1963 and the *Kompas* daily newspaper in 1965. Under his leadership, *Kompas* emerged as a gold standard for professional integrity, navigating the complexities of Indonesia's political shifts with a philosophy known as "Prophetic Journalism," a style that is critical yet solution-oriented, and always rooted in humanism.

Beyond the newsroom, Jakob Oetama was a pioneer of media diversification. He expanded his influence into book publishing, television, digital media, and bookstores through the Gramedia network, effectively creating an ecosystem that promoted literacy and critical thinking. His commitment to the regional media community was equally steadfast. He served as an advisor to the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists and co-founder of *The Jakarta Post*, Indonesia's premier English-language daily, to bridge Indonesian perspectives with the global community.

Jakob Oetama's contributions earned him numerous prestigious accolades, including the Mahaputra Utama Star from the Indonesian government and multiple Lifetime Achievement Awards from national and international press bodies. In 2025, the Indonesian Press Council honored his legacy as a "Press Figure" for his role in building journalism that served the public interest above all else.

AMIC Asia Communication award recognizes Jakob Oetama not just as a media mogul, but as a "National Teacher" who used the power of the press to comfort the poor and remind the prosperous. His legacy continues through the institutions he built and the generations of journalists who follow his creed: that journalism is not merely a business, but a sacred mission to uplift humanity.

Source: Raditya Helabumi in *Kompas*



JUAN L. MERCADO (PHILIPPINES)

A Lifelong Advocate for Press Freedom and Development Journalism

2014 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Mr. Juan L. Mercado, founding Director and Trustee of the Magsaysay Award-winning Press Foundation of Asia and founding Director of the Philippines Press Institute, is an illustrious pioneer in the field of Asian journalism and mass communication.

Juan L. Mercado finished his AB degree from University of San Carlos and MA at Ateneo de Manila University, both in the Philippines. He also trained at the American Press Institute in Columbia University in the USA, and was a Kissinger Fellow at Harvard University in 1962.

Mr. Mercado started his illustrious journalism career in the 1950s as a reporter with the Cebu daily newspaper, the *Southern Star*. He became an associate editor of the same paper before joining the *Evening News* in Manila, covering the Senate and writing an opinion column. He was based at the United Nations in New York for the *Evening News* (1961-1963) and, upon his return to the Philippines, served as Manila correspondent for several foreign publications.

In the 1960s, his pioneering work in writing development journalism features for Asian newspapers led to the conceptualization and founding of DEPTHnews. This ground-breaking service of the Press Foundation of Asia provided development news and features to several hundred newspapers and radio stations in Asia and the developing world. It continued for some 20 years before a lack of funding brought about its closure.

Mr. Mercado was also founding Director of the Philippines Press Institute and started the Philippine Press Council. In this capacity, he designed training programs for journalists and published various training manuals on writing, development journalism, and press freedom.

In 1972, along with 21 other journalists, Juan L. Mercado was detained in the first wave of martial law arrests ordered by President Ferdinand Marcos. No charges against him were ever filed. Along with other detained journalists, he was kept under city arrest and, during this period, edited several 'underground' newspapers.

After he was freed, he joined the United Nations in 1975 as Communication Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regional office in Thailand, and then at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. Following the 1986 People Power Revolution in the Philippines, and after 19 years of UN service, Mr. Mercado returned home and continued to write as one of Manila's leading newspaper columnists. He has received numerous national and international recognitions for his achievements.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to excellence in journalism and media development in the Philippines and the developing world, AMIC is proud to present to Mr. Juan L. Mercado this AMIC Asia Communication Award for 2014.



DR. ALAN HANCOCK (UNITED KINGDOM)

A Visionary who Pioneered Educational Media in Asia

2015 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Dr. Alan Hancock is a pioneer, one of the unsung pioneers of media and communication development in Asia.

Dr. Hancock was the 'father' of the Malaysia-based Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), a regional organization which has trained thousands of media practitioners. At the time, he was UNESCO Regional Communication Adviser for Asia (1969-72) based in Kuala Lumpur, responsible for the original planning of the AIBD, and later as Team Leader of the entire UNESCO project (funded by the UNDP). He worked with the newly appointed AIBD Director to develop and operationalize the organization. In addition, he was also responsible for initiating UNESCO's other communication and media efforts in the region, stretching from Turkey to Japan and into the Pacific. He supported the development of AMIC and also provided advice and support for the Malaysian Educational Television Service and the communication education programs at Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang.

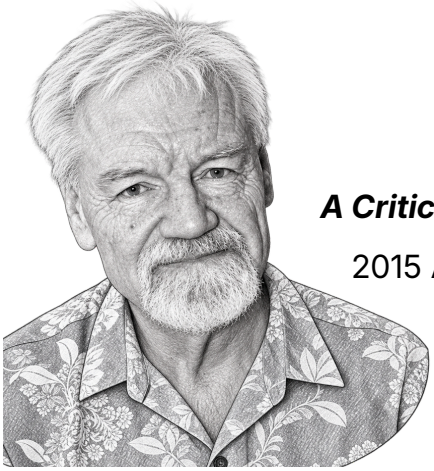
Dr. Hancock was responsible for the planning and development of several major educational media projects in Asia. From 1966-68, he was the Principal Expert guiding the development of the new Singapore Educational Television Service.

He was later Team Leader of a World Bank project to strengthen educational media in Thailand and also established an educational radio service for school and out-of-school education. He went on to India where he helped to establish an MA program in development communication at Pantnagar University and also worked on the SITE project (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment), one of the most revolutionary communication programs at the time.

He studied under Dr. Wilbur Schramm at the East-West Communication Institute in Hawaii and has written and published extensively, including initiating the first UNESCO World Communication Report. His PhD is from the Open University in the UK where he has also been employed as a Senior Producer in educational TV production, while both his BA and MA are from Oxford University.

Dr. Hancock was Director of UNESCO's Communication Division at headquarters in Paris, where he initiated and provided technical expertise and funding support for the establishment of media and communication projects worldwide, especially in Asia and the Pacific. He is currently a consultant for the European Union and other agencies.

As a globally recognized communicator, media development specialist, author, and educator, Dr. Hancock has made significant contributions to the establishment and growth of numerous national and regional initiatives across the Asia-Pacific region.



DR. DAVID ROBIE (NEW ZEALAND)

A Critic and Conscience of Society

2015 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

His AMIC Asia Communication Award 2015 is conferred upon Professor David Robie. With a journalistic background of over 40 years and a focus on human rights and the environment, the unassuming Director of the Pacific Media Centre at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) has made outstanding contributions in all of the award categories—Research, Education, Institution-Building, and Excellence in Journalism.

This year sees a new edition of the top-ranking researcher's 1986 book, Eyes of Fire, marking the 30th anniversary of the Rainbow Warrior bombing by French secret agents on 10 July 1985. Another recent, equally commendable book by Professor Robie is titled Don't Spoil My Beautiful Face (2014), a tribute to human rights in the Asia-Pacific that captures the struggles of the oppressed—through firsthand accounts from his 35 years in the region—and highlights the pivotal role of journalism in creating positive change.

As a journalism educator, Professor Robie has led the way with his vision of a critical and reflective body of journalism scholars. Despite his demanding research schedule, he convened the Pacific Journalism Review 20th Anniversary Conference at AUT University in November 2014, bringing together renowned investigative journalists, filmmakers, academics, and media freedom campaigners from across the Asia-Pacific region for a thought-provoking discussion on political journalism. In the same year, the Journalism Education Association of New Zealand (JEANZ) recognized his significant role in "fostering journalism and journalism education and research in the Asia-Pacific Region."

In 2014, Professor Robie was awarded the Dean's Prize for Critic and Conscience of Society, in acknowledgement of the Pacific Media Centre's Pacific Media Watch freedom regional project. He also received the Dean's Award for Research Excellence (2012), the Vice Chancellor's Teaching Award for innovative media education (2011), the Creative Stimulus Award for innovation in covering "hot topics" in the Pacific Journalism Review (2010), and the Pacific Islands Media Association (PIMA) Pacific Media Freedom Award (2005).



DHAVALASRI SHELTON GUNARATNE (SRI LANKA)

A Professor who Integrated Eastern Philosophies into Global Communication and Journalism Studies

2016 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

As Asians are now asked to turn inwards for wisdom and guidance in this post-truth world, it is only fitting that the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) honors one of the pioneers in Asian journalism and mass communication who did just that as far back as a decade ago.

Shelton Gunaratne started his distinguished career as a journalist in Sri Lanka and went on to conquer new journalistic worlds in Malaysia, Australia, and the United States. Go West, young man, he was told. He did, like many other Asian communication scholars of his generation, and eventually became the first Sri Lankan to receive a doctorate in mass communication from the United States in 1972.

He did come back to his roots briefly, to conduct pioneering research for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Minnesota, by studying the role of communication in rural development in Sri Lanka. The results were published by AMIC as one of its first research monographs in 1976.

He then switched to academe as a journalism educator for the next decade in Malaysia and then Australia. From there he went to the United States to teach at the University of Minnesota Moorhead (MSUM) from where he retired as a professor emeritus in 2007. All throughout his teaching career in the West, he continued his love affair with Asian journalism and communication.

After 2000, Gunaratne focused his academic energies on globalizing communication/journalism studies with his attempt to merge Eastern philosophies—particularly Buddhist and Daoist phenomenology-in his seminal book, The Dao of the Press, published in 2005.

Gunaratne argues in this book that the classic Four Theories of the Press, articulated by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm since 1956, and which had become standard textbook in communication and society courses in Asia as in the rest of the Western world since then, was based on Eurocentric history, theory, and practice.

Gunaratne said he wrote The Dao of the Press as an attempt to de-Westernize communication theory. This new book interprets press theory from the perspective of Eastern philosophy—particularly Buddhism, Hinduism, Daoism, and Confucianism. Gunaratne proposes "a more humano-centric theoretical framework that reflects the marriage of Eastern ontology with Western epistemology."

Dr Gunaratne's development of a humano-centric theory of press freedom presumes a world system that reflects the characteristics of a yin-yang (libertarian-authoritarian) spiral-shaped continuum. Therefore, he argues, communication theory must concede the Daoist notion of diversity within unity (varying degrees of freedom in different countries) because it describes the reality of nature.



WIJAYANANDA JAYAWEERA (SRI LANKA)

A Catalyst for Change in Communication Policies, Standards, and Programs

2017 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Asia-Pacific's communication media landscape continues to evolve today into a free, developed, and dynamic setting. The imprint of Wijayananda Jayaweera in this continuing transformation cannot be denied.

In his career of about 50 years in the communication media sector—starting as a production assistant in 1969 at Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation up to his distinguished career as UNESCO Director of Communication and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)—Wijayananda Jayaweera has either initiated or introduced "revolutionary" programs that are redefining communication policies, standards, and programs.

The Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) 2017 Asia Communication Award recognizes Wijayananda Jayaweera for being an innovator in media development.

Jayaweera's initial major contribution to media development was the establishment in 1984 of Mahaweli Community Radio, a pioneering Asian community radio project. This facilitated the relocation of nearly 60,000 families under one of the most ambitious resettlement projects implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka. Throughout his career, he has played a significant role in institutionalizing community radio in various countries, including Bhutan, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. These initiatives were under the aegis of UNESCO and the Asia-Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development (AIBD), among others.

As an institution builder, Jayaweera led the reform process for the Paris-based International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), successfully reinvigorating it with renewed donor confidence as the main multilateral instrument to support the development of free, independent, and pluralistic media in developing countries.

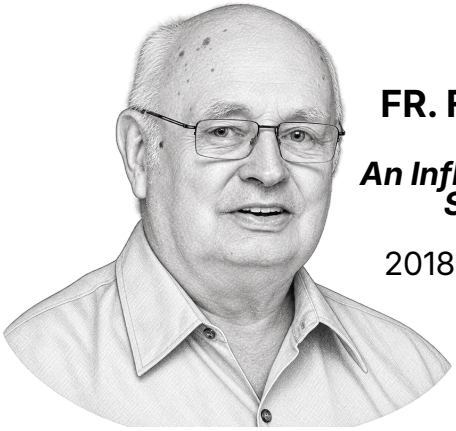
He was also instrumental in bringing the issue of the safety of journalists and impunity to the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC, and in making the Council a global oversight body on the issue by obliging UNESCO member-states to report on the judicial follow- up of the killing of journalists in their respective territories.

During his tenure as Director, he led the crafting and introduction of Media Development Indicators, now regarded as the only set of internationally approved indicators to determine media development needs. It was also under his directorship that UNESCO set the standards for journalism education with UNESCO's Model Journalism Curricula and criteria for instructional excellence applicable to media training institutions.

Among his other significant initiatives is Media and Information Literacy (MIL), now a major pillar of UNESCO Media Development Programmes. In this age of post-truth, hate speech, and fake news, MIL has evolved as a potent tool in empowering media users to be discerning media consumers and responsible and ethical content producers.

AMIC also acknowledges the strong partnership forged between AMIC and UNESCO during his incumbency as Regional Communication Adviser for Asia and, later, as Director of the UNESCO Communication Development Division and IPDC.

After his retirement from UNESCO in 2011, Jayaweera has remained passionate and active in promoting an enabling environment for free, independent, and pluralistic media in the Asia-Pacific and throughout the world as an adviser in several communication programmes and projects.



FR. FRANZ JOSEPH EILERS (GERMANY)

An Influential Voice in Church and Social Communication

2018 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Over the years, the name Franz-Josef Eilers, SVD, has stood out in the field of Church and social communication. Many religious and lay leaders now engaged in the "communicating Church" were students and directees who got their knowledge and inspiration from their eminent teacher.

An ordained priest of the Society of Divine Word (SVD) congregation, Fr. Eilers has written extensively on human and social communication, the concept first introduced in the Council Decree "Inter Mirifica" (1963). He ranks among a few Church scholars and theologians who have traced God's communication in salvation history. He also explicated the new concepts of pastoral communication and evangelizing communication in one of his most seminal works. His priestly ministry, now spanning five decades, saw his books used as standard references in missiology, intercultural communication, and communication. His name resonates as one of a few significant contributors in literature and discourses on communication theology.

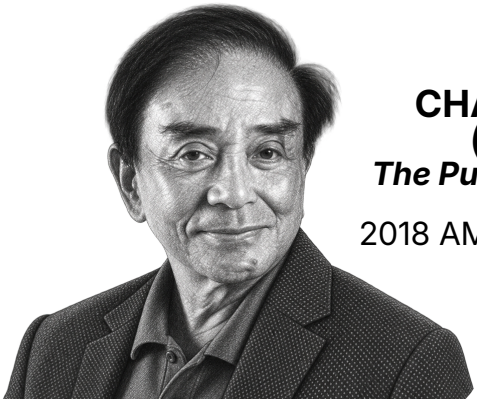
Fr. Eilers is professor at the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas (UST), Maryhill School of Theology (MST), and Don Bosco Center of Studies (DBCS) in Manila. He is the founder/coordinator of a graduate program in Theology specializing in social/ pastoral communication (MAT-SPC) at UST.

He holds a Doctorate in Communication and a Licentiate in Missiology from the University of Muenster in Germany. He is adjunct professor of the University of the Philippines at Los Banos (UPLB) College of Development Communication. He has taught Communication and Missiology at Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay City, as well as the Gregorian and Salesian Universities in Rome.

Fr. Eilers helped establish the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication (ARC) at Saint John's University, Bangkok, Thailand. He also co-founded St. Joseph Freinademetz Communication Center (JFCC) in Quezon City, Philippines.

Fr. Eilers has served as executive secretary of the Office of Social Communication of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), and Consultor of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications in the Vatican. He served as communication secretary of the SVD Generalate in Rome, and at the Joint Committee on Society Development and Peace (Sodepax) of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. He was founding director of the Catholic Media Council (CAMECO) in Aachen, Germany.

He was conferred the Jaime Cardinal Sin Outstanding Catholic Author Award in 1996. The Carmelite Fathers (OCarm) conferred on him in 2015 the very first Titus Brandsma Excellence in Social Communication Award for his contribution to communication education, formation and research. In 2007, a "Festschrift" was published in his honor by colleagues from University of Dayton in Ohio, U.S.A. and University of Kassel in Germany.



CHARLIE A. AGATEP (PHILIPPINES)

The Public Relations Maestro

2018 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Charlie A. Agatep has been dubbed a guru for a reason. In Asia where guru means master teacher, he is a grandmaster in his chosen profession—public relations. This is especially significant for an Asian in a field that was invented by Westerners and where Westerners still rule.

Charlie started out the conventional way. His first job was as an advertising manager and marketing communications director from 1954 to 1964 in Sterling Winthrop Pharmaceuticals, an American company operating in the Philippines.

In succession, he built up his career and reputation in multi-national companies in the country—as public affairs director of Esso Standard Fertilizer/Planters from 1964 to 1980, and as assistant vice president for public relations of Mobil Oil Philippines/Micronesia from 1980 to 1983.

After three decades working for foreign masters, Agatep decided to test Filipino enterprise—his own. In 1988, Guru Charlie established Agatep Associates, a Communication and PR agency that aimed to help companies and individuals tell their stories to various publics. At that time, the agency had no credentials, no clients, practically no money in the bank.

Ten years later, by 1998, Agatep Associates had built a mini-empire--over 40 prestigious local and international clients, 75 talented employees, some 450 million pesos worth of annual advertorial and retainer billings, and a couple of foreign communication agencies knocking on Agatep's doors seeking full partnership. Charlie Agatep and his agency had begun to migrate into social media and digital marketing communication.

It is interesting to note how Charlie Agatep built his public relations empire the Asian way. With the help of daughter Monique, who was then PR manager of Holiday Inn, and son Norman, who was teaching high school English at the Ateneo de Manila University, he set up a tiny office in Makati . . . with no credentials, no clients, no money in the bank, except some P20,000 collective savings. Charlie said they had extensive PR work experience and communications degrees and were prepared to work 16 hours a day if necessary.

At the start, Charlie worked from 6:00am to 11:00pm every day, seven days a week . . . as the janitor, messenger, writer, media relations officer, account executive, presenter, billing clerk and security guard all rolled into one. He did all the writing of news releases, feature articles, PR proposals, PR strategies and PR presentations. There was no air conditioning in the office on Sundays, so he had to work in his undershirt beside a small electric fan.

The Filipino PR Guru made a conscious departure from the Western way in his profession—and succeeded. He quoted David Ogilvy—that great American advertising icon, who said "whenever two of your people get married, one of them must depart—preferably the female so she can look after her baby."
Charlie Agatep said that he does not buy that advice. His senior division manager got married to their HRD manager years ago and they are more efficient than ever. They have a cute son that the company uses as a print model GRATIS ET AMORE for his budget conscious clients.

They also had a female division manager who fell in love with her handsome subordinate and they got married. His editorial director married one of the company's senior PR consultants. They are full of marital bliss and very energized to work even harder. Ogilvy also admonished not to hire relatives. Charlie does not agree. The general manager of Agatep Associates used to be his late daughter, Audrey General and he doubts if he could have found a better manager. The company's present president and managing director is Charlie's son, Norman Agatep. Without his children, Charlie says he could not run his agency profitably. Is this the Asian way of doing business?

Charlie A. Agatep's public relations career has spanned five decades. In that time his company has won 137 Anvils (the Philippine equivalent of the Hollywood Oscar Awards in their profession)--nine golds, 71 silvers, three grand prizes, three platinums, and a special citation for excellence in brand-building and reputation management.

Charlie Agatep has been recognized in the Asian region when he won the PR Professional of the Year given by the Asia Pacific PR Awards 2006. He also received the Gawad Panday Award, the highest and most coveted award given by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) to the most outstanding PR practitioner in the Philippines.

Over the years, Agatep has mentored and provided a means of income and livelihood to over 200 communication-oriented employees; retained and serviced some 100-prestigious local and international companies. He transformed Grupo Agatep, Inc. into the largest integrated marketing and digital (social media) communication agency in the Philippines.

Charlie Agatep also reached out to the youth to share his knowledge of public relations. He has taught in many Manila schools over the years. One of his former students who became the Communication Director of former Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, Sonny Coloma, pays Agatep the ultimate tribute:
"Charlie is a guru, a shaper of many professionals who have learned from his artistry and mastery of the craft. He has helped elect candidates, sell industry-leading products, shape public opinion and influence diverse audiences across multiple sectors of the market and society. Indeed, in my book, Charlie is a living legend. I am blessed to have known him and learned from him."



DR. LEELA RAO (INDIA)

A Lifetime of Scholarship: Bridging the Hard and Soft Dimensions of Human Communication

2019 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Leela Rao is one of the pioneers of Indian communication research, practice, and teaching which started when she joined the pioneering Indian Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) in 1975-76.

She brought to her early work her rich East-West background. She got her master's degree in communication from Syracuse University in New York her Ph.D. in communication from the University of Poona, India.

Dr. Rao took a prominent role in early Indian communication research, under the leadership of the late K. E. Eapen, conducting satellite communication studies with the help of her students who have now become senior professionals in their own right, occupying important communication positions in the field.

Leela Rao started her career with the "hard" part of communication, —dealing with the "hardware," before she delved into the "soft" part of communication, or the research, theories, and practice of human communication.

Her first major assignment was to set up the first radio and television studio in Bangalore University, which served as a training facility for both undergraduate and graduate students. Dr. Rao stayed as faculty and then Dean at Bangalore for 20 years, from 1977 to 1997, until she moved to Manipal.

There she started and managed the Manipal Institute of Communication, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka. For eight years, from 1997 to 2005, she worked to lay the foundations for the Institute to become one of the leading communication institutions in India today.

She developed the professional communication curricula for undergraduate and postgraduate programs in communication studies, building necessary infrastructure for computer labs and, audio- visual labs, and spearheading the successful program. She also established several exchange programs for students and faculty with the University of Bremen, Germany, and University of Birmingham, UK, which continues to this day.

Dr. Rao's research interests and achievements over a long period of time include gender issues and Indian culture: An Indian Perspective on Modern Technologies of Communication, A Social Science Perspective of Indian Cinema, Medium and the Message, Women in Indian Films, Facets of Media and Gender Studies in India, Networking for Gender Empowerment.

She continues to be active for the professional growth and development of Indian communication education, where she has influenced a generation of Indian students, some of whom now occupy positions of responsibility in Indian communication universities, industry, and government.



DASHO KINLEY DORJI (BHUTAN)

A Champion of Modern Media as Platforms for Citizen Participation in Bhutan

2020 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Dasho Kinley Dorji introduced modern media into Bhutan, using them as platforms for wider citizen participation in the country's move into democracy, while bringing new thinking on the role of media in society to the international academic community.

He earned a Master of Journalism degree from Columbia University, USA, and was awarded the prestigious John S. Knight Fellowship at Stanford University. In 1982, Kinley graduated from Mitchell College in Bathurst (now Charles Sturt University), Australia, with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications.

On his return, Kinley set about turning the government newsletter Kuensel into the country's first newspaper. This was a significant challenge in a small, oral culture, where reading was considered work, among the tasks civil service employees were paid to do.

Over the next two decades, Kinley trained journalists to work alongside him, increased publication of Kuensel to twice-weekly editions in two languages (English and Dzongkha), and widened the distribution of the paper across the country. He wrote editorials, encouraging critical reflection about Bhutanese society. They became a must-read among the educated and the political class.

He wrote in one of his editorials: "All of us who professionally use the media are the shapers of society. We can vulgarise that society. We can brutalise it. Or we can help lift it to a higher level."

Kinley's belief that media should serve to elevate society reflected Bhutan's renowned philosophy of Gross National Happiness. He developed Bhutan's media space according to those principles.

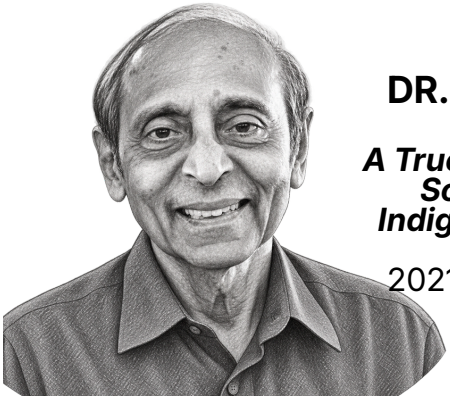
"Media must help society to understand change and, in the process, define and promote the right values, including public values... we are responsible for culture, happiness, liberty, spirituality, even survival of society," he wrote in a conference paper in 2006.

Kinley was a valuable voice in his country's development. Kuensel online was a platform for the whole country to have a say in the drafting of the Constitution, which was ratified in 2008. The Constitution enshrines freedom of expression, freedom of media, and citizens' rights to information.

In 2009, after 29 years at Kuensel, Kinley assumed the role of Secretary to the Ministry of Information and Communications, advising government on media and communications policy. He also published Bhutan's first book of Creative Non-Fiction, Within the Realm of Happiness, reflecting on life in Bhutan.

In 2016 Kinley established a twice-yearly academic publication The Druk Journal,. inviting scholars and civic leaders, both Bhutanese and international, to contribute and develop a community with analytical attitudes toward national policies.

Now retired, Kinley maintains an active voice in the community, serving as editor of The Druk Journal and Chairman of the Bhutan Broadcasting Corporation.



DR. WIMAL DISSANAYAKE (SRI LANKA/USA)

A True Asianist: Uniting the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems

2021 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

"Disruptive" is a fitting word to describe the notable achievements of Prof. Wimal Dissanayake. For truly, his scholarship embodies the pursuit of the road less travelled in communication inquiry: Asianization, indigenization, and excavating Asian epistemology rather than settling for the received/dominant/Western theories and models. Instead of taking the usual high road of the social sciences, he focused on the humane side of the discipline and contributed greatly to building a conceptual link between communication studies and cultural studies of Asia.

Prof. Dissanayake's distinguished body of works is not just on communication research, frameworks and methods, but also on Asian communication theory. He accomplished this by drawing inspiration from classical Asian cultural traditions and belief systems. Throughout his career, he operated like an archaeologist, historical sleuth, and ethnographer rolled into one, immersing himself in the classical teachings in Asian religion, morals and literature in order to understand their impact and encroachments and permutations in the communication culture of Asia. He buried himself into belief systems, customs, oral and written texts so that he could understand the communication patterns, ways and behavior that go into both verbal and nonverbal expressions of Asian sensibility.

The result is a comprehensive view of social interaction, an understanding of the overt and subtle concepts of communication, and a deeply Asian way of holistically approaching knowledge systems as communication systems and vice versa.

That Prof. Dissanayake has been thorough in his investigation is obvious from his collection of works, a variety of streams in critical communication studies and cultural theory, namely: Asian communication theory, Asian communication research, Asian cinema, broadcast genres, Asian literary studies, popular culture, postcolonialism and national identity.

Prof. Dissanayake is a true Asianist who does not discriminate between social sciences and humanities and between critical communication studies and other applications of indigenous knowledge systems. He is a superb synthesizer, an excellent builder of thought, a prolific enunciator of complex theories. He is scholar-par-excellance.

His books, Communication Theory: The Asian Perspective (1988, 2021), Continuity and Change in Communication Systems (1984), and The Role of News Media in National and International Conflict (1984), provide the social context of communication studies to his extensive examination of Asian traditions, values, belief systems and customs. Critical of the dominant influence of the Western logos, Prof. Dissanayake's scholarship puts the Asian individual as a prime agent, a cultural force that enables Asian communication cultures to flourish, using their distinct languages and symbols to communicate their heritage and their conception of the world.

Dissanayake's interest in cinematic and television narratives drew largely from his abiding interest in literature. His poetry collections, anthology of short stories, and other works of creative writing and literary criticism enliven all the more the humanistic roots of his communication scholarship.

Prof. Dissanayake's inquiry is disruptive in that it brought a harmonious connection between the Asian world of communication and its humanizing agency through his erudite writings on creative media.



DR. RONNY ADHIKARYA (INDONESIA)

A Leader, Journalist, Scholar, and International Civil Servant

2022 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

In recognition of his significant contribution to the field of Asian communication scholarship, education and practice, through a lifetime of exemplary and dedicated service in his various capacities as communication and development researcher, educator and trainer, policy advisor, international development program manager, journalist, author, and philanthropist.

Dr. Adhikarya received the Master in Professional Studies (MPS) degree from the Department of Communication Arts, Cornell University (1972) and the Ph.D. from the Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University (1981). His career in international development assistance, specializing in communication, education and training spans 50 years.

He served as Senior Trainer and Manager at the World Bank in Washington D.C., USA, and as Country Director/Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy, and in Islamabad, Pakistan. He also worked for other international organizations worldwide, undertaking official Missions in 52 countries, and visiting more than 100 countries.

He was associated with Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Stanford University, the East-West Center (EWC), and other universities in many countries.

He is often invited as keynote speaker at international conferences, and has given public lectures in at least 28 countries from 2005 to 2022. Well-known also as a Story-Teller globally, his wide- ranging topics include challenges of digital disruption, Artificial Intelligence-technology-based applications and their impact on education, business, shared economy, virtual education and communication, tacit knowledge brokering, edupreneurship, generational conflicts, and societal and cultural cohesion.

Dr. Adhikarya, an Indonesian national, worked as an award-winning journalist for Daily Indonesia Raya from 1968 to 1971. He has written eight books on communication, education, and training, which were published in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Germany, Italy, England, and the USA. These books and his other publications are available in English, Spanish, French, Indonesian, Malaysian, and Chinese languages.

He now resides in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, and has also served in various advisory boards and committees of international development organizations in Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, England, Switzerland, and USA.

He established in 2020 the R-Adhikarya "Niche" Awards (RANA) at the East-West Center (EWC), Stanford University, and Cornell University. The annual RANA Program Scholarship recognizes and rewards smart, innovative, and competitive young students who wish to pursue their dreams to learn, explore, and apply disruptive ideas and "niche" innovative thinking in their studies and future careers.



DR. ARVIND SINGHAL (USA/INDIA)

An Academician with A Continuing Passion for Social Change and Development Communication

2023 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Dr. Arvind Singhal, 2023 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee, becomes part of AMIC's tradition of honoring outstanding Asians who have contributed significantly to the global communication setting.

Communication paradigms and strategies now in our toolbox have been enriched by Dr. Singhal's four decades' worth of contributions to education, research, publications, and extension work.

Dr. Singhal is known internationally for his research on the diffusion of innovations, entertainment-education strategy, positive deviance approach to social change, development communication, and liberating interactional structures. He has led 34 funded research projects in these areas in many countries in Asia and other continents.

His social change research projects featured women empowerment at the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and dairy cooperative societies in India, working closely with Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus and Father of India's White [Milk] Revolution, Varghese Kurien. His experiences from these projects are featured in the Sage 2006 book, Organizing for Social Change: A Dialectic Journey of Theory and Praxis.

Dr. Singhal is a leading scholar on Positive Deviance approach to social change. He has written books and numerous articles on the topic. For his work on positive deviance in health communication, he was honored with the prestigious John P. McGovern 2024 Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Art and Science of Medicine by the Baylor College of Medicine.

Dr. Singhal has authored or co-edited 14 books with reputed academic publishers. Three of his books won awards for distinguished applied scholarship.

He has authored over 225 peer-reviewed articles and essays in top journals, such as Asian Journal of Communication, Media Asia, Journal of Development Communication, Journal of Communication, Communication Theory, and Journal of Health Communication.

He received 51 professional awards, including top papers and article awards from professional associations, distinguished professional service accolades, distinguished book awards, named lectureships and fellowships, and outstanding awards for teaching, research, and service.

Indeed, chronicling in a single document his many contributions to Asian and global communication will be difficult. But AMIC believes that Dr. Singhal has more to offer and his grateful communication society eagerly awaits these initiatives.



DR. CHERIAN GEORGE (SINGAPORE)

An Educator who Set the Global Benchmark in Journalism, Academia, Communication Media Research, and Socio-Political Advocacy

2024 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

A compleat media person.

This best describes Dr. Cherian George, AMIC Asia Communication Awardee for 2024. His professional career crosses important areas – journalism, academia, communication and media research, and socio-political advocacy. What is remarkable is that Dr. George traverses these areas with excellence, integrity, and a deep understanding of the Asian contexts.

Before transitioning to academia, Dr. George had a distinguished career in journalism where he set high standards for investigative reporting and insightful commentary. His exemplary journalism practice has accorded him a solid foundation in pursuing journalism education, communication, and media studies.

As a journalism educator, he mentors inside and outside the classroom. As a journalism professor at Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University and at Hong Kong Baptist University, he has influenced the next generation of Asian journalists and media professionals. His teaching and mentorship have helped elevate media studies as a discipline in Asia.

As the founding head of the Asia Journalism Fellowship, he has significantly contributed to the professional growth of journalists across the region. As an adviser to the Ethical Journalism Network, he emphasized that journalism matters when it embodies excellence and ethical standards. He has served as juror for prestigious international journalism awards.

Dr. George has enriched the field of communication media research through innovative research agendas and methods that have also "disrupted" traditional narratives, encouraging a re-evaluation of the roles and responsibilities of communication media in society. His research spans different social science disciplines such as political science, sociology, and media technology highlighting the complex interactions between media, society, and governance.

Dr. George has authored several influential books and was editor-in-chief of Media Asia, a peer-reviewed journal that focuses on practices in journalism and other aspects of media in Asia. The journal is published quarterly by the AMIC and Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.



DR. KARLYGA MYSSAYEVA (KAZAKHSTAN)

A Leading Media Scholar on Social Media, Democratic Engagement, and Civic Identity in Central Asia

2025 AMIC Asia Communication Awardee

Dr. Karlyga Myssayeva is a leading media scholar in Central Asia. She has served as Associate Professor and Vice Dean of the Faculty of Journalism at al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU) in Almaty, Kazakhstan, one of Central Asia's most prestigious institutions.

With a Ph.D. in Journalism and over 20 years of teaching and research experience, she has emerged as a pioneering voice in the fields of journalism, media studies, and civic communication in post-Soviet Central Asia.

Her academic career coincides with the region's broader efforts to build democratic institutions and develop a pluralistic media landscape. Dr. Myssayeva's scholarly contributions—particularly her current focus on social and civic journalism—have significantly advanced both academic research and professional training standards in Kazakhstan and neighboring countries.

Her numerous works have had a profound impact across Central Asia, shaping journalism education, influencing national media policies, and supporting the growth of a more critically engaged media environment. Her studies are frequently referenced in academic and policy circles and have become foundational for understanding the role of digital and social media in societal transformation throughout the region. She has also helped build academic bridges between Central Asian scholars and the global research community, empowering local voices and narratives in international discourse.

In addition to her many academic publications and projects, Dr. Myssayeva is currently co-authoring a book titled, The Media and Journalism in Central Asia, in collaboration with Professors Michael Brown and Cynthia Price Schultz from the University of Wyoming. This forthcoming volume is expected to be a significant contribution to global media studies and regional scholarship.

She also serves as co-lead in the ongoing pioneering study on the Status of Journalism Education in Central Asia, a collaborative project between AMIC and al-Farabi Kazakh National University. This groundbreaking study encompasses journalism schools in all five Central Asian countries and is expected to be completed in June 2025. The findings are anticipated to inform education policy and reform throughout the region.

Dr. Myssayeva has conducted research under several prestigious international fellowships, including the Fulbright Program and the Study of the United States Institutes (SUSI) at Ohio University, and a research internship at Oklahoma State University. Most recently, she served as a Bolashak Visiting Scholar (2023-2024) at the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, Elliott School of International Affairs, at The George Washington University.

She has presented over 30 research papers at international academic conferences, including those hosted by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), and the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS). Her research has been widely published in peer-reviewed journals, including Media Asia, Journal of Media Ethics, and Journal of Radio & Audio Media.

In 2024, Dr. Myssayeva was appointed as Kazakhstan's official representative to AMIC. At AMIC's 30th Annual Conference in Beijing, she played a key role in initiating a Memorandum of Understanding between al-Farabi Kazakh National University and eight universities from South Asia. She continues to be an active voice in regional collaboration and curriculum innovation.

A core theme in her research is the impact of social media on democratic engagement and civic identity in the five former Soviet republics of Central Asia—a region of increasing strategic importance. Since 2016, she has organized a Central Asia Media Studies panel for the CESS annual conference. Most recently, she organized a panel on journalism and media development issues in Central Asia for the ESCAS 2025 Conference, further reinforcing her leadership in shaping regional scholarly dialogue.

Acknowledgment

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