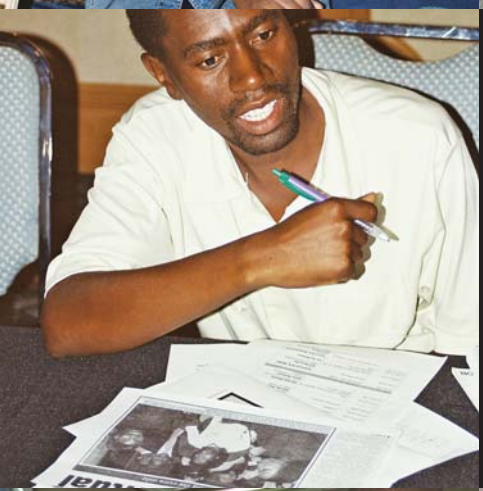








THE SOUTHERN AFRICA MEDIA DIVERSITY JOURNAL









GENDER AND MEDIA





THE SOUTHERN AFRICA MEDIA DIVERSITY JOURNAL

GENDER AND MEDIA

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EDITORIAL



Janine Moolman

This inaugural issue of the *Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal* is published at a time in which media the world over are debating the outcry over the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed which first appeared in the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*.

The controversy has raised critical issues for media. Most importantly however, the lesson to be taken from these events is that with media freedom comes responsibility. This responsibility includes being respectful of diversity - of faith, language, race, ability, social status and so forth - that defines the globalised world in which we live today.

This respect for diversity, however, should not only be reflected in media content, rather it should extend to ownership, policies and laws, media practice, employment, education and training, and the regulatory framework that governs media practice.

Media coverage in Southern Africa is seen as being single sourced and event driven; based on an hierarchical news structure which privileges particular dominant voices over others that have less power and as such, less voice. This has resulted in the absence of a diversity of voices and representation of people who consume media. A further consequence is the weakness of contextual and analytical reporting. The absence of a diverse media that is representative of the interests and concerns of all citizens is a threat to the regions' democracy and citizen's ability to participate in democratic processes.

The Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal is a direct response to these concerns and as such exists to promote a deepening of media diversity in the Southern Africa region. The journal fills a critical gap between media theory and practice as it publishes analytical and reflective content on media practice for those involved in media – as news producers, news consumers and news shapers. It creates the space for critical reflection, debate, criticism and arguments for media diversity in Southern Africa. Underpinning the journal is the idea that knowledge is produced in multiple sites and that good media practice reflects this in content, policy, training, research and ownership.

The journal is the product of a partnership between Gender Links and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network. Indeed, the majority of contributors to this issue are GEMSA members. This issue of the *Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal* has been made possible through the financial assistance of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).



The inaugural issue of the bi-annual journal explores media diversity from a gender perspective. Timed to coincide with the release of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2005, the journal offers readers views, research and analysis on gender and the media in Southern Africa.

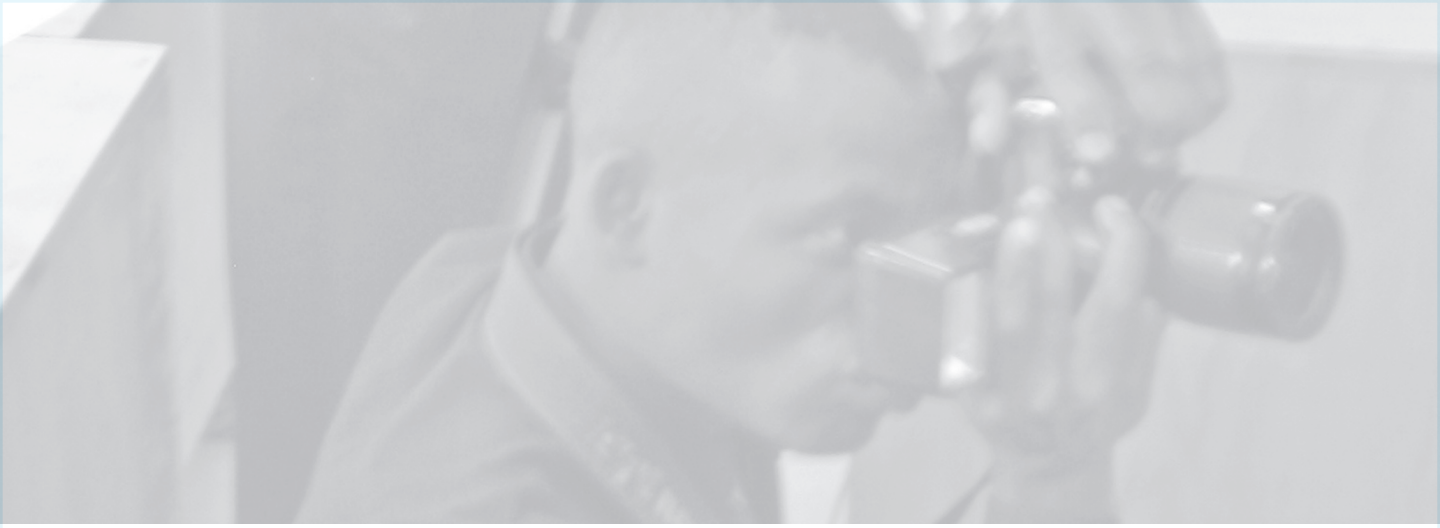
The journal takes its cue from the results of the GMMP which finds that a decade after the first global monitoring took place, not much has changed in the way in which women are represented in the news – as subjects, sources or producers.

In her contribution Anna Turley shares the highlights of the study and argues for a wide scale social and political transformation in which women's communication rights are understood, valued and respected. Benchmarking the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) conducted by Gender Links and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) against the findings of the GMMP 2005, Colleen Lowe Morna writes that while Southern Africa has made significant progress towards achieving greater gender balance in the news and in newsrooms, it is still far from achieving equality by any of the measures used in the GMMP. One of the key findings of the Southern Africa analysis is that women are still most likely to be approached as news sources in their personal rather than in their professional capacity.

Does this reflect a respect for diversity? How can it, when half of the world's population, as Christine Davis writes, are unable to relate to the images of themselves they consume through the media. She writes that women need to use their power as consumers of media to demand a more diverse representation of themselves.

Supporting this argument, the findings of the Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS), outlined in an article by Agnes NM Odhiambo, show that women and men in Southern Africa are looking for more diversity in the news they consume. They want more local content, human interest stories and women and men to be portrayed in more diverse ways. What the findings are telling media owners and producers is that media diversity is good for business.

In her contribution, Rosemary Okello, writes that African editors are embracing diversity and want to reflect "the continent in its totality". Reporting on the recent African Editors Forum conference, Okello argues that reflecting Africa's story in its totality implies the telling of women's stories.



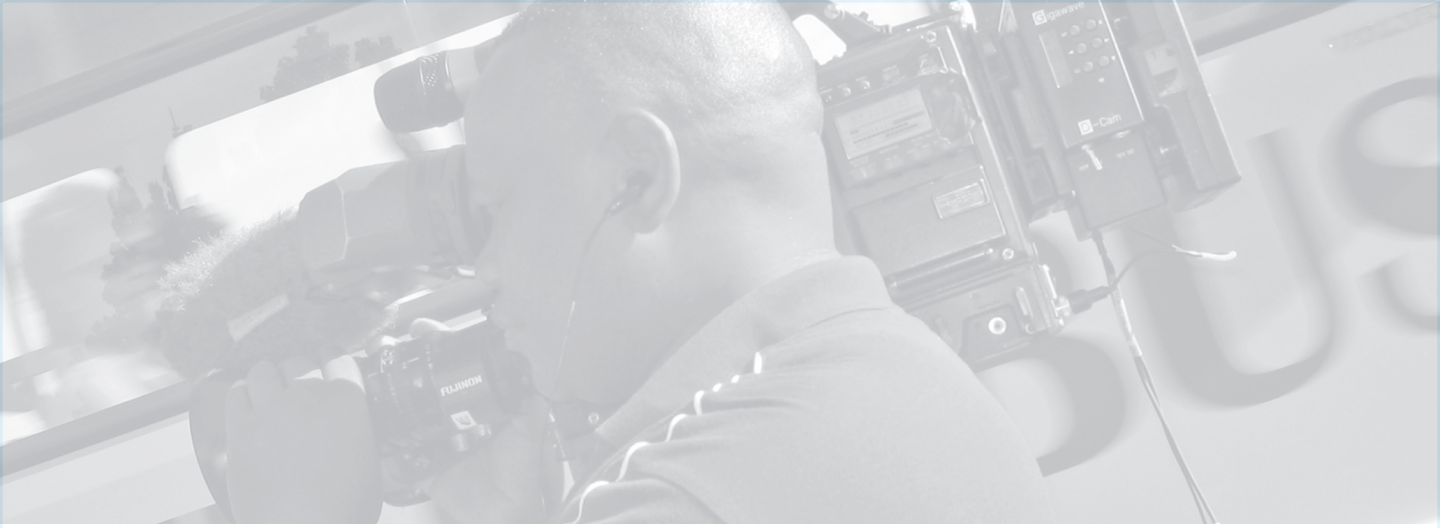
Crystal Orderson analyses the representation of black women in the popular soap operas *Generations* and *Isidingo* (which are screened in most Southern African countries). She writes that black women being portrayed as women with voices and opinions who are able to make decisions – a definite departure from representations of black women as powerless victims without agency. However, she cautions against the entrenching of a new set of stereotypes.

Media activism needs to be intensified if any meaningful shift in the representation of women in the media is to be achieved. This was one of the findings of the GMMP. In a groundbreaking study of women's media activism across the globe, Carolyn Byerly and Karen Ross present the findings of a study which found that women media activists followed very specific strategies in their media activism. The article presents the Model of Women's Media Activism which the authors hope will encourage others to extend and refine their qualitative and quantitative work in order to develop clearer understandings of the role of women's media activism
in social change both within and across nations.

Recognising the critical role media advocacy plays in deepening diversity, the journal includes a specific section on this subject. In this issue, an overview of the successful strategies employed to influence the South African media agenda during the 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence are discussed as well as an article on an ongoing campaign to rid Mauritius of sexist advertisements.

In the policy section, Patricia Made shows the potential that policies have for promoting diversity in media in Southern Africa. She cautions, however, that in order for policy to move beyond paper, and for it to be seen as a credible process by all staff, commitment from the highest level is essential. Rene Smith and Davison Mudzingwa shed light on the policy environment within South Africa and Zimbabwe and show how the legislative framework governing media in these countries impacts on media diversity. Making the link between sexual violence and media policies, Loveness Jambaya investigates sexual harassment policies in Zimbabwean newsrooms and argues that sexual harassment of women journalists works against media diversity.

Ruth Ayisi, coordinator of the Southern African Media Trainers Network (SAMTRAN) shares her vision for reviving the network in her contribution to the training and education section. Jeanne Prinsloo's article shares the



rationale behind the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Information 21 Project's draft curriculum that focuses on coverage of regional development and integration.

Diversity is also critical for new media. In the information and technology section, Brenda Zulu illustrates this as she reports on the disappointing outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society world conference held in Tunis which she, argues fell far short of the expectations of gender activists. Chris Kabwato and Vanessa Malila report on a Highway Africa training workshop that has equipped journalists with practical and conceptual skills on reporting on the information society.

The *Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal* puts the spotlight on media diversity in the region. We hope that this and future issues stimulate debate and discussion to contribute towards building and strengthening the dynamic media in Southern Africa.

The second issue of the journal will be published prior to the second Southern Africa Gender and Media Summit taking place in Johannesburg from 6-8 September. The Summit is taking place under the theme "Media diversity: good for democracy, good for business." This is also the theme for the next issue of the journal and we invite potential contributors to send us ideas
and contributions that fall within this theme.

We thank UNESCO for making the publication of this issue of the journal possible and hope that other partners will join us in this important project.

Janine Moolman, Editor

Send comments and suggestions to: *janine@genderlinks.co.za*

NEWSBRIEFS

Reviving the Southern African Journalists' Association

Plans are afoot to revive the Southern African Journalists' Association (SAJA) which was founded in 2002, but which has lying dormant in recent years due to operational problems. SAJA represents journalists and media workers in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Most of its member unions are affiliates
of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).

With IFJ and the Freedom of Expression Institute's (FXI) support, SAJA will assist in rebuilding national organisations in countries where existing media unions are weak so that the rights of journalists and the right of the public to access to information are protected. SAJA will be temporarily housed at, and administered by FXI until it holds its congress in 2006 and elects a new executive.

Source: MisaNet

Audit shows gender gaps in laws and policies

A gender audit of media, information and communication laws and policies has found that while most SADC countries subscribe to the principles of freedom of expression, gender equality, universal access to information and ICTs, there are critical gaps in the laws and policies relating to gender analyses on content provided by government information channels, gender disaggregated data on who has access to information and services, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms generally and specifically in relation to gender. The audit, which is currently underway and is being conducted by the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network points to the need to move from principle to effective practice. For more information contact ceo@gemsa.org.za

Zimbabwe government responds to pressures to review media law

Responding to the strong criticism by journalists and activists across the SADC region, *MISANet* reports that the Zimbabwean government is conducting a review of the controversial Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). The review follows a report by the African Union's human rights watchdog that criticised the law for suppressing freedom of expression.

Meanwhile, *IRIN News* reports that the government has begun negotiating with the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) to replace the controversial government-appointed Media and Information Commission (MIC). The MIC was established through the AIPPA and has the powers to evaluate and based on assessments, either issue or reject applications for licences and registration.

Foster Dongozi, Secretary General of the ZUJ, told IRIN: "The minister of information has asked the ZUJ to embark on a process to draft a code of ethics and come up with a voluntary media council to oversee and regulate media in the country."

Sources: MisaNet & Irin News

Citizen's engaging with media

A new publication titled: "Media matter citizens care: The who, what, when, where, why, how and buts of citizen's engagement with the media" argues that there can be no real democracy without citizens who are well informed and that the democratisation of communication is a prerequisite of democracy.

Authored by Indian journalist Ammu Joseph, the publication shows how citizens are realising that they have a stake in the media as consumers. Using examples from across the world, Joseph points to growing

awareness amongst ordinary people who are "beginning to turn active, seeking recognition as citizens who have a right to be heard on all issues relating to the media."

The publication can be downloaded from the UNESCO website.

Monitoring made easy

The Media Monitoring Project is developing the Monitoring Made Easy (MME) tool to help broaden the base of media monitoring data and to introduce media monitoring activities to more organisations. The tool is a direct response to the need for a standardised monitoring methodology that can be applied within a single organisation, country or across a number of countries. A straightforward interface will guide the user through the monitoring process, from data collection to the production of results. This user-friendly tool accommodates grassroots organisations as it requires a bare minimum level of computer literacy. The tool is an out-of-the-box solution that includes everything necessary to enable any organisation with a computer to monitor the media, producing automatic results as soon as the monitoring data has been captured.

In addition, the standardised monitoring methodology will facilitate international comparisons. Future collaborative projects will now be easier than ever before, as the groundwork will be laid by the MME tool. Data can also be pooled in a central location to protect against data losses and build an archive of monitoring information throughout the SADC region. The MME database and gender media rating system was piloted during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign. The tool will be released early March and will be available at no cost.

Send an email to sandrar@mediamonitoring.org.za for more information and to obtain a free copy.

HIV positive women from Lusophone Africa: where are their voices?

Think about the last images you saw in the media of an HIV positive woman. Was she a heroic grandmother caring for orphans or a faithful wife infected by her husband and chased from the family home? Think about the voices of HIV positive women you last heard. Were they victims of the virus or experts on it? Lastly: when did you last read about HIV positive women in a Portuguese-speaking African country?

The portraits of HIV positive women in the media often fall into the heroine and the victim category, admittedly true, but not the whole picture. When their voices are heard, they seldom speak in Portuguese.

A new blog will set this right. Featuring the voices of HIV positive women from Angola and Mozambique, the blog (which started in February at www.plusnews.org/pt) shares their joys and fears, their relationships with children, spouses, family, friends and colleagues. The website also features news and analysis of HIV/AIDS in the five Lusophone African countries.

From its regional bureau in Johannesburg, *PlusNews* operates through a network of local stringers. The editor is Mercedes Sayagues, and the deputy editor is Amancio Miguel. PlusNews is part of Irin, the United Nations humanitarian news service, and is funded by SIDA.

Send information, press releases, job vacancies and story ideas to: Correio@plusnews.org



What is media diversity?
By Milica Pesic

Abstract

The writer shows why media diversity is a cornerstone of democratic principles. Reporting diversity, she writes, is not just another form of specialised reporting but is the very essence of responsible journalism in democratic societies. It is about inclusion and gives all members of a society a voice, so that responsibility for that society's future is based on joint decisions, not on a decision made by a small group or by one person.

Key words

diversity, journalism, multi-culturalism, stereotypes, credibility

The day after the terrorist attack on London in 2005, the front page of *The Sun*, one of the most xenophobic British tabloids, carried photos of two young women: one white and one Arab; Christian and Moslem; with one caption, "Pray for all of them". The message could not have been clearer: regardless of their religion, ethnicity or skin colour, they are equal in being the innocent victims of someone's madness.

Those familiar with *The Sun's* approach to foreigners, particularly immigrants, asylum seekers, Roma and Moslems, were pleasantly surprised. The most popular tabloid which sells millions of copies a day usually runs rather different stories accusing East-European asylum seekers of stealing and barbecuing the Queen's swans, portraying Roma/Gypsies as invaders of the island, ready to cheat and milk the British Government endlessly, or presenting Moslems as "all the same" – radical, conservative, fundamentalist Islamists.

The Sun's reporting on the terrorist attack took the same approach as all the other leading media in the United Kingdom (UK). The city which won the bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games only a day before the attack for – among the other reasons being the most diverse, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic place in the world, had to pay the price for its open-mindedness. The city where all sorts of religious fundamentalists head to, aiming to benefit from Londoners' admiration for freedom of speech and for praising individualism and diversity, has been – ironically – a victim of intolerance, narrow-mindedness and hatred. And instead of revengefully turning on all Moslems, the UK media including the tabloids, turned – at least immediately after the tragedy - into heralds of tolerance.

It is hard to say at this point what made chronically intolerant, xenophobic British tabloids turn to responsible reporting – the seriousness of the situation or something else. Whatever it was, their way of reporting on the "Islamic terrorist attack" is a good starting point for any discussion on how journalists approach diversity and – relate to it – what the role of the media should be in mirroring diversity which, like it or not, is the reality of any society on this planet.

Why does diversity matter?

Diversity matters simply because it exists. We talk either about race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, physical abilities, political views, social and economic status or sexual orientation. All or some of these human qualities make an individual or group different from another individual or group. This is what makes us different from each other, unique. Not better or worse, just different. And this is what makes societies where we live diverse, consisting of unique individuals and communities, where the same person or group might be the majority for belonging to one diversity category, but could be the minority for belonging to some other diversity category.

As an agnostic in a predominantly conservative Orthodox Christian (with a very recent Communist past) Serbian society, I am a minority. At the same time being a Serb makes me a member of the majority ethnic group in a country with some 30 percent non-Serb citizens. In other words, "we are all a bunch of minorities" as one former Editor-in-Chief of the *Los Angeles Times* put it when explaining why his paper turned towards a growing Latino readership. He suggests we should try to see the world from the perspective of minorities. With all our differences we make our societies heterogeneous, multicultural and diverse. Our differences, instead of being a source of disagreement – as has often happened through history, could be a source of agreement.

But no matter how different we are, in fact despite our differences, we do have a lot in common. We share many of the same principles and have common interests. We are all members of the communities in which we live and work; we all wish to be considered useful members of our communities; we all want to live in peace and have good lives; we all want to be respected, to be counted on. We all want to contribute to the society we work and live in. And we all want to be heard and seen. And this is where the media come in.

When the prominent UK magazine *Prospect* published an article by its editor headlined "Too Diverse?[1]" a heated debate within the media followed which lasted many months. Has Britannia embraced its diversity? Has it gone too far in doing so? Is multiculturalism taking over Britishness? Should integration be more encouraged? Where is the balance



between multiculturalism and integration? The media took part in the debate, each contributing what had been their understanding and their approach to the very visible diversity in British society. And as often happens after the debate, most were just more deeply entrenched in the ditches than they were in before the debate started. The question of "multiculturalism versus integration" has been debated in many societies for different reasons. In post-communist countries it was a part of the "democratic" processes. Or, as in the case of the Balkans, it was seen as a reason for war. In the West, this debate was imposed particularly after 9/11 in North America as well as in the European Union. And it is still going on and the media is an important part of it.

Diversity matters simply because it exits

The role of journalists: public service versus commercial media

When in 2002 the famous British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) launched its new brand image for

TV – politically correct images of people from around the world dancing all sort of dances, including young black, wheelchair-bound men dancing hip-hop – the BBC Controller at the time, Lorraine Heggessey, explained that the change was introduced because she wanted the channel BBC1 to "make viewers feel it was in tune with their lives."

The BBC promised at the same time that by 2010 its staff would reflect the ethnic make-up of the country's population: 10 percent of its employees would be from ethnic minorities (ethnic minorities comprise just under seven percent in the UK). Of course hiring a journalist from a minority does not necessarily mean that he or she would bring stories from his or her community, but there is a suggestion that having a colleague in the newsroom from "another" group makes a mainstream journalist more sensitive to the issues the new member of staff represents. The idea is that the new member of the team could be a good source of information on the communities little known to the mainstream journalists. Mirroring the society it serves has been an important principal for years not only for the BBC but for other British TV channels as well. Like other national stations in the UK, the BBC has had black and Asian presenters for some 15 years. In contrast, the very first black presenter on French TV appeared only last year.

Simply recruiting staff from ethnic minorities without attempting to nature and accommodate racial and cultural diversity does not work

But no matter how hard the BBC has tried to be a broadcaster where all members of the society would recognise peoples and views like themselves, not many think it has been doing enough. "Simply recruiting staff from ethnic minorities without attempting to nurture and accommodate racial and cultural diversity does not work," says Joy Francis of The Creative Collective, a London-based non-governmental organisation which specialises in bringing more journalists with ethnic minority backgrounds into the UK media. Francis sees the BBC as still having "a hideously white face."

Like many news organisations in the UK and the USA, the BBC has a special guide for the producers. It is a kind of diversity checklist with detailed tips on how to report on members of diverse communities – ethnicity, race, gender, age, asylum seekers, homosexuals and lesbians, people with non-typical appearances and so forth. Satisfying common as well as specific interests of its audience is one of the crucial principals of public service broadcasters. To strike a balance between the two is a matter of professional skill as well as political sensibility. The more the audience sees a channel or newspaper as reflecting the audience's views, the more they will trust it. This in turn brings credibility to the channel or paper and hence gives more power to those media to change the social attitudes and to make an impact.

As mentioned the commercial media in Britain and overseas do not follow the agenda of public service media. For most, diversity is reported only if it brings in additional income. Take the case of *The Los Angeles Times*: 40 million Latinos living in the area could be – and are – a great source of profit. This is not a problem as long as reporting on this group is fair, accurate in-depth and engaging: the principles of responsible journalism already listed in this article.

This inclusive journalism contributes to the building of bridges between mainstream and minority communities. It strengthens the minorities' feeling of belonging and strengthens unity, which are two important principles of a stable and open society. Unfortunately, when tabloids turn to topics related to



A Media Diversity Institute workshop in Georgia.
Photo: Media Diversity Institute

members of minority communities, it is usually to misrepresent or stereotype them or to turn them into scapegoats, conveying the message "our lives would be much better without them."

Examples are numerous. "So, this is how they thank us?" was *The Sun's* headline (2002) for an article on a fire in a detention centre for asylum seekers in the UK. The very first sentence, "The luxurious £100m facilities couldn't be better (…) but asylum seekers still burned it down," says it all: asylum seekers are to be blamed for the damage. The fact is that the damage could have been prevented if the anti-fire system in the centre had been working – information *The Sun* did not bother to share with its readers. Another example is the (2000) *The Mirror* headline "Girl, 20 gang-raped by asylum seekers." Lead: "A woman walking home after a night out (…) raped by three men – thought to be asylum seekers" So, **thought** to be asylum seekers. But those who read the actual article would find the perpetrators were unknown!

From developed to developing societies

In so-called developed democracies, the rules are clearer and more respected and therefore, either through the legal system or professional codes of conduct, responsible journalism is encouraged. However, as shown earlier, this does not mean that there is no xenophobia, racism, nationalism and other "isms" and phobias in their media.

In so-called developing democracies, the situation is much gloomier. A single article insensitive to ethnicity or religion – the two most sensitive diversity subjects – can cause conflict and demonstrations resulting in dozens of deaths. Take the case in Nigeria, where an article referring to the Prophet Mohamed in, for some readers, an inappropriate way, caused the killing of some 200 people in the north of the country. Or the case of the Rwandan radio station *Radio des Mille Collines*, where presenters were openly inviting members of one ethnic group to kill members of another. Which they did, of course: in their thousands.

The war in the Balkans is over, but not the hatred. Nor is the hate speech in the Balkan media, mainly towards Roma, gay people and people living with AIDS. The Media Diversity Institute's (MDI) monitoring of the most popular papers in the region, six years after the conflict, showed that the common image of an ethnic minority is still, according to Snjezana Milivojevic:

"One of an undifferentiated whole: presented through collective groups rather than individuals. Widespread, deeply-rooted stereotypes and prejudices that govern the common understanding of minority-majority relations are reflected in the press[3]."

MDI has also monitored the papers in the South Caucasus, a region with several unsettled ethnic conflicts. Research undertaken in 2004 looked at the quality of coverage of five diversity categories – ethnicity, religion, refugees, internally displaced people and homosexuals. Among 6000 articles only 3,4 percent were related to the five categories. Only a fifth of the articles about minority groups were accompanied by a picture and only one in five articles on the topic appeared on the front page. And even though we are talking about a significant percentage of people – 40 percent – minority groups in the South Caucasian region got little chance to speak for themselves; even when reported, they were not quoted. Only one quarter of the stories about minorities quoted members of the minorities themselves.

Low media standards and journalistic practices contribute to intolerance towards minority communities

Training

MDI's studies confirm the low media standards and journalistic practices which contribute to intolerance towards minority communities. What is hard to say is why that is and what makes journalists do the job that way. Are the media, as some claim, just reporting the facts (and racism and intolerance are the facts) or do they by (negatively) stereotyping members of minority communities, create an image of them which most of the audience accept uncritically?

Whatever the case, education is needed. The MDI experience shows that training at least sensitises journalists to the issues related to diversity. At its best, it brings about changes which some describe as revolutionary. This was the case of Georgian National TV. After a

Reporting Diversity consultant spent several months working with both management and journalists, the channel introduced five minority language programmes – a pioneering move, unique in the whole South Caucasus region.

Unfortunately, training for journalists alone is not enough. No matter how much they would like to take another view on diversity issues they can not do very much if their bosses have different attitudes. This is why training for media decision-makers are needed too. Crucial to this training are two elements: the legal responsibilities the public service media have in this respect and the business case for diversity in regards to commercial media. In other words, the public service media should learn about their legal obligations regarding representation of different communities, while commercial media need to be convinced that diversity brings profit.

Fair, accurate, empathetic and in-depth reporting is vital in promoting understanding between different groups

Helping journalism educators on different levels develop their own Reporting Diversity Curricula is a serious and necessary task in societies with a poor diversity awareness. This helps new generations of journalists learn the basic lessons of the profession before they start.

Conclusions

Reporting diversity is not just another form of specialised reporting (like "today we learn financial reporting, tomorrow showbiz…"). It is the very essence of responsible journalism in democratic societies. It is about inclusion and gives all members of a society a voice, so that responsibility for that society's future is based on joint decisions, not on a decision made by a small group or by one person.

Fair, accurate, empathetic and in-depth reporting is vital in promoting understanding between different groups. Only thus can we begin confronting irrational prejudices and challenging extremist political agendas.

Reporting diversity is a significant means of conflict resolution – in the 21st century of information – (news) media can (and do) create dialogue and peaceful solutions in situations of latent, low-intensity or open conflicts when ethnicity and/or religion are the cause or pretext for the conflict. It can help or contribute to strengthening the human rights of minorities or marginalised groups, who are important segments of a civic society.

By focusing on the most deprived communities, it can contribute both to the education of the members of those communities about their rights and how to lobby for them; as well as putting pressure on those responsible for improving the status of those communities and therefore reducing poverty in the society in general.

Writer's Bio
Milica Pesic is the Executive Director of the Media Diversity Institute. This article was first published in *Enjeux Internationaux*.

Notes

[1] The article was written by David Goodheart and published in the February 2004 edition of *Prospect* magazine.

[2] The Media Diversity Institute (MDI) is a charity, non-partisan organisation that mobilises the power of media to lessen inter-group conflict, advance human rights – especially minority rights – and support deeper public understanding of all types of social diversity. See www.media-diversity.org for more information.

[3] Snjezana Milovojevic (2003) "Media Monitoring Manual" a Media Diversity Institute publication with support from the European Commission.



Who Makes the News? The Global Media Monitoring Project

By Anna Turley

Abstract

The article[1] presents some of the findings of the third Global Media Monitoring Project in which over 13 000 news items were monitored in over 70 countries on 16 February 2005. The findings show that very little has changed in the way in which news media represents women and men.

Key words

GMMP, media, monitoring, representation, advocacy

It is 16 February 2005 and an article appears in a Jamaican newspaper entitled "Steamy Valentine's at asylum." Masquerading as an innocent piece of fun, the story is vicious in its representation of women. The thread of the story, which links garbage, sex workers and women at a nightclub, is unmistakably misogynist. The underlying message – that women's sexuality is overpowering, causing men to lose control – feeds on myths about the causes of rape and sexual violence.

It is stories like these that have come under the microscope in three international media monitoring projects over the last 10 years. When the first Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) was conducted in 1995, few of those involved could have imagined that it would develop in the way that it went on to do. Ten years later, with the third such project now complete, the enormous significance of this international initiative is more obvious. The three projects constitute the most extensive global research of gender in news media ever undertaken.

The importance of media monitoring as a tool for change was officially recognised by the United Nations for the first time in Section J of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professional media associations are urged to:

"Encourage the establishment of media watch groups that can monitor the media and consult with the media to ensure that women's needs and concerns are properly reflected."

However, the idea for a one-day study of the representation and portrayal of women in the media worldwide was first conceived prior to the Beijing conference, at the international conference "Women Empowering Communication" held in Bangkok in 1994. The conference was organised by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) in association with the International Women's Tribune Centre, New York and Isis-Manila.

Media Watch, a Canadian NGO and one of the pioneers in "media watching" volunteered to coordinate the project with support from WACC and others. Erin Research Inc., Canada, developed the methodology and designed the monitoring tools. The first international monitoring day took place on 18 January 1995 and

produced more than 50 000 data records based on the news on radio, TV and in newspapers from 71 countries.

Global Media Monitoring: Women's Participation in the News was launched at the Women's NGO Forum in Beijing in September 1995 and highlighted the results of the monitoring. As a follow-up, the WACC Women's Programme later published a series of regional analysis reports on Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Central America, and the Pacific in order to produce more country-specific data for use by groups in their own countries.

GMMP 2005 shows that very little has changed in the way in which the world's news media represent women and men

WACC's Women's Programme coordinated the second GMMP five years later in order to assess whether and how the media's portrayal of women and men had changed in the half decade since the first study. Hundreds of volunteers in 70 countries once again monitored the day's news on radio, television and in print on 1 February 2000. The preliminary results were released in time for the UN Beijing +5 events in June 2000. The final results including detailed country tables and qualitative analysis by region, based on more than 16 000 news stories, were published in *Who Makes the News?* at the end of that year.



Monitoring in Jamaica for GMMP 2005. Photo: WACC

The GMMP drew inspiration from women activists' concern that the issue of media accountability should be brought to the forefront of the debate on gender inequalities. Its subsequent implementation was guided by researchers' desire to ensure comparable and accurate analysis of data collected in different settings by different individuals, many of whom had no previous experience of research.

The study aimed to give a global overview that went beyond the findings of specific local or even national studies, and to provide a reliable picture of women's presence in the news around the world. In each GMMP, the day was marked by tremendous excitement and solidarity among participating groups linked only by e-mail and a common task. In 2000, for example, the monitoring group from China e-mailed to say how pleased they were to be included "in this historic event" and a volunteer in Kenya captured the mood of the day when she said, "I can't believe I am having so much fun here in Kenya, knowing that people are out there, doing the same thing" (Spears and Seydegardt, 2000:7).

GMMP 2005

Seventy-six countries took part in GMMP 2005 with hundreds of monitors coding almost 13 000 news stories on television, radio and in print. Monitors came from a wide range of organisations and included gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists' associations, alternative media networks and church groups. The 2005 project included greater participation from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states than before, alongside countries from North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Western Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific which have been involved in GMMP since its inception.[2]

Unfortunately, GMMP 2005 shows that very little has changed in the way in which the world's news media represent women and men. As the French monitoring group reflected after completing the monitoring in 2000:

"The coding results reinforced the impression that the media allow very little space for women … this raises the question of what is news, what makes the news, and why" (Gallagher, 2005:12).

Groups participating in the GMMP have regularly

documented the nature and scale of women's exclusion from the world's news media by monitoring the news media in a systematic, coordinated way. The data are solid. The evidence is irrefutable.

News: mirror on the world?

It if often said that the news provides a mirror on the world. However, the data from GMMP over the last 10 years shows that the mirror of the world provided by the news media is like a circus mirror. It creates distortions by magnifying the importance of certain groups while shrinking the importance of others. Women make up 52 percent of the world's population yet in 2005 constituted only 21 percent of news subjects – the people who are interviewed, or whom the news is about. This figure has barely increased from 1995 when women made up 17 percent of news subjects and 2000 when they were 18 percent. For every woman who appeared in the news in 2005, there were four men.

Women are never the majority featured in any news topic and their points of view are least likely to be heard in the topics that dominate the news agenda. In stories on politics and government only 14 percent of news subjects are women; and in economic and business news only 20 percent. Even in stories that affect women profoundly such as gender-based violence, it is the male voice (64 percent of news subjects) that prevails. When women do make the news, it is primarily as "stars" (celebrities or royalty) or as "ordinary" people. Female newsmakers outnumber males in only two occupational categories – homemaker (75 percent) and student (51 percent). Women also barely feature in the news as authorities and experts. Expert opinion is overwhelmingly male. Men are 83 percent of experts and 86 percent of spokespersons.

Women in the news are also much more likely to be identified by their marital or family status: as the wife of, mother of or daughter of a man. In 2005, 17 percent of women were described in this way while only five percent of men were described as husband, son, father and so on. So while men are perceived and valued as autonomous individuals, women's status is deemed to derive primarily from their relationship to others. It is from these relationships rather than from her autonomous being that a woman draws her authority.

The GMMP also shows that while in general terms victims are common currency in news, women are more than twice as likely to be identified as victims than men. Nineteen percent of female news subjects compared with eight percent of males are portrayed in this way. News disproportionately focuses on female victims in events that actually affect both sexes such as accidents, crime, and war. Topics that specifically involve women – sexual violence for example – are given very little coverage.

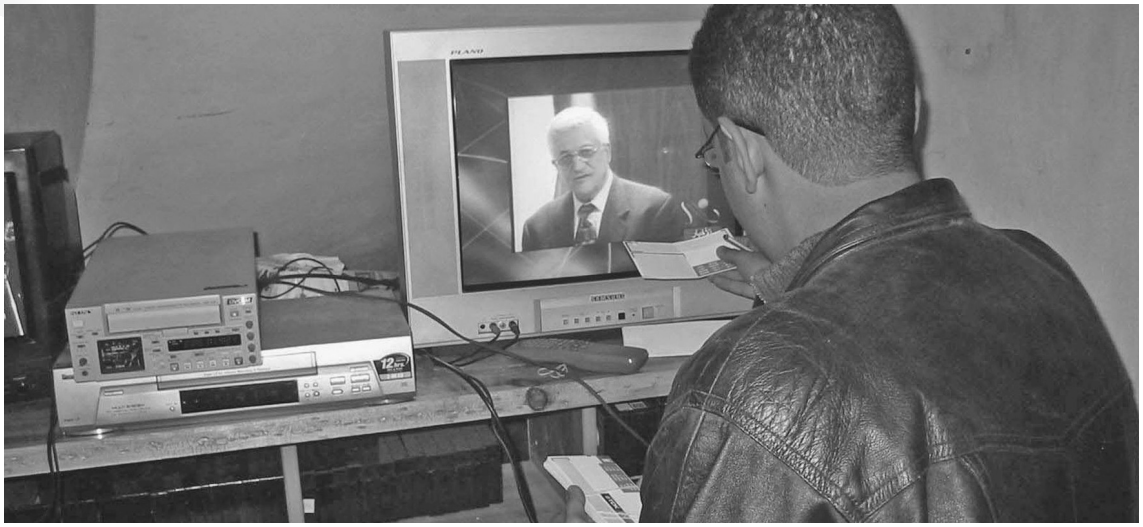
News is shaped within news organisations by journalists and editors who make decisions about what should be covered, and how

Delivering the news

News is shaped within news organisations by journalists and editors who make decisions about what should be covered, and how. To the extent that gender is a factor in determining those decisions, the GMMP is also concerned with the people who deliver the news.

While women are still underrepresented as reporters there has been a steady increase in the percentage of news items reported by women from 28 percent in 1995, to 31 percent in 2000, reaching 37 percent in 2005. Female reporters have gained more ground in radio and TV than in newspapers. The press falls far behind the electronic media, with only 29 percent of stories reported by women in 2005.

The GMMP also highlights that there is a gender division of labour in the way that stories are assigned to female and male reporters. Overall, male journalists report at the so-called "hard" or "serious" end of the news spectrum such as politics and government whereas women report only 32 percent of such stories. Female journalists are more likely to report on the so-called "soft" stories such as social and legal issues (40 percent reported by women). Women reporters are often assigned to stories that are downright trivial – celebrity news (50 percent reported by women) or arts and entertainment (48 percent). Female reporters predominate in only two topics: weather reports on TV and radio (52 percent) and stories on poverty, housing and welfare (51 percent).



Monitoring in Egypt for the GMMP 2005. Photo: WACC

News content

Irrespective of who reports the news, the fundamental concern is that so few women make the news at all. Very little news – just 10 percent of all stories in 2000 and 2005 – focuses specifically on women. Equally, news on gender equality is almost non-existent. Only four percent of stories in 2005 highlighted equality issues and they are concentrated in areas such as human rights, family relations or women's activism, topics which are barely visible in the overall output. Stories with a gender equality angle are almost completely absent from the major news topics of politics (three percent and the economy one percent). When women do appear in the news it is frequently in stereotypical ways. The GMMP 2005 shows that blatant stereotyping is present in news around the world and extends to a wide range of stories including sport, crime, violence and even politics.

The over-riding goal of the GMMP is to change media output

A tool for change

While the GMMP data provide a periodic, persistent reminder that very little has changed, this is not for want of effort by gender and communication groups worldwide. The methodology and results of the GMMP have been used in a myriad of ways by gender and communication groups around the world. The GMMP provides a research instrument that has been easily applied in subsequent monitoring at both the local and international level. It has also been used extensively for media literacy work and monitoring groups have reported that taking part in GMMP has been a process of conscientisation. As the monitoring group from Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2005 explained after completing their monitoring: "We believe we will never watch, listen or read the news with the same eyes" (Gallagher, 2005:12).

An important aim of the GMMP is to promote media literacy and gender awareness through media monitoring. However, its over-riding goal is to change media output. With this in mind, groups in many different countries have used the GMMP results to launch dialogue with media practitioners and policy-makers. The data have proven invaluable in opening up creative discussion about the accepted routines and practices in media production, about how particular journalistic decisions result in specific patterns of gender imbalance, and about how alternative choices and approaches could lead to a fairer, more balanced gender portrayal.

Many individual strategies have brought results. In Australia and Canada the data have been used in advocacy interventions aimed at fair gender portrayal; in Uruguay, meetings with editorial staff have resulted in changes to both content and editorial policy[3]. In

Jamaica, the Assistant Executive Director of the Broadcasting Commission described GMMP as containing:

"…extremely useful information to the Commission's work, particularly in the formulation and implementation of content standards for gender portrayals in the Jamaican electronic mass media" (Gallagher, 2005:13).

The there are many more examples. Importantly, the GMMP has allowed these and other groups around the world to move beyond one-sided complaints **about** the media to constructive dialogue **with** the media.

The strength of GMMP as a tool for change lies is that it provides hard facts and figures – the staple food of journalists and programme makers. The hard data the GMMP provides – together with concrete examples – reaches media professionals with an immediacy never achieved by theory or abstract argument.

It is for this reason, that GMMP 2005 places a strong focus on using the results of the research for advocacy and lobbying activities and to promote dialogue with the media. The experience of the past 30 years of gender and media campaigning has shown that criticism of media content creates a lack of trust and interest on the part of media professionals. Interaction and dialogue between gender specialists and media professionals is the only way forward. This dialogue should not simply be about trying to get certain issues or events covered in the media, but about working to promote a gender vision within the media.

While only small gains in changing media representation of gender have resulted from the GMMP so far, if these gains spring from awareness that current representation of gender in the news is something to be questioned, rather than taken for granted, they have the potential to be transformative. Ultimately, what is actually required is a wide-scale social and political transformation, in which women's rights – and particularly women's communication rights – are truly understood, respected and implemented both in society at large and by the media. While this will not happen overnight, the GMMP brings us one step closer to such a transformation.

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Spears G & Seydegart K (2000) *Who makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2000,* London: World Association of Christian Communication.

Writer's Bio

Anna Turley is the coordinator of the Women's Programme of the World Association for Christian Communication.

Notes

[1] *This article draws heavily on Who Makes the News? The Global Media Monitoring Project 2005 report. The full report can be obtained from www.whomakesthenews.org*

[2] WACC coordinated the 2005 GMMP in response to calls from groups throughout the world working on gender and communication issues. The process of planning and designing GMMP 2005 was carried out by WACC in consultation with a GMMP steering committee which first met in South Africa in May 2003. Following this meeting the GMMP methodology was extensively revised and then piloted by the steering committee in eight regions of the world. The final GMMP methodology used for the 2005 study is available at www.whomakesthenews.org

[3] Information on these advocacy interventions can be found in Gallagher M (2001) Gender Setting: New Agendas for Media Monitoring and Advocacy, London: Zed Books in association with World Association of Christian Communication.



The exclusion of women's voices is part of a broader malaise in the media

By Colleen Lowe Morna

Abstract

The fact that women's voices are systematically excluded from the media is not in question. The three Gender and Media Monitoring Projects (GMMPs) and the Southern African Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) have provided conclusive evidence that this is so. But, particularly in our region, we should not see the exclusion of women's voices in a vacuum. The bigger context is the weakness of journalistic practice. A history of heavy state involvement in the media in many countries, fledgling private media that struggle to survive, as well as low levels of training of many practitioners and weak newsroom management have led to an output that in many cases is event driven; single source (often even secondary source) and fails to verify or question facts handed down by figures of authority who are invariably men. This paradigm is hardly conducive to the views of any weak or marginalised groups in society being heard. A Southern African reading of the GMMP results provides a compelling argument for gender and media debates to be located within the broader context of diversity of media ownership, types of media, views and voices. Hence the theme of the 2006 Gender and Media Summit: "Media diversity-good for democracy, good for business."

Key words

gender, media, diversity, function of sources, summit

Of all the findings in the GMMP 2005, among the most fascinating for Southern Africa relate to the functions of news sources; a new parameter introduced in the third of this study that has run every five years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

Overall, the study found that in Southern Africa, women sources have increased from 17 percent in the GMBS conducted by Gender Links (GL) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2002 to 19 percent in the GMMP conducted across 76 countries in 2005. This is below the global average of 21 percent.

However, nine out of the 13 SADC countries showed an improvement, with South Africa (26 percent) now leading the way, followed by Swaziland, Mauritius, Namibia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Belgium (31 percent) tops the global list; followed by Sweden and Colombia (30 percent). The highest performer in Africa is Rwanda (29 percent). Angola, with 13 percent women sources tails the regional and global list.

Southern Africa in the global study

While the GMMP monitoring consisted of just one day compared to the GMBS that spanned a month, the data for Southern Africa is among the most comprehensive in the global study thanks to the mobilising that took place through the Southern African Gender and Media (GEMSA) Network:

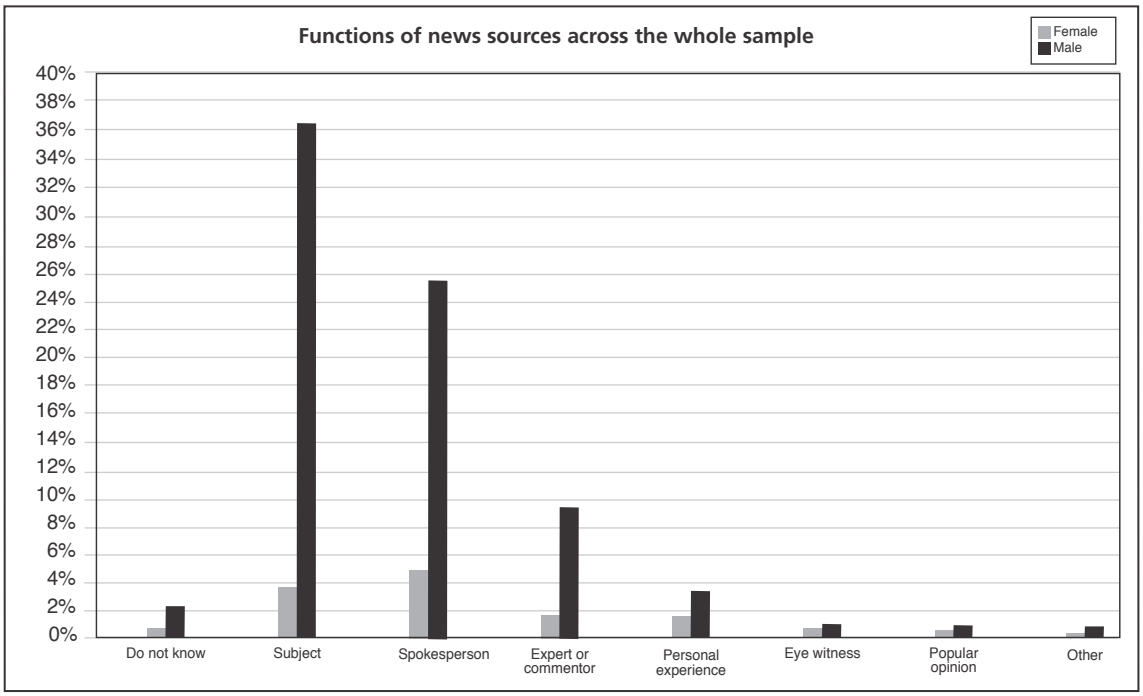
- While in 2000 only two Southern African countries participated in the GMMP (Namibia and South Africa) in 2005, 13 Southern African countries joined the effort.
- Of the 18 African countries that participated in the study, 13 (or 72 percent) are from Southern Africa.
- Southern African countries comprise 17 percent of the 76 countries that participated in the study across the globe.
- Some 8 percent of the news items monitored in the GMMP 2005 came from Southern Africa.
- Of the 16 case studies in the study 4 (or 25 percent) came from this region.

What the "functions of sources" measure does is to interrogate the capacity in which a person is approached to give information: as the subject; as an official spokesperson; as an expert or commentator; to reflect on a personal experience; as an eye witness; to give a view as part of a popular opinion poll or in any other capacity. The first two categories may be regarded as primarily providing facts or information; while the last four provide verification, analysis, insight and context.

Using data from the GMMP, Gender Links constructed an overview of all the different sources in the Southern African sample (women and men) and in what capacity
they were approached on the day of the monitoring.

The results are as striking for what they reflect about journalism in the region as for what they reflect about its gendered dimensions. The graph below shows that sources are most likely to be approached as subjects or spokespersons, rather than as experts or in any of the other categories.This suggests a strong tendency towards event rather than issue based reporting.

The gender disaggregation of the statistics shows that as compared to men in each of the categories, women are least likely to be the subjects or focus of the event or story (23 percent); official spokespersons (16 percent); or experts and commentators (20 percent). They are more likely to be consulted as human interest or personal experience subjects (25 percent); as eye witnesses (37 percent) or as part of snap popular opinion



surveys (43 percent). As the graph shows, these last three categories are the ones in which overall, the least number of sources are consulted. The example below from the monitoring shows how this happens in practise:

Men are authorities, women are unacknowledged

A story on ZTV news during the monitoring concerned new machines that can be used to test the viral load for people living with HIV/AIDS. Three women and two men are interviewed. Each man is interviewed in his own office, in a hospital setting. Each is identified by name and occupation – both in the reporter's commentary, and by name captions on the screen. The three women are all interviewed in the same external location, which appears to be a garden. One of then is living with AIDS. The other two are involved in AIDS-related work. None of the women is identified, either by name or by occupation. The impression is that these women are less important and less acknowledgeable that the men, who are the "real" experts. In fact, two of the women are well-known activists in Zimbabwe – but this is never mentioned (Source: GMMP 2005:p36).

One conclusion that can be drawn from this is that a deliberate effort needs to be made to ensure that women become more central in the first three categories: as news subjects; (for example through more stories on gender equality, or women in non-traditional roles; or through highlighting the role played by women where they are often invisible); as official spokespersons and as experts.

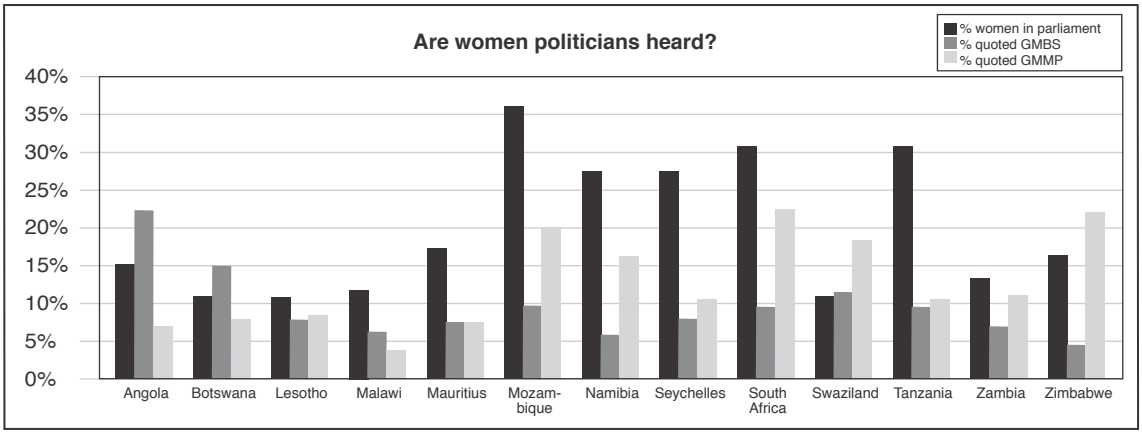
Related findings show, however, that even when women exist in professional categories their views are not necessarily heard.

Women are not heard in proportion to their strengths in professions

The comparative study of the GMBS and GMMP shows that although there has been an improvement in women's voices being heard in different professional categories, women are still not heard in proportion to their strengths in these categories. For example, in Southern Africa, women comprise 20 percent of parliamentarians, but women only constituted 14 percent of the politicians quoted.

The graph below compares the percentage of women in parliament in each country, with the proportion of women politicians quoted in the GMBS and the GMMP. It shows that with the exception of Zimbabwe, there is no country in which the proportion of women politicians quoted is equal to or higher than the proportion of women in parliament.

One approach by GEMSA country networks (for example Media Watch Organisation-GEMSA in Mauritius) has been to develop directories of women sources for the media and to work with media decision-makers in developing policies that deliberately seek out the views of women. Ferial Haffajee, editor of the *Mail and Guardian* in South Africa, has produced a directory of 300 women experts for her reporters to consult: as a start.



Diversity of views

The other approach is that there needs to be a far better balance of different types of sources in reporting in the region (e.g. those who make policy pronouncements and those who are affected by them; those who make official statements and those who can verify if they are correct or not; those who give facts and those who interpret them; human interest stories that demonstrate how prevailing conditions affect peoples every day lives as opposed to speeches by ministers on policy initiatives).

Getting away from the single source, official pronouncements that dominate the news is not only good journalism; it would open more space for women's voices to be heard, as illustrated in the following example from the monitoring.

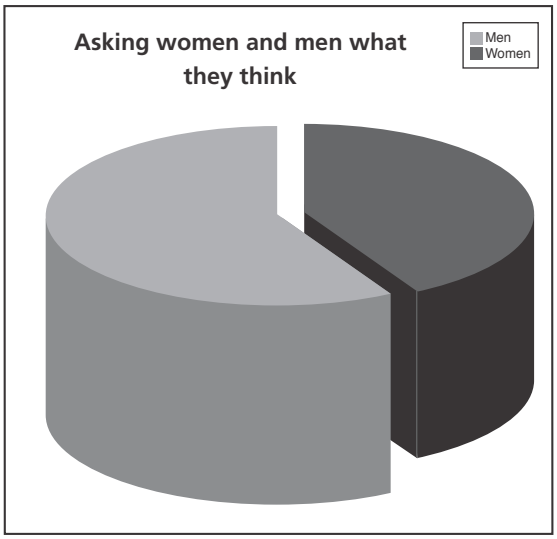
The curse of the single source story

The story is introduced by the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation TV reporter as: "the government plans to develop fishing facilities in the Bel Ombre district." The content of the story is about what the government plans to do, as seen through the eyes of one male official government source (the responsible minister). Although he talks about how the development will benefit fishermen, none of the fishermen are interviewed. The reporter also does not interview the people who are likely to buy the fish, the majority of whom are women. The reporter fails to ask the minister in what ways the government plans to ensure that women are equal beneficiaries in the project and are not just consigned to being the buyers of fish. The use of the term "fishermen" presupposes that the beneficiaries will be men. The term also fails to distinguish between the categories of those involved in the trade, for example the boat owners; those who go out to sea; and those who clean the fish and prepare it for sale (a category in which women are likely to be found). Raising questions about how women will benefit could well raise an important policy debate about what the government is doing to challenge gender stereotypes in society.

Popular opinion is an easy and important start

One of the more encouraging findings of the GMMP 2005 is that in Southern Africa, women constitute 46 percent of those who views are consulted in popular opinion stories (vox pops); higher than the global average of 34 percent. This is probably a tribute to the awareness raising and training that has been done in newsrooms. One of the "quick remedies" for editors when confronted with statistics on women sources is to ensure that any time there is a vox pop, women and men are interviewed.

As mentioned earlier, it is unfortunate that these kinds of approaches (personal, eyewitness and popular opinion) are so limited in the news in Southern Africa. Other than being an obvious starting point for increasing women sources, they also contribute to audiences being more involved in the making of the news, and thus to a better and more marketable product.



Missed opportunities

Like the GMBS, the GMMP 2005 makes the point that seeking out women's voices is not just a matter of being politically correct; it is about fresh perspectives that make for more interesting and better journalism. Southern African monitors picked out several examples of stories under the category "missed opportunities." These are stories that would clearly have been enriched by having women's perspectives included.

Missing views, deficient stories

An article in the Lesotho newspaper, Mopheme, concerned the recent sudden closure of some textile factories that left thousands of Basotho jobless. The sole source in the story is the Minister of Industry, Trade, Cooperatives and Marketing Mpho Mali, who blames the closure on the exchange rate. He added that HIV/AIDS is taking a heavy toll on factory workers. Textile factories employ a high proportion of women in Lesotho. Women are also disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Yet no women are interviewed. Their views would not only have added a human face to the story but may have yielded opinions on whether the government had done enough to keep the factories open, to support people living with HIV/AIDS etc. This may have completely changed the angle of the story. For example, instead of being a story on factories closing, it may have been a protest story on the government not doing enough to protect the rights of workers and the livelihoods of families.

Conclusions

While it is understandable that advocacy efforts to date have focused specifically on the gender deficiencies in the media, as we move forward there is need to situate these within broader debates on human rights, media diversity, ethics and professionalism in the media, growing markets and media sustainability.

This approach will not only help to overcome some of the resistance that is apparent in some quarters, but also foster the notion that gender awareness is not just a matter of being politically correct: it is also enlightened self interest. Hence the proposed theme for the 2006 Gender and Media Summit: "Media Diversity: good for business, good for diversity".

Practical strategies include: engaging with media regulatory authorities; deepening the engagement with media decision-makers; setting specific targets; taking a fresh look at training; engaging with media audiences; broadening research to include genres other than the news and invigorating the gender and media activism in the region that has played a key role in raising the awareness responsible for the successes to date.

(Colleen Lowe Morna is executive director of Gender Links and Chair of GEMSA. "Who Makes the News: A Southern African Mirror on the Findings of the GMBS" can be found on www.genderlinks.org.za)

Gender and Media Summit tackles diversity
By Kubi Rama
CEO, GEMSA

With its motto *"making every voice count and counting that it does"* GEMSA is convening the second Gender and Media Summit in September 2006 under the banner: "Media Diversity: Good for democracy, good for business."

GEMSA has its roots in the historic Gender and Media Summit convened by Gender Links and MISA in September 2004, attended by 184 media decision-makers, practitioners, trainers and gender activists. The Network currently has 13 institutional and 218 individual members in 13 countries. The summit will double as the General Meeting of GEMSA. Key themes that will be covered in parallel sessions include:

Enabling environments

The media in Southern Africa face various challenges on a macro level. These include restrictions to freedom of expression in Zimbabwe, transforming national broadcasters into public broadcasters and the lack of independent regulatory authorities in some countries. The session will focus on initiatives to mainstream gender in media and communication legislation, policy and regulation across the region.

Professionalism in the media

Using case studies of stories produced by journalists in the region this session will make the links between the principles of good journalism such as balance, accuracy and fairness with gender aware reporting.

Diversifying media markets

The Gender Links and MISA Gender and Media Audience Study undertaken in 13 Southern African countries shows that audiences, especially women, are crying out for more diversity in media content.

Policy and practice

The findings of the groundbreaking Gender, HIV and AIDS and the media baseline study conducted by Media Action Plan (MAP) spearheaded by the Southern African Editor's Forum (SAEF) and how this is being translated into newsroom policies will be presented during this session.

Research and monitoring

The findings of the GMMP for the Southern African region will be used as a bench mark to plan for the second Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS).

Media training

This will address the need for links between formal training institutions and in-service training providers. Common standards and curricula are important to promote effective training and to ensure that trainees can move from one training context to another. Presentations on gender mainstreaming in the curriculum will be included in this session.

Media literacy

Developing a critical citizenry in relation to the media is important so that the public can hold the media accountable. Media literacy must be mainstreamed in to school curricula and media literacy training should be conducted in communities, Examples of good practice will be presented at the Summit.

Media activism

There are several regional campaigns that GEMSA members have been participating in. These include the Sixteen Days of Activism and SADC and Gender and Care Work campaigns. These campaigns raise issues that go to the heart of democracy such as the representation of women in decision-making; violence against women and HIV and AIDS. The campaigns, and the strategies they have employed to raise media awareness will come under the spotlight in the deliberations.

The Summit aims to put in place a sustainable regional gender and media plan of action that will ensure the increased diversity of voice, subjects and representations of men and women in the media in the region. Each session will identify indicators that will be used measure how much has been achieved at the GEM Summit in 2008.



Reporting Africa for Africa and the world: the missing voices

By Rosemary Okello

Abstract

This article reports on a recent conference held by The African Editors' Forum in South Africa where more than 150 editors gathered to discuss how the media has portrayed the continent to Africa and to the world. While the role of the media as articulated by the Africa Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development is critical for the continent's growth, this article argues that media has failed to portray Africa in its totality as women's voices continue to be excluded and marginalised.

Key words

media, women, gender, editors, Africa

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is one of the milestones in the continent's evolving political and developmental terrain. It provides a new threshold for performance and accountability for governments through peer reviewing process.

The role of the media in the new development model for Africa has been heralded as critical. It is argued that the fundamental ingredient that makes democracy and development possible is the free flow of information, without which people cannot make informed decisions.

Various theories of development have highlighted the media (electronic, print, Internet and community media) as an essential change agent, which plays an important role in influencing the development of a society. If media is restricted, censored or hindered in any way, then citizens remain ignorant of events, their rights, their duty to the State and the role that they can play in development in their countries. Powered by awesome and fast changing technology coupled with vast reach, the media can be said to be one of the most powerful forces on earth today.

African editors at The African Editor's Forum (TAEF) conference in October 2005 re-examined their role as agents of development and expressed concern that often reporting from within Africa is presented from a western perspective. The conference's title "Reporting Africa for Africans and the world" reflected the desire to challenge this and to strengthen journalism on the continent.

Speaking about the need for critical reflection in African journalism at the opening of the conference, South African President, Thabo Mbeki said:

"[Critical reporting] would enable us as Africans to understand one another better so that when we work together it is not on the basis of insufficient or bad information. This is all part of the process of openness and transparency."

The opportunity to examine how the continent is reported was presented during the G8 Summit when British Prime Minister Tony Blair presented his African Commission report and again during the Millennium

Development Summit. But this spotlight exposed not only the tendency for news reports to reflect a "Western gaze" but also the absence of African women's perspectives from the news.

The discussions at the TAEF conference mirrored this absence. Even though editors interrogated the construction of African news by exploring issues such as defining "African news", "African perspectives on news", the need to guard press freedom and "the state of technology research" in detail, issues of gender in defining African news were not addressed at all.

This is perplexing. How is it possible that discussions about a free press do not include discussions on gender? As Susan King of the Carnegie Corporation once commented:

"We are talking about a free press. There is no free press if women have no role in that free press; we are half of the society" (cited in O'Brien, 2000).

In his address to the TAEF conference United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, argued that the media has a vital role to play in raising awareness by providing a forum through which governments can be held accountable. "If we succeed, we will improve the opportunities for all human beings – and Africans in particular – to build better lives," he said.

But as pointed out by media analyst Margaret Gallagher (2001), with media regulation becoming more and more difficult to enforce and media increasingly being driven by the quest for a huge financial profit, the commodification of women in media content is likely to intensify. How does this build better lives for African woman?

What editors at the TAEF conference did do however was to note that Africa's story has not been fully reported and that the time has come to reflect the continent in its totality. This means taking into consideration issues of women's representation – as subjects and as media practitioners. Reflecting Africa's story in its totality implies the telling of women's stories.

How is it possible that discussions about a free press do not include discussions on gender?

Despite the fact that women produce 80 percent of the continent's agriculture and carry the burden of care for those infected and affected with HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS *et al*, 2004) roles one would assume would make them newsmakers, the media has to date paid very little attention to women's stories.

African women, as their global counterparts, are limited as the sources of news and so often are simply



Editors at the African Editors Forum Conference. Photo: TAEF

missing in the media. Compared to men, they are less likely to feature in news stories and are less likely to be interviewed and asked for their opinion (Spears and Seydegart, 2000).

The TAEF conference missed the opportunity to explore what "Africa's story" is by excluding discussions of gender and women's representation in African media. Unless African editors seriously engage with these challenges, women's voices will continue to be missing and the worthy goal of reporting on Africa in its totality will not be achieved.

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Writer's Bio

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Study finds women and men want diversity in their news

By Agnes Odhiambo

Abstract

The article presents the findings of the Gender and Media Audience Study which explored how women and men interact with the news. The findings have important implications for work on promoting media diversity, media literacy, gender balance and sensitivity in the media and significant implications for stakeholders involved in the production, dissemination, marketing and consumption of the news.

Key words

audiences, portrayal, consumers, editorial content

It is official. Women and men want diversity in the news they consume. This is one of the key findings of the Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS) which was conducted in 13 Southern African countries.

The GMAS focuses on news consumers with the aim of probing how women and men interact with the news: their news consumption patterns, preferences and the gender dimensions of these. The study took place against the backdrop of limited audience data and research in the region as well as low levels of consumer awareness and activism. This makes the study unique, not only in so far as it raises critical gender issues, but also as the first major audience research study in Southern Africa. The study was conducted in Angola, Lesotho, Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The findings show that audiences – both men and women – want more local content, human interest stories, and the portrayal of men and women in more diverse ways. Significantly, the study found that most people are not comfortable with sexual images of women.

The stock response of editors and journalists to critiques of their content in the form of images and reports being stereotypical has most often been along the lines of: "But it's what our audience wants!" And of course, the cardinal rule in any business (which is what media is), is to give the consumer what they want no matter what.

So, if the needs of consumers of media are to be fulfilled at all costs, it stands to reason, given the findings of the research that audiences in Southern Africa should prepare themselves for more diversity in the news presented to them.

Where do audiences get their news from?

The study shows that overall, radio is the main source of news with an equal proportion of women and men (51 percent) choosing this medium. This is true in nine out of the 13 countries researched. However, television is fast taking over from radio as the main source of news

in most countries. In Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles and Zimbabwe, television is now the main source of news for both women and men. The consolidated findings illustrate that to the extent that audiences get their news from television, more women (37 percent) than men (31 percent) get their news from this source.

The study confirms the global finding that more men than women rely on newspapers for news. But in Namibia, Lesotho and Seychelles the opposite is true. It also reflects the digital and gender divide in the finding that only a tiny proportion of audiences (three percent), and even a tinier percentage of women (one percent), get their news from the Internet. No women or men in Namibia, Angola, Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia chose the Internet as their main source of news, yet in Mauritius and Seychelles (probably because of the high levels of employment among women in these countries) higher proportions of women than men said that they rely on the Internet as their main source of news.

Although there are still gender gaps in who decides on news mediums, women are increasingly maken independent choices

There appears to be a strong correlation between levels of education and the main source of news. Although there are exceptions, in general those with higher levels of education gravitated more towards the print media and the Internet, and those with lower levels of education towards radio. TV tended to have a cross cutting appeal, particularly among women.



Audiences want to see women in a diversity of roles, beyond the "home maker" category. Photo: Trevor Davies

What news genres do audiences prefer?

Women and men prefer short news reports to any other news genre. However, there are interesting exceptions. Although preference for in-depth features is low, in Mauritius 56 percent women and 44 percent men said they preferred in-depth features. Opinion and commentary are viewed as distant by most audiences and generally more men than women tended to favour this genre. This may be attributed to several factors, such as the fact that this genre is generally associated with newspapers (which are not the main source of news for many citizens) and the fact that the appreciation of such news may be correlated to levels of education.

However, this finding also raises editorial challenges. Leader pages are generally the preserve of small elites of (largely male) decision-makers and influential personalities who might draw the interest of policy-makers but are apparently seen as distant by the majority of news consumers. Conscious efforts to diversify sources of opinion and commentary (including giving greater voice to women) could help to grow audiences, especially for newspapers. For example, more Tanzanian and Zimbabwean women than men cited opinion and commentary as their favourite genre, suggesting that women readers can be cultivated in this area.

The study also shows that contrary to the perception that women do not have time for, or are not interested in current affairs, they are in fact keen to engage with news. Twelve percent women and 10 percent men chose "news that asks for feedback, such as letters to the editor" as their favourite news genre.

Who decides on where to get the news?

Although there are still gender gaps in who decides on news medium, women are increasingly making independent choices. Forty-nine percent of women and 55 percent men said they make their own decisions about where to get their news from. Although the six percent difference between women and men represents a significant gender gap in the extent to which independent choice is exercised, the fact that the majority of women make their own choices reflects an important advance for gender equality in the region.

Moreover, only 14 percent of women and 12 percent of men identified their spouse or partner as the person who selects the news medium. Some 28 percent women and 23 percent men identified another "family member" as being influential in their choice of news medium. The fact that women are not as influenced by others, and especially by their spouses, as might be expected in the choice of news medium is a significant finding for media marketing, which has tended to treat women as invisible.

Audience perceptions of how women and men are represented and portrayed

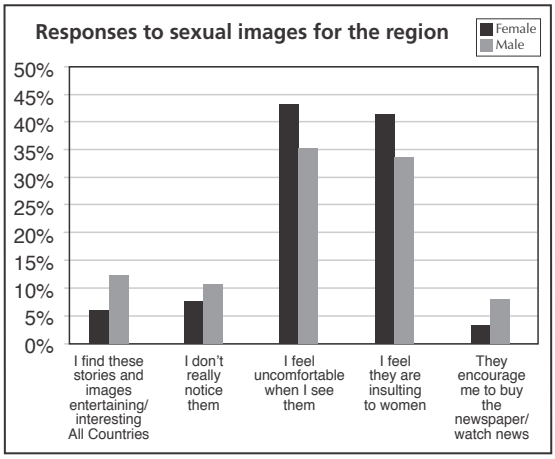
Respondents expressed mixed perceptions about women's representation in the news, with almost equal proportions of women and men saying, the news "does reflect the interests of women and men equally" and the news "does not reflect the interests of women and men equally". The question about the extent to which women feature as news sources elicited similar split responses, with just about even proportions of women and men saying women are "seldom" used as news sources to those who said they are "often" used as news sources.

On the other hand, and mirroring the findings of the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS), audience perceptions of the roles and ways in which women and men are portrayed in the news were quite clear. According to both the GMBS and the GMAS respondents women are most likely to be portrayed as models/beauty contestants; victims, health workers; home-makers; sex-workers and citizens. Both studies also show that in reality and in the perception of consumers men are most frequently portrayed as politicians; government officials; policemen; businessmen; criminals and sportsmen. The combined findings suggest that – possibly as a result of socialisation and the expectation that "men make the news" – neither women nor men have given much thought to gender balance in the news, but they are instinctively aware of gender bias.

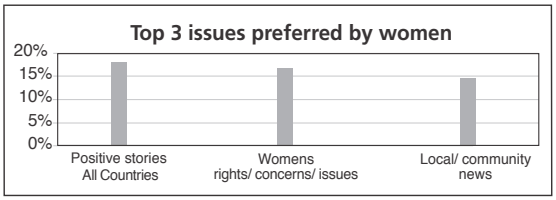
The other unequivocal finding, across all countries, is that audiences either feel uncomfortable with, or are insulted by sexual images in the news. This is evinced in responses to the question of what women and men would like to see less of in the news. Amongst the women sampled, 43 percent found sexual images of women in the news "uncomfortable" and 42 percent found them "insulting." The comparative figure for men is 36 percent and 34 percent respectively.

These findings are echoed in the response to the question of what women and men would like to see less of in the news, in which sexual images along with topics such as violence and war. The two findings together challenge the widely prevailing view that sexual images of women sell the news, especially newspapers. The extent to which audiences, and especially women, viewed such images as demeaning should be pause for thought for media decision-makers who defend the use of sexual images on grounds that this is vital to their bottom line.

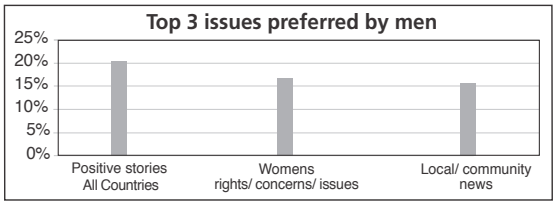
Audiences either feel uncomfortable with, or are insulted by sexual images in the news



As stated earlier, the study found that women and men across all 13 countries want more positive, local and human interest news. In addition, women want more stories on women's rights. Both men and women, but especially women (68 women percent compared to 47 percent men) felt that the news would be more interesting if the ideas and views of women are reported more often.



Across all 13 countries 18 percent of women prefer and would like to see, read and listen to more positive stories while 20 percent of men interviewed held the same view. An equal proportion of male and female respondents (15 percent) cited a preference for more local/ community news.



Audiences also strongly endorse the challenging of stereotypes. When asked what "other" kinds of roles they would like to see women in, audiences cited more women in public life, business, leadership, as experts, opinion makers and so forth. Women and men mentioned a range of non-traditional roles for men, such as home-maker, parent and care giver.

Conclusion

The GMAS, providing as it does a "citizens mirror" to the GMBS, makes available a wealth of data and insight into the ways in which women and men interact with news in Southern Africa. It is an important contribution to the growing body of literature on gender and the media in the region and also provides some of the most reliable and up-to-date information on news audiences in Southern Africa.

Editors should take note of the clear messages about editorial content arising from the study

The findings have important implications for the campaign to promote media diversity, media literacy, gender balance and sensitivity in the media. Furthermore, these findings have significant implications for different stakeholders involved in the production, dissemination, marketing and consumption of the news, as well as in creating conducive policy environments for this.

For example, the findings that more women than men get their news from television and that there is a greater potential market among women for newspapers should send clear messages to media decision-makers. Those involved in the business side of the media need to identify women as a distinct and critical segment within the media market; gather gender disaggregated data as part of their market intelligence and devise strategies that capitalise on the market potential among women media consumers as well as seek to meet their news needs. Editors should also take note of the clear messages about editorial content arising from the study, and adapt their policies accordingly. Media practitioners need to generate more gender balanced, diverse content that challenges gender stereotypes.

The challenge of democratic transformation in the Southern Africa region affects all spheres of social life, including institutions and practices of the media. As we move towards an information society, and as different countries strive to enact laws, policies and regulations that enhance freedom of expression and media diversity, it is critical that all citizens have access to the widest range of information and opinion in order to participate effectively in the democratisation process. This calls for media practitioners and decision-makers to ensure that media consumers – women and men – have access to a range of views and information sources fully reflective of our society.

The GMAS shows that there are similarities and differences in the way in which women and men interact with the news. Importantly, what emerges from the research is that women, just like men, are serious news consumers as well as a market with specific needs. Bridging these two requires gender related measures to be integrated into market research to better inform media marketing as well as editorial strategies. The findings of the GMAS point to important news needs, tastes and preferences among women and men and which can and should inform a truly democratic media environment.

Writer's Bio

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DIVERSITY WORKS

Reflections of a woman media manager
By Beata Kasale

Diversity has become the name of the game in Botswana's print media. Newspapers have changed in design, employing big colourful headlines and photographs and significantly, many have begun to mainstream gender into their content.

From my personal perspective, more newspapers are shifting from the narrow focus on politics, to giving more voice to the concerns of the ordinary citizens. This is a major victory for women whose voices have finally begun to be heard in media. I am particularly proud that *The Voice*, the weekly newspaper where I am the publisher, has played an integral role in the changing media landscape in Botswana. *The Voice* newspaper was established in February 1993 in Francistown, Botswana's second city. It was the first paper to be established in the north and also the first newspaper to find a niche in human interest stories.

Botswana's private media industry spans over 20 years. Over the past 10 years women have held leadership positions at both the private and public media houses. Out of nine newspapers, four are managed by women: *The Botswana Gazette*, *The Voice, The Sunday Tribute* and *Mokgosi*, which sadly closed down recently.

Most of the newspapers are in tabloid format and survive from advertising revenue. However, our existence is threatened by the government owned *Daily News'* recent decision to commercialise as a cost recovery initiative. This move has adversely affected newspapers as the advertising pie has become smaller by more titles competing for advertising revenue.

Amidst these problems in July 2005, *The Voice* officially became Botswana's best selling newspaper with a print run of between 30 000 to 33 000 copies weekly, primarily due to the focus on human stories.

This was an important triumph particularly as *The Voice* management consists of women – the publisher, editor, advertising manager and administrative and distribution Managers are all women. Of course, this is not to say our male colleagues did not contribute to this victory.

Publishing *The Voice* has been challenging. We have paid the price of standing by our decision to focus on the coverage of human-interest stories as opposed to politics. There are advertisers who have chosen not to advertise in *The Voice* due its style and content. But we have remained committed and many of our stories continue to revolve around women as a category of marginalised people in Botswana. It is women who are subjects of domestic violence and rape and now the victims of the growing trend of "passion killings" where hundreds of Batswana women are murdered by their male partners supposedly in the name of love.

My challenge has been to keep *The Voice* afloat in a country which is embracing the technological advancements of the digital world, while at the same time grappling with addressing the poverty in which the majority of its people live. Given our work conditions and the financial constraints we face, it has been a struggle to convince financiers, who are mostly men that our product is essential as we reflect Botswana society as it is today.

However, my biggest challenge has been how to juggle my career and motherhood: a challenge I know that faces women across the world. I remember when I joined *The Voice* I would take my two sons, then aged 12 and eight with me to cover stories – even if I was travelling to the remotest of areas. The long hours and deadlines would sometimes take their toll, but I took comfort in the fact that there were thousands of media women in the world like me, doing what they had to.

Women in the media have the power to bring about gender balance in content by acknowledging the women who have against all odds fought for their rights and those of other women to survive. They are government officials, entrepreneurs, academics and ordinary women in communities with remarkable stories to tell.

As newspaper owners and publishers we should ensure that women have voice in our newsrooms through employment and also through content. We must be careful though, that we represent all women, not only those in prominent positions, but also the amazing women in rural and remote areas who are making a difference in their communities and our society.

Writer's bio

Beata Kasale is the publisher of The Voice newspaper which in July 2005 became the best selling newspaper in the Botswana. She is co-owner of The Voice newspaper and has over 20 years experience as a journalist. She is currently the local trainer for the Maisha Yetu Botswana programme for the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF). The goal of the project is to enhance the quality and consistency of media coverage of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa through accurate and relevant media messages.



Women consumers of media must flex their muscles

By Christine Davis

Abstract

The article argues that women consumers of media are not using their power to demand fairer and more realistic representations of themselves and their interests. The author writes that the continued exclusion of women's interests and voices works against the ideal of media diversity.

Key words

representation, economy, stereotypes, consumers

Media is about money. This is a truth that is often forgotten in the sometimes idealistic discussions about freedom of expression, fair representation of minority groups, the development of culture and community and indeed, about diversity.

This truth also impacts heavily on the way in which women are represented in the media today. In a "cents", money determines who we see, who we learn to relate to, and as a result, who we become. How does this happen?

The type of woman one sees in images presented to us through the media I argue, are only those types of women we will willingly pay to see… or rather, expect to see. In other words, we are presented with images that it is assumed we want. The problem with this is twofold: on the one hand we consume stereotypical images of ourselves because it is assumed that this is what we want (not that we are asked!); and on the other, our silent consumption of these images simply perpetuates the stereotypes.

As women, we know that we are not seeing ourselves in the media we consume in all our magnificent diversity. We are aware that our interests go beyond the best stain removing power of washing powder and that we often fall outside of the neatly defined categories of "woman" targeted through the media. We know that we dance, sing, laugh, love, negotiate power and share passion with people other than our husbands. We know that our families are often central to our lives, but are not the only and most important part of who we, what we do and what defines us. We know that we are mothers, caregivers, supporters, sexual beings and sometimes victims. But we also know that we are much more than these things.

Despite this, many of us are not fully aware of our power (and rights) as consumers of media and as such have not used this power effectively. But the blame should not be solely ours. The truth is that media producers themselves are to blame as they have not actively (apart from a few notable exceptions) engaged with women on issues of representation and diversity.

Margaret Gallagher (2001) has written about power and influence of female images, created by men, and how women have failed to question these, in most cases uncomplainingly accepting these without critique.



Searching for an image she can relate to. Photo: Arthi Sampath

Even though the media have come under increased critique and scrutiny over the past decade, contemporary images of women in the media reveal that media messages continue to be constructed from the masculine gaze. As women, we are seeing ourselves in the way men see us. If we accept this without question, then we begin to accept that this is who we are, what is expected of us and what we should expect from others. But this is not new and media activists have been making these arguments this since the onset of feminism, which begs the question, why has this not changed?

In my view, nothing has changed because of the tensions between government policy, economics and media structures. In countries where government policy does not lend itself to ensuring the empowerment of women's rights, the media can only report on what should be done, not what is being done. Women have seldom had sole control over their bodies and their sexualities, and when government policies limit this expression further, the media has little choice but to risk all or conform to ensure their own survival.

Media transformation is superficial

In countries such as South Africa, where the rights of women are considered as important as any other right and where the media embraces its role as a watchdog, the failure of diverse representation comes from two areas. Firstly, I believe that media transformation, although a widely spoken ideal has been superficial. In addition most work on media transformation in South Africa has focused on race and not gender.

The historic 2003 Southern African Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) sought to establish how women and men are represented in the media, in what areas and by whom. According to an article published by UNESCO Press:

"The Southern African media give very little space to the views of women, and, when it comes to subjects such as politics, economy, sport or agriculture, their voice is virtually unheard. Women journalists are, however, given more exposure than men in reporting on subjects that have to do with the body, home and beauty. It is in television that they find the best professional opportunities – essentially as presenters – but they are only employed for a limited time, because in that part of the world it is uncommon to see women working beyond the age of 50 in any media[1]"

Contemporary images of women in the media continue to be constructed from the masculine gaze

The second area of failure of media diversity in South Africa comes from the economy itself. The vast majority of women in South Africa, specifically under-educated black women, do not earn enough money to be of any interest to advertisers of expensive items. Advertising is core to the way in which the media see their consumers. If men make the money and make the financial decisions in the home, then advertisers are going to market their campaigns to men, and as a result, media content is going to be male-centric.

Media content is designed to attract men in the same way that advertisers design their products and campaigns to attract particular target markets. In Southern African countries, the GMBS found that women make up over half of the population but only 17 percent of news sources were women (Made, Lowe Morna and Kwaramba, 2003), thus ensuring that the opinions of men and men's interests constitute the majority of the content that exists.

Women it seems are left in the same position they always have been in. The stories woman journalists tend to be assigned to, fall in the domain of beauty contests,

the home and issues related to health, beauty and well-being. This cements the impression that women themselves are only interested in being pretty, nurturers and caregivers. Women reporters are silently denied access to reporting issues of politics, sports and economics – in ways that are both subtle and overt.

Women must be taught of their own spending power to control content that they can choose to pay for or reject

The reason for this as Tawana Kupe, head of the School of Literature, Languages and Media Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand points out, is that the media "in general has a one-dimensional view of its role in the young democracy that is South Africa" (Kupe, 2005). He suggests that the media have neglected their developmental responsibilities in favour of attaining the title of "watchdog" that the independent press strives for. In other words, the media expends resources on constant political analysis instead of analysing their own structures and taking steps moves to correct this.



Media messages are constructed through the masculine gaze, says the author. Photo: Neo Seseane

Women must demand

The lack of a fair, honest representation of women's interests and women themselves can never be solved by forcing the media to report on these issues. Rather the media must work towards encouraging women to demand more diverse representations of themselves and their interests so that they become actively aware of the messages they are receiving. The interference of financial stability on the structure and nature of media content has created a shift where people, men and women alike, are no longer treated as active members of an audience that can be engaged with, but instead as members of a consumer society that can pick and choose their products.

If this is the trend of media today, it is not necessarily a bad thing. It just means that women must be taught of their spending power, and their own ability to develop and control content that they can choose to pay for or reject. The media however, can not hide behind ideals of diversity and follow a reality of economics. This will result in a deepening of the mistrust people have for the work the media do, and will jeopardise any work the media attempts to sincerely do as part of its developmental mandate.

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Writer's Bio

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Notes

[1] http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=14853&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html site accessed on 20 January 2006.



Torchbearers of a transforming society? Black women in soap operas in post-apartheid South Africa

By Crystal Orderson

Abstract

This article explores the representation of black women in two South African soap operas: *Generations* and *Isidingo* in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. It argues that while there are many more black women represented on South African television than prior to 1994, it is essential that these images be viewed with caution.

Key words

soap operas, television, representation, stereotypes

Broadcasting and television have played an instrumental role in the construction of black women in the new South Africa. This article asks: what is the construction of black women in South African soap operas and does this construction contribute towards their social reality?

The article explores the representation of black women in two South African soap operas. It argues that while there are now many more black women represented on South African television, it is essential that these images be viewed with caution.

While there is a vast amount of literature on soap operas, research into this genre in Africa and in South Africa in particular has been limited. From observation however, in the contemporary black women appear to be portrayed as women with voices and opinions who are able to make decisions – a definite departure from representations of black women as powerless victims without agency.

South Africa is home to a number of local soap operas, any of which would have made for interesting analysis in terms of their representation of black women. However, *Generations* was selected because it has the biggest audience share of all the soap operas that are screened. It was also the first soap opera that was screened in the country that had a black cast and whose central characters were all black.

Isidingo, was chosen because it is seen as the "most realistic" soap opera on television. The creators of the soap argue that it deals with issues that "ordinary" South Africans are grappling with, i.e. HIV/AIDS, unemployment, and polygamy, adoption and mixed-race relationships and so forth. In other words, the soap opera's themes reflect contemporary socio-economic issues that South Africans are confronting.

Generations

Generations was first screened on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC's) CCTV, a forerunner of the contemporary SABC 1 channel. In May 2002 the series broadcast its 1 000th episode and in 2004

celebrated its 10th year of broadcast.

According to its creative director, Mfundi Vundla, the show made history as the first "soap, produced, directed, and written by black South Africans" (Vundla in Majola, 2003). He says the soap portrays a society obsessed with power, money and sex. Vundla, also executive director of *Generations*, argues that the characters are the "torchbearers of a transforming society" and as such reflect this transformation (Vundla, 2005).

There are rigid norms and sterotypes to conform to if you want to make it in the South African imagination as a black woman

Viewing figures and format

The show is now a R40 million (approximately US $6.5 million) a year production. According to the SABC, 52 percent of South Africans aged 16-34 watch the show implying an audience of close to one million viewers. The show is now screened in most sub-Saharan countries, as well as Jamaica.

Generations focuses on two families, the Mthembu's and Moroka's and is set in the powerful and ruthless world of advertising. The storyline centres on rivalry and jealousy between the two families based in South Africa's economic capital, Johannesburg. All the characters are black, glamorous and speak a variety of local languages. As in primetime American soap operas such as *The Bold and the Beautiful* upon which it is modelled, the women are portrayed as go-getters and professional, with access to money. They spend time at hair and beauty salons and gossiping. Most of the characters' hair is woven or they wear wigs. As much as the show has been hailed as a success it has also had criticism from the viewing public and press. Some commentators have argued that the show does not question how wealth is attained as long as there is a black bourgeoisie. Vundla asserts:

"...these people we see [in Generations] are the vanguard of the first generation of the African bourgeoisie in the making. It's a process, its happening" (Vundla in Majola, 2003).

He argues that society is transforming and the bourgeoisie is becoming more entrenched. Thus black people are represented as successful business entrepreneurs. However as Bobo (1992:66) notes:

"...the way a group of people is represented can play a determining role in how these people are treated socially and politically. This means that the process of representation is a politically charged act."

I argue that *Generations* therefore plays a role in how black people see themselves and that the representation of black women in soaps is politically charged. The fact that black women dominate the soap opera is proof that they can achieve and after years of repression are now allowed to take their rightful place in a new South Africa.



A scene from Generations. Photo: SABC

Appearance

A glance at the appearance of the show's characters is revealing in terms of its representation of black women. All the characters sport the latest designer outfits and hairstyles. Most of them occupy senior positions within their companies and there are no children or husbands to take care of. Apart from Khetiwe, the character who is a domestic worker, everyone spends a lot of time at the hairdresser, shopping malls and at business meetings. As Smith (1996) argues:

"… There are rigid norms and stereotypes to conform to if you want to make it in the South African imagination as a black woman" (Smith, 1996:32).

In other words, the image of the black woman must fit into an aesthetic eurocentric one of one who has straight hair, a light skin, a toned body is well-educated and speaks well. This she argues is the image and dominant representation of the new black woman. It appears that the image of the poor rural uneducated black woman has been left behind.

From this reading, one can also infer that black women have to adopt certain characteristics in order to be seen as "successful." These include the characteristics mentioned above. It also suggests that even though black women are now fully recognised as citizens with agency, in order to be "accepted" as successful they are still required to conform to a particular stereotype.

Critical reception

But to what extent does the show reflect the realities of life in post-apartheid South Africa?

The fact that *Generations* was first screened in 1994 gave the producers the opportunity to represent an image of black people, and of women specifically, that did not fit into the dominant ideology of apartheid. However, the representation of black women in the soap opera is not a realistic reflection of the status of black women's role in society, as the producers have simply reproduced a white stereotype of "successful". The soap shows that although black women are in control of their lives and making their own decisions, they still have to fit into a particular stereotype of the non-confrontational, easy-going professional woman.

As Hall (1986:9) states:

"Because there are many different and conflicting ways in which meaning about the world can be constructed, it matters profoundly what and who gets represented, [...] and how things, people, events, relationships are represented."

Isidingo

The second soap opera under investigation is *Isidingo* which television critics argue, "best mirrors" South Africa's evolving democracy. According to the show's creative producer, Ilse van Hemert:

"...The show's success is due to the excellent quality of acting and it's a truly South African story, complex and fast moving. It is the thinking person's soapie" (SABC, 2005).

The show was first screened in 1998. The story is set in a mining community Horizon Deep, in the Northern Province, just outside Johannesburg. The central theme of the show was initially the intrigues and activities of the small mining community but it has since moved to the powerful intrigues of a television company owned by Barker Heyns.



The character Ma Agnes (middle) in a scene from Isidingo.
Photo: SABC

It appears that the image of the poor rural uneducated black woman has been left behind

Isidingo is often referred as the "show of unquestionable quality, a jewel in the crown of the industry" (G Anstey, "A mirror for the rainbow nation" *Sunday Times*, 28 March 2004). The show has been able to deal with issues such as affirmative action, domestic abuse and racism. It has also dealt with cross-cultural adoption, polygamy and the usual mix of murder, jealousy and backstabbing.

Viewership and format

According to the SABC, approximately 60 percent of the viewers are black, and 30 percent white (www.sabc.co.za). *Isidingo* enjoys the largest audience share across five channels namely, SABC2, Bop TV, M-Net and free to air channel, e-tv.

The key characters in the show are Barker Heyns

and his vindictive wife, Cheryl Heyns. Heyns's daughter, Lee is a tough no nonsense television executive. In the mining town Agnes Matabane and her family are key characters. She holds the family together and manages the local bar. She has had to take issue with her husband, Zebedee Matabane, who decided to marry another woman, as his culture allowed.

Ma Agnes, as she is affectionately known, was an illiterate housewife from a rural area, who educated herself and started a small expanding business. The couple has two children, Lettie and Parsons, who is married to HIV positive Nandipha Sithole. Twenty-something Nandipha has gone from being a maid to a TV presenter and an HIV/AIDS "ambassador." Nandipha has overcome an abusive past in the form of her taxi warlord-cum gangster husband who infected her with HIV. She embodies the strong black woman who has accepted her HIV positive status, gained self-confidence and proves that she can be a professional while living with HIV.

Critical reception

Television writers in the South African media argue, "*Isidingo* has proved itself to be original, fresh and always relevant" (G Anstey, "A mirror for the rainbow nation" *Sunday Times*, 28 March 2004). The shows' producer, Ian McCarthy argues that the story lines are atypical of the soap opera genre and continue to twist and turn, often leaving the viewer "breathless and intrigued" (N McCarthy, "The new aspirational", *Mail & Guardian*, www.mg.co.za, site accessed 10 May 2005.)

Stereotypes, however inaccurate, are one form of representation. Like fictitious characters,They are created to serve as substitutions. They are not to tell it like it is, but to invite and encourage pretence

According to McCarthy, the SABC required the new post-apartheid soaps to represent the changing face of the country. McCarthy further argues that there was a need for transforming society not just socially but also ideologically through representation of the nation. It was also seen as an opportunity to, as hooks (1992:116) asserts:

"...create a space of agency for black people, wherein we can both interrogate the gaze of the Other but also look back, and at one another, naming what we see."

The "reality" of its storyline is a constant feature of the show. But what is this "real"? The fact that the show has a domestic worker turned television presenter is representative of the idea that the new South Africa offers equal opportunities to black woman – a stereotyped representation: you can make it no matter what.

hooks (1992:26) argues:

"...Stereotypes, however inaccurate, are one form of representation. Like fictitious characters, they are created to serve as substitutions. They are not to tell it like it is, but to invite and encourage pretence. They are fantasy, a projection onto the other that makes them less threatening."

The following analyses of Nandipha, the domestic worker turned television presenter character illustrates hook's point.

From domestic worker to high flying television presenter

Nandipha symbolises the face and image of HIV. Viewers empathised with her character – an innocent young woman who was married to a man who slept around, abused her and later raped her. But Nandipha's life and character develops from one of a victim to that of a heroine. She won a competition to host a television show and was transformed from being an introverted, docile girl to a go-getter, savvy and stylish woman. Nandipha the domestic worker usually wore a pink maid's uniform with a scarf on her head. She now sports a fashionable woven hair-do that enhances her new glamour image. Nandipha's character has been allowed to develop over time and it also challenges the conventional stereotype of the back HIV positive woman.

As Prinsloo (1997:41) asserts:

"...Stereotypes only partially reflect women's experiences and do not offer alternatives to these societal expectations and there is also a tendency to marginalise women's issues in positioning or scheduling them, to exclude or under-report them."

However, Nandipha's character challenges the stereotype because while her initial role fell into the stereotype of domestic worker and rape victim, her

character developed and thus offered alternatives. It also drew attention to a problem that was and still is crippling the country.

However, it seems she only "made" it when she was discovered by television scouts. Her character goes through a dramatic transformation and through her narrative it demonstrates the very real problems that are facing South Africans. The Nandipha character shows that there is hope: if you strong enough and you "can make" it in the new South Africa.

Conclusion

Television soap operas are in some ways carrying the burden of representation. The soap operas under review in this article are representative of a transforming society and as such affect how women are represented in business, politics and in the home. At the same time they raise awareness of the socio-economic conditions that women find themselves in. The shows promote empowerment, though in different ways, and the directors, producers and the public broadcaster have wholeheartedly embraced these ideals. Both soaps can therefore be seen as an expression and validation of identity which represent a unified generation that is confident and ready to tackle challenges.

The soaps have given us alternative images but this does not mean we should wholeheartedly embrace these images because its ideology, although not as brutal as the apartheid regime's, is still powerful. Hence we have to interrogate the new post-apartheid stereotypes and representations of women on offer.

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Writer's Bio

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Women's media activism: cross cultural research and theory

Carolyn M Byerly and Karen Ross

Abstract

This article presents the findings of a study of women's media activism[1]. The qualitative findings from an analysis of participants' narratives suggests that the women followed specific strategies in their media activism. The study identifies a Model of Women's Media Action, which it is hoped will encourage others to extend and refine their qualitative and quantitative work in order to develop clearer understandings of the role of women's media activism in social change both within and across nations.

Key words

women's media activism, feminist movements, Model of Women's Media Action,

As critical researchers and feminists, we have made women-and-media issues (both within our own and in other nations) the focus of our scholarship for the better part of two decades. However, we have also been involved in feminist politics in various other ways. From this emerged our observations that media had been not only a target of feminist critiques for many years, but also an integral part of women's efforts to speak to a wider audience. We believed that women in various nations should participate in a study which would allow us to compare and contrast their strategies and experiences.

We undertook the study of women's media activism in 2003 and 2004 in order firstly, to document the range of projects that women have undertaken from nation to nation, secondly, to discern patterns in their activism, and lastly, to move toward a theory of women's media activism within the context of women's liberation movements.

Figure 1 on page 41, summarises the geographic location of participants, who volunteered to be interviewed in response to requests we posted to various global feminist listservs and through academic and other networks. Approximately half the interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the remainder either by telephone or via the Internet.

Informants came from nearly all regions of the world, with relatively more participation from India, the United States and South Africa. India and the United States have experienced extremely active feminist movements since the 1970s, including women's media activism. South Africa has experienced these developments since the end of apartheid in the late 1980s with the emergence of a newly democratic South Africa. We aggregated data in order to discern trends across nations but the major focus of our research was to elicit narratives from which we could obtain a more descriptive account of women's experiences as media activists.

Region	No. Participants
Africa Cameroon-1, Ghana-1, South Africa-10, Sudan-2, Zambia-1	15
America Canada-2, Colombia-1, Jamaica-4, Dominican Republic-1, United States-22	30
Europe Belgium-1, France-2, Germany-1, Netherlands-2, United Kingdom-5	11
South Asia, Middle East and Australia Australia-1, India-29, Iran-1, Israel-1, Malaysia-1, Philippines-1	34
Total	**90**

We defined media activism as any intentional effort to use media to circulate progressive ideas and analyses about women, to reform a media policy or practice with women's greater equality in mind, or to establish media enterprises which women would control in order to better insure women's interests would be represented. The period we were concerned with was the 1970s to the present – a span of about three decades – which roughly parallels the emergence and evolution of global feminism.

Profile of participants

While we did not ask informants to specify their ages or to provide other personal details, many did so voluntarily in the course of their interviews. Thus we were able to abstract a profile of them. All participants appeared to be college educated, with many holding post-graduate degrees. About a third referred to their backgrounds as "privileged" in relation to socio-economic class and the educational and other advantages this had brought them. Many, including those specifying privileged backgrounds, said their involvement in feminist and other social justice work was the result of having grown up in progressive, politically active families. Others came to their activism through varying routes, such as gaining a better analysis of women's status through something they had encountered at work, or through events that had convinced them to get politically involved.

Goals of media activism

About one quarter (26 percent) of the respondents identified their first goal to be increasing information about women in the media. Sixteen percent said their main goal was to inform women about their rights or to stop media stereotypes of women. Another 15 percent said they wanted to inform women about their legal rights or about some issue specifically related to women's status and wellbeing. A smaller number (11 percent) said that they wanted to use their media activism to help connect feminist issues to other broader concerns (e.g. housing, war, health, and environment). The most frequently mentioned secondary goals were to mobilise activism around women's issues (26 percent) and increasing coverage about women (22 percent). Very few (10 percent) cited some form of personal satisfaction as either a primary or secondary goal for engaging in women's media activism.

The period we were concerned with was the 1970s to the present which roughly parallels the emergence and evolution of global feminism

Current involvement

Because the timeframe we were considering in the study involved a three-decade period, it was useful to inquire about what participants were currently doing. Among other things, this allowed us to determine whether those who had made contributions in the 1970s and 1980s were still involved in some way. Nearly all participants indicated they are still active (though not necessarily in the same way that marked their earlier years). For example, just over a quarter (27 percent) said they remain active through their professions in the media, with many being print or broadcast journalists who are able to find ways of incorporating a gender angle into their stories or undertake longer investigative stories about women on a regular basis. Others said they work as feminist media advocates (17 percent), teach or train others to be media activists (17 percent), or serve on media monitoring projects (10 percent). The remaining 29 percent said they engage in some other activity, e.g. working for women's advancement in media through

unions, participating in non-governmental organisations, working through traditional political activities with an aim to expanding women's voice in the media, developing Internet websites, or running a women's book publishing house, among others.

Perceived accomplishments and future work

From their vantage point as activists, women we interviewed saw a range of outcomes from their (and in many cases, their organisations') work. A third (33 percent) said that there is more women-focused content in the media today because of women's media activism. A fifth (20 percent) said they believe there exists a stronger public consciousness about feminism because of their media activism. Slightly fewer participants believed that women's media activism has enabled women's ability to enter and advance in media professions (18 percent), to mobilise followers into women's rights work (12 percent), or to improve the image of women in mainstream media (<10 percent). The remainder believed their work had contributed to changing legislation relating to media or shifting public policies, or served to legitimise feminism among broader audiences.

Participants believed that the need for women's media activism was far from over

Participants believed that the need for women's media activism was far from over. The most frequently mentioned challenges were the need to secure greater coverage of women's lives and concerns in the news media (25 percent) and continuing to advance women into decision-making roles within media industries (25 percent). Some participants believed that feminists needed to build political alliances with other political movements to engage in media activism together (13 percent). Still others (12 percent) believed that sexist or inaccurate portrayals of women in advertising, television, news and other mainstream media remain compelling problems to be addressed. The remainder said that women's media activism should focus on lobbying for better public policies governing media content, or develop and circulate updated feminist critiques of media.

Limitations of the quantitative data

The study was designed within a critical and interpretive theoretical framework that made use of the ethnographic method of interviews and narrative reports, rather than social science methods, e.g. survey questionnaire. Therefore, the quantitative data summarised here should be understood as descriptive of this particular sample of 90 participants but not necessarily generalisable to all women media activists. We hope that the study, and the Model of Women's Media Action derived from it, will encourage others to extend and refine both our qualitative and quantitative work in order to develop clearer understandings of the role of women's media activism in social change both within and across nations.

Summary of qualtitative data

The qualitative findings from an analysis of participants' narratives suggested that women had followed discernible strategies in their media activism. We discerned four specific strategies, discussed here. In addition, we determined that their activism collectively functioned in a number of ways to advance feminist political ideals within women's movements. We used this information to pose a new model in feminist media theory that we call the "Model of Women's Media Action." These findings, and the model, are summarised here.



Women's media activism in action: Maria Suarez, director of Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE) at the Beijing +10 Conference in New York. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Model of Women's Media Action

The Model of Women's Media Action (MWMA) takes us a step closer to a well-developed theory of how this particular form of women's agency has functioned within women's liberation movements. The model begins to consider the range, purpose and interrelatedness of these activities in an organised way. In analysing the interviews and written answers of respondents in our study, we found that their activities had followed four distinct patterns that we have called paths. The metaphor of the path suits the present research on women's media activism well. A path connotes direction, purpose, and movement. It embodies the notion of a journey that begins one place and ends another. These characteristics reflect all or major parts of what participants in the study told us about their experiences, knowledge and lessons from working as feminist media activists.

The first path – which we call Politics to Media – is represented by feminists' decision to begin to use media as some part of their feminist political work. In other words, these women moved from simply being "feminist activists" to producing media products of some kind to speak to a wider audience, to circulate new ideas about women and/or to generate a public awareness and debate about a particular issue.

The second path – Media Profession to Politics – describes the strategy followed by women employed in media industries who decided to use their vantage point as insiders to expand women-related content or to reform the industry's policies to improve women's professional status. Women who followed this path are working media professionals. They were formally trained in a media profession – in news reporting, radio or television production, film or video production, or some other kind of media work. At some point in their career paths, they developed a strong identity (and perhaps involvement) with feminism and began to explore ways of increasing information about women in media content, of making company policies more egalitarian, or of taking some other specific action.

Women who follow the third path – Advocate Change Agent – used a strategy of pressuring media to improve treatment of women in one or more ways. The outside advocate's path often entails research and analysis about women and media, including publication of reports or articles. Advocacy may also entail mobilising a constituency to write letters or take some other specific action to change the media or to create laws and policies that will reform the women-and-media relationship.

The fourth path – Women-owned Media – allows women the maximum control over message production and distribution. Enterprises illustrated by this path include book and magazine publishing, syndicated radio programming, women's news agencies, and independent film and video companies.

How the Model of Women's Media Action functions in feminist movements

Based on the narratives of our 90 informants, we suggest that women's media activism functions in at least five important ways within feminist movements.

The *ritualistic* function: First, women's media activism serves a ritualistic function, announcing women's commitment to self-determination in the wider world. This function constructs women's private concerns as public issues, setting them before a larger audience with the message, "we will now address this in public view and through public forums."

Women's media activism serves to connect women with a feminist perspective across space and time

The *connective* function: Second, women's media activism serves to connect women with a feminist perspective across space and time. This has often been accomplished through women's own publications and other media.

The *educational* function: Third, women's media activism serves an educational function, pushing new feminist-oriented ideas, analyses and language into the public sphere that otherwise would have been silent, invisible or marginal with the specific goal of changing minds and hearts.

The *social alignment* function: Fourth, women's media activism has brought gender issues into closer alignment with socio-economic ones such as class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, i.e. related social characteristics that have long served as the basis for exclusion and marginalisation. Though gender is inherently imbedded in all social issues, this function serves to reveal the gender dimension more clearly.

The *regulatory* function: Lastly, women's media activism serves a regulatory function, helping to increase the flow of information from the inner workings of women's movements into the wider world. The most commonly cited primary and secondary goal among informants in our study was to increase the amount of information about women to the general public. This function has often been exercised through routine press releases, circulation of reports and feminist books emanating from women's groups to the wider world.

Recommendations

Women's agency through media activism defines the lines and means of struggle over women's right to communicate. As many have observed, the right to communicate is bound up with meaningful democratic participation in civil society to which women already belong but do not always have the means to readily enter because of historical barriers based on sex discrimination (which includes their exclusion from opportunities in education, employment, politics and so forth).

Very little is actually known about the specific ways that women have challenged such restrictions related to their communication in their day-to-day worlds. Such explorations have broad possibilities within and across nations as our own study sought to identify. Significantly, women's struggles to be heard in their societies on a wide range of matters that concern them, their families and their world, have not been confined to a single nation or region but rather seem to be universal in their geographical reach.

We have viewed these efforts collectively as a communication phenomenon and we have posited women's media activism as something whose patterns and contours are ready for more extensive description, definition, and theoretical analysis. We encourage investigations that seek to document women's efforts to communicate to each other and other constituencies through the media, particularly when these efforts are part of specific campaigns to achieve rights, or to bring broader dialogue on a social issue. Research that identifies and analyses women's success and failures to make specific media reforms will also contribute to an emerging literature on women's media activism. In addition, we encourage others to engage in theory-building in relation to women's media action so that women's agency in this area of social change can be better understood and explained.

Writer's Bio

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Notes

[1] This article is drawn from Byerly CM & Ross K (2006) Women and Media: A Critical Introduction, Blackwell Publications,



Putting gender violence on the media's agenda

By Janine Moolman

Abstract

The article looks at the forms of media activism employed during the 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence in 2005. It shows that there are multiple points of entry to influencing media agendas and highlights the potential of constructive engagement as a way of deepening media diversity.

Key words

media activism, content, diversity, gender violence

Gender activists have had a somewhat antagonistic relationship with media. Accusations of unfair, stereotypical and downright sexist representation of women have most often been at the root of this troubled relationship. Often media have defensively responded by either taking the criticisms on board in the interest of producing a more diverse and representative media (although the cases of this are few and far between) or, as in the case of the South African "Strip the back page campaign[1]" resort to public mudslinging or simply ignoring the criticisms.

However, it is not only gender activists who are in a constant struggle to see not only a fairer representation of gender concerns in the media, but also at a very basic level, the production of media that reflects the concerns of a particular group of people. The same battle is faced by environmentalists, people working on minority and indigenous issues, and so forth. But why is it so difficult to get the media to reflect what are seen as legitimate concerns that have impact on societies at large? The argument that is used to silence those calling for a more representative media often is: "it's about our bottom line."

Fair enough, but surely logic would imply that if citizens are presented with media they find useful, can relate to and which enhances their world view this would affect the bottom line – positively! The question then is how do activists engage with the media in a way that benefits both parties?

Dictionary.com defines activism as "The use of direct, often confrontational action, such as a demonstration or strike, in opposition to or support of a cause." However, activism does not necessarily have to be confrontational. In some instances media activism has more impact when efforts are made to find common ground rather than to assume opposing positions. This is not to say that criticism is silenced, rather it creates a culture in which constructive criticism is encouraged and even welcomed.

So how do activists engage with media in constructive ways? There are many entry points, as was demonstrated during the South African 16 Days of Activism Campaign on Gender Violence in 2004.

Providing content

A major critique of journalism and reporting in Southern Africa is that it is event-driven and single sourced. This is evident in reports on gender violence where incidents of rape, sexual assault, domestic and economic violence are reported as single events; with very little analysis into the root causes of gender violence, or for that matter how high levels of gender violence threatens democracy.

The coverage of gender violence shifted to more in-depth and probing articles

A key strategy during the 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence was to provide media with "ready to use" content that provided a more analytical perspective. Importantly, writers were drawn from a cross section of people working on issues of gender violence, and those directly affected by gender violence. The results of this were two-fold: firstly, journalists were able to access more and non-traditional sources (survivors of violence, academics and researchers, etc as opposed to officials, spokespersons etc.) when writing their own stories and secondly, the coverage of gender violence shifted from the "who, what, when, where, why and how" to more in-depth and probing articles.

Defining the issues

Gender violence is a complex problem that requires interrogation from a number of entry points. These include examining policies and legislation to address gender violence, the provision of adequate services to survivors of gender violence, public awareness and education on the issues, the many forms of gender violence etc.

It is therefore critical that the media articulate these issues in the public space in a manner that captures this complexity. However, journalists do not necessarily have the time, or for that matter an interest in excavating what the critical issues are. Responding to this, gender activists developed a set of thematic areas which informed the focus of the campaign and also provided journalists with guidance, background information and available content on the core campaign areas of focus. This ranged from themes on trafficking, masculinities, places of safety and care, amongst others.

The 16 Days of Activism Campaign has also been critiqued by the media as "sentimental" and not having any meaningful impact on the levels of gender violence in the country. As such every year has seen some scepticism underlying some reports on the campaign. In direct response to these criticisms, which many gender activists themselves had acknowledged, an audit of the extent to which commitments made by the government in the previous years' campaign was undertaken and the results made public at the beginning of the campaign.

This had multiple impacts. Firstly, it shifted the debates in the public sphere from questioning the relevance of the campaign, to holding government responsible for commitments it had made. It also located the discussion on gender violence beyond the 16 days of the campaign and framed it as a social and political issue that required action from a range of sectors – a critical shift for gender activists who have long argued that efforts to end gender violence must be sustained and receive public attention beyond the high profile campaign.



Amina Franse, board member of MISA South Africa (left) and Maureen Isaacson, Assistant Editor and Books Editor of the *Sunday Independent* at the media debate. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Engaging in debate

While influencing content is an important strategy, unless there was "buy in" from editors and journalists themselves, no matter how relevant the content, the likelihood of the strategies mentioned above having any significant impact was not very strong.

Recognising the need to engage with editors and journalists on issues of concern, a public debate with under the theme "16 Days of Activism: High horse for gender activists or a valuable campaign[2]?" took place prior to the campaign launch.

Editors, journalists, media practitioners and gender activists participated in a vibrant and controversial discussion that covered topics such as media ethics, coverage of gender violence, and the critique of the campaign by media as "sentimental" and having limited impact, amongst other issues. Importantly, the debate provided for both "sides" so to speak to exchange views in a productive forum.

The debate also brought the spotlight on media's role in ending gender violence. The "oppositional" relationship was reframed as one of partnership, working towards a shared goal. The debate was an example of media activism working from "the inside".

What next?

Ensuring sustained and sensitive coverage on gender violence beyond the 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence remains a challenge for gender and media activists. Outside of the campaign period we can continue to utilise the strategies described above, but we can also engage in longer term activities to ensure an improvement of coverage over time.

This includes working at the policy level through critique of and input into new legislation and policies governing the media environment; using the channels provided by regulatory authorities more effectively to challenge offensive and insensitive coverage; interventions at the level of media ownership; and initiating consumer campaigns.

Writer's Bio
Janine Moolman is the editor and assistant director at Gender Links.

Notes

[1] When in 2002 the South African Gender and Media Network called for the "removal of the back page" in the week leading up to International Women's Day, the response from media was personalised. See www.genderlinks.org.za for more information.

[2] The Media Monitoring Project, Gender Links and Constitution Hill collaborated on the debate.



Gender justice: Making IT work

By Kubi Rama

Abstract

The article looks at the "IT for Advocacy" campaign that took place in Southern Africa during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in 2005. It shows how, instead of information having the potential of widening the digital divide, it can also contribute towards ensuring that the voices of marginalised communities are represented in the information age.

Key words

cyber dialogues, IT, advocacy, training, media

When one hears the words "information technology" ideas of high tech equipment and a mystical language of "bandwith, URLs, domains, connectivity and dial ups" come to mind. It appears to be out of reach of many and indeed, arguments about the widening "digital divide" abound.

But information technology (IT) also has the power to link communities of people beyond their physical borders. At the click of a button someone in Rwanda can communicate with a counterpart in Zambia, sending an important message, or photograph, or even a sound bite.

The Gender Links cyber dialogues project[1] piloted in 2004 helps bridge both the gender and digital divide. The project, which operates under the banner "Making IT work for gender justice" works to harness the potential of IT in an advocacy campaign to end gender violence.

Since the inception of Gender Links' strategic communications training in 2003, the organisation has sought ways on how to leverage communication for use in advocacy campaigns. Up until 2004, relatively limited use had been made of the "new media" in 16 Days of Activism campaigns. The Gender Links cyber dialogue project brought together 50 people from non-governmental organisatons (NGOs), community based organisations, councillors and government communications departments from all the provinces in South Africa. Participants at a two-day workshop were trained as facilitators on how to use the cyber dialogues website and to get comfortable with "chatting" online. They took the skills they learnt and shared them with their communities. The training resulted in 65 access points for participation in the cyber dialogues across the country.

Recognising the potential of using IT for advocacy on gender violence, the cyber dialogues project spread its wings in 2005 when 563 people from 10 countries in Southern Africa received training. Gender Links trained members of the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network who developed a 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence action plan, a key component of which was participation in the cyber dialogues.

The action plan was implemented through a coordinating committee that was identified during the training. One participants in the training said:

"It was really good for me to get a chance to be exposed to the Internet again, to receive the latest knowledge of IT. At least now I will be able to connect with colleagues in Swaziland about the issues that affect us."

Conducting training on site meant that the facilitator's got a clear sense of what IT capacity existed in different countries. Facilitator's could test the technology locally and trouble-shoot if there were problems. Also, the information could be fed back to the organisers so that the technology could be tailored to allow as many people as possible to access the cyber dialogues across the region. The training sites often became the cyber dialogue access points during the campaign.



Getting to grips with the cyber dialogues during a training workshop in Zimbabwe. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Each day had a specific theme relating to gender violence under which the cyber dialogues took place. Themes included trafficking, legislation, the criminal justice system, and working with men, amongst others. In South Africa the media could access fact sheets for each of the themes through the Gender Links website. The Gender Links Commentary service commissioned expert pieces and first hand accounts or "I" stories on the different themes. As a result of the readily available content, 64 print media across the region used content provided by the Service. In South Africa the television coverage on the public broadcaster tended to follow cyber dialogue themes using the fact sheets and daily discussions as their reference point.

A total of 703 users from 12 countries participated in the cyber dialogues

The approach facilitated region-wide discussions on the themes and ensured that discussions occurred in country in local languages. Regional cyber dialogues took place on five days: 25 November (International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children: Trafficking and Violence Against Refugee Women); 1 December (International AIDS Day); 3 December (International Day of the Disabled); 6 December (Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre: Role of men and boys) and 9 December (Day of Commitments: From advocacy to action). Experts and participants from 12 different countries contributed to the discussions and reinforced the need for regional cooperation on these issues.

Using the chat technology it was possible to set up eight different language rooms. These included English, Kiswahili, isiZulu, Creole, Portuguese, Chichewa, Sotho and Shona. GEMSA country chapters utilised the specific language rooms to have in country discussions in their local language. This facility extended the reach and depth of the cyber dialogues substantially in the region. A total of 703 users from 12 countries participated in the cyber dialogues. People in individual countries took ownership of the process and of the content of the dialogues. They were able to identify actions specific to their context and that could be monitored over the coming year.

One of the key outcomes of the strategy has been transferring and sustaining the IT skills GEMSA members learnt during the training by creating opportunities and access to the Internet. During 2006 GEMSA will use the cyber dialogues in various regional campaigns to enhance members' skills and to mobilise through online petitions and alerts.

The 2004 cyber dialogues campaign in South Africa broke down barriers. An aspect that stands out is that the virtual nature of the cyber dialogues created a safe, anonymous space to speak out. Women could "speak" openly about being raped or sexually harassed and ask for help which was then provided in the form of telephone numbers and names of institutions and organisations that could assist. This trend continued during the 2005 campaign.

An example of this comes from Benson:

"*The thing is I live in a shack with my husband who is very ABUSIVE I must say, but I don't know what to do with the situation. I feel trapped.*"

Benson was provided with telephone numbers of shelters and counselling services.

The cyber dialogues have reinforced for the facilitators, GEMSA and Gender Links, a number of important principles. These include:

- The importance of learning how to use IT for a purpose,
- Ensuring that there is access to the technology,
- Training in context using local priorities,
- Using software and hardware that may be utilised by as many people as possible, and
- The necessity of participants taking ownership of the process and content.

On a macro level it highlights the need to take ownership of IT for our purposes and to harness the power of IT to promote gender equality.

Writer's Bio
Kubi Rama is the CEO of the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network.

Notes

[1] Cyber dialogue: an hour long real time online discussion through a moderated chat room.



Declaring war on the sexist adverts

By Loga Virahsawmy

Abstract

The article shares the different strategies and approaches employed to ensure the removal of sexist advertisements in Mauritius.

Key words

advertising, sexism, media, regulatory authorities, advocacy

The way in which women are treated in society is a reflection of the strength of the societies' democracy. If women are not treated equally and respectfully, half of the members of that society are unable to access the benefits of their democracy. The little tiger of the Indian Ocean, as Mauritius is often called, posits itself as a model of democracy in Southern African region. Yet a cursory glance at the sexism displayed in some Mauritian advertisements, paints a different picture.

Despite this, it appears that gender and media organisations on the island are gaining ground when it comes to the removal of sexist advertisements. Media activism on the island has resulted in the removal of more than 10 sexist advertisements, thus contributing to a more consientised and gender sensitive advertising industry.

The 2003 Media Watch Organisation[1] (MWO) call for the removal of a sexist advert from prime time television, was the first challenge relating to sexist advertisements in Mauritius' history. The advert depicted the silhouette of a woman undressing in front of a building. An official letter of complaint was sent to the Mauritius Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) with a copy to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. This was followed by an aggressive national media literacy campaign (specifically targeting advertisements) as well as the publication of articles in the press. Our efforts paid off and the advertisement was eventually removed.

This was our first victory. We have had many since and learnt that there are a number of ways to bring pressure to bear on advertisers and broadcasters to remove sexist and offensive advertisements.

MWO-GEMSA is the only organisation in Mauritius that has taken complaints of sexism to the IBA, which is the only regulatory body for the media in the country. Importantly, our media literacy work has raised the levels of awareness of sexist advertisements amongst ordinary Mauritians including members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community leaders, women's organisations and schools. Through our work, it has become apparent that while many people have been offended by sexist adverts, they simply did not know what to do about them. This has been particularly problematic as there is no general Press Complaints Commission or similar body in Mauritius.

However, the IBA does accept, investigate and rule on discriminatory news items and reports as well as advertisements. Unlike the South African Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) revised Code of Advertising Practice where sexist advertising is explicitly condemned, the IBA Code of Conduct for Broadcasting Services is vague on this issue.

The only clause that can be used to combat sexism reads:

"(a) any material, which is indecent, obscene or offensive to public morals or offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the population…

(b) present material, which depicts or relates to brutality violence, atrocities, drug abuse and obscenity."

South Africa's ASA is much more specific and states: *"Gender stereotyping or negative gender portrayal shall not be permitted in advertising, unless in the opinion of the ASA, such stereotyping is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society on human dignity, equality and freedom."*

Getting sexist adverts removed can be a long and tedious process, often without the desired result

The Mauritian Association of Advertising Agencies (AAA) has its own Code of Conduct which does not condemn sexist advertisements, but nearly all advertising companies are members of the AAA. It would therefore be strategic to lobby the body to adopt a stronger position on sexist adverts as all members would be required to comply with the standards set. For now, getting sexist adverts removed can be a long and tedious process, often without the desired result. And even when adverts are removed, it is done discreetly, very rarely with a public apology on behalf of the advertisers.



The offending advertisement that was successfully removed.
Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

Although there is cause for celebration because of the removal of some sexist advertisements, the single winning formula which will assist us in our work is yet to be found. However the variety of strategies we are employing do seem to be paying off.

When we saw an advertisement on garbage bins advertising for a brand of t-shirt with the wordings "I wish these were brains" on a woman's breasts, we knocked at the right doors.

We sent a complaint to the Sex Discrimination Division with copy to the Municipal Council of Port Louis. We also wrote letters and published articles in the media. Our work paid off as members of the police were deployed to remove all of the advertisements which had been placed all over Mauritius. But it did not end there and the matter was heard as a specific item on the agenda of the Municipal Council of Port Louis.

In a letter dated 25 April 2005 to MWO-GEMSA, the Town Clerk of the Municipal Council of the City of Port Louis wrote:

"The advertisements placed on waste bins have been removed and this matter is being brought before the appropriate committee to review the policy concerning advertisements to be affixed in public places."

But other advertisements were soon doing the rounds and we became even more vigilant. We have found a good partner who shows great understanding in our work – the Mauritius Attorney General who is also the Minister of Justice and Human Rights.

Discriminatory advertisements must be removed immediately and sometimes cannot wait for the long administrative procedures of the IBA. A telephone call followed by a fax to the Attorney General and Minister of Human Rights is now doing the trick. Two radio advertisements were instantly removed when we used this strategy.

And our reputation is growing. In early December MWO-GEMSA, on the advice of the Attorney General, received an urgent request from the largest corporate body in Mauritius asking us to approve their calendar before printing and distribution:

"*Mauritius Telecom has made a corporate communication campaign to highlight the contribution of MT to the lives of all Mauritian citizens... we are making a calendar. The Attorney General suggested that I contact you for a clearance. We would appreciate having your feedback before going ahead,"* read the request.

We certainly have come a long way and our work is paying off. Our calls for legislation to govern sexist adverts have also been heard. On 23 January 2006 we received a letter from the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice and Human Rights which stated:

"*The Ministry of Human Rights is collaborating with Media Watch in order to have the proper legislation to get rid of all types of sexist advertisements.*"

It appears we are winning the war against sexist adverts.

Writer's Bio

Loga Virahsawmy is the Chair of Media Watch Organisation, the Mauritian Chapter of the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network.

Notes

[1] Now also the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network chapter in Mauritius, hence the acronym MWO-GEMSA.



Why we need media policies

By Patricia Made

Abstract

This article argues that media houses can only ensure that they fulfill their roles in society, create innovative, non-discriminatory and effective working environments, and produce high quality products through internal checks and balances that are systematised through policies. It explores reasons why the media needs to develop policies and also identifies the key policy-makers within the media.

Key words

policies, workplace, accountability, policy-makers

No media is an island. Every media institution, whether classified as state, public, private, independent or community media, is situated within a given society.

The free exchange of information in and through the media is one of the general tenets of democracy adopted worldwide. But it is not the free flow of information alone that is central to the vision of democracy. This information must be disseminated through a free, independent and publicly interested press.

Ask any editor, journalist, sub-editor or media owner why the media is there, and the first round of answers are along the lines of: "The media is there to inform, educate and entertain." When probed further to find out if these are the only functions of the media, one begins to hear things like: "The media is a catalyst for change; it serves a watchdog function to keep government accountable; the media mirrors and reflects society."

But on whose behalf or, for whose benefit is the media at work? By and large the first answer is "the media operates in the public's interest."

This introspective discussion with media practitioners at all levels, but especially senior management, is necessary outside of the day-to-day hustle of meeting deadlines. Media owners and managers should constantly reflect on the following two key questions:

- Are we still relevant? In other words, is the media we own, manage or work for covering the issues that greatly affect the majority of the public?
- Who is the public? Are the views and perspectives of the public (men and women of various races, sexes, classes, geographical locations, ages, ethnicities, etc.) reflected in the media, or those of only certain groups?

Also, it is no longer correct to assume that the media in whatever shape or form objectively puts out information to the public. While the following quotation comes from

a black woman legal scholar and columnist in the United States, the view given of the media is worth pondering by those who shape and make the news in Southern Africa:

"The media do not merely represent; they also recreate themselves and their vision of the world as desirable, salable. What they reproduce is chosen, not random, not neutral, not without consequence. To pretend (as we all do from time to time) that film or television, for example, is a neutral vessel, or contentless, mindless, or unpersuasive, is sheer denial…" (Williams, 1995:79).

Patricia J Williams, who is a recipient of a Macarthur Genius Award for her writings on the intersection between race and gender goes further to state that the media "constitute one of the major forces" in the shaping of a nation's vision and sense of identity. Research on media influences also shows that the media not only shapes national identities, but also individual identities around gender, race, class and other classifications.

Therefore the very institution in society that seeks to uphold democracy in other entities on behalf of the public has to consciously and consistently ensure that the free flow of information and images, as well as the conditions within its own walls, do not promote discrimination, inequality, stigma, human rights violations and other undemocratic tendencies.

Not only should the media serve as one of the checks and balances in a society, it should also have its own forms of internal checks and balances so that it can avoid the proverbial adage: "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones."

The development of policies provides this internal system of checks and balances to help media houses play a key role in a democracy by "…providing a space for civil society debate, for people to air their views and to promote alternative agendas" (Scalway, 1993:52).

Media accountability

Another reason for the media to develop policies is to ensure that it is accountable to its workforce and to the public. One of the media's main functions is to serve as a "watchdog" of the institutions that ensure democratic governance – the executive, legislature and judiciary – and to ensure that all entities in the public and private sectors of a society adhere to the principles of equality and justice for all.

The media has sought to keep itself accountable through the adherence to a basic set of principles, ethics and codes of conduct. But it is also coming under the spotlight from external forces.

There has been a surge in media activism throughout Southern Africa during the last 10 years. One aspect of this activism has concentrated on campaigns for the development of independent and free media, media liberalisation and opening of the airwaves, and for the protection of the rights of media practitioners to carry out their work in an atmosphere free of intimidation. This form of activism's aim has been to protect the media and its role as a check and balancer in the region's emerging democracies.

There has been a surge in media activism throughout Southern Africa during the last 10 years

The media however, should pensively cast its attention on the growing networks, movements and activism to bring about greater diversity in and through the media. Media monitoring and research is beginning to focus on who is given the right to communicate and to freedom of expression; whose voices and perspectives are missing; how various groupings are represented in the media; how the media perpetuates stigma and discrimination against certain groups, as well as who is who in the media's ranks.

This second type of activism is various groups' attempts to keep the media accountable to the public.

In order to protect its credibility and its cherished freedom, the media needs to put its own house in order. The development of policy and policy reform to transform undemocratic practices within the media are key strategies to do this.

Policy also is a sign of effective media management. An effective leader is often a visionary who is able to not only create, but also communicate a compelling vision to others. This vision cannot just be communicated orally. It needs to be infused into the operations of an institution at every level, as well as guided into implementation. Again, policy is a significant tool to translate vision into action.

Getting it right: policy as a tool for mainstreaming and a check on editorial independence

The media must stay abreast of many trends, new developments and challenges in societies. It must also ensure that its internal environment too is not archaic or sluggish due to management systems, which do not promote creativity and growth.

Policy provides an avenue for the media to meet these challenges by using the strategy of mainstreaming. Mainstreaming involves both internal transformation as well as the integration of certain considerations (be it gender, HIV and AIDS, race or other issues of diversity, etc) into all aspects of service delivery – from the inception and design of projects to their implementation, training and capacity building, to monitoring and evaluating the outcomes.

The media's claims of editorial independence also can be tainted through the various biases, prejudices and attitudes, which can easily appear in the news product when there is no guiding framework.

While it can take longer to change, gender biases and prejudices among media practitioners, for example, a clear set of guidelines set out in a policy framework (employment and editorial) can change the way people do their work, thereby avoiding the slippage of these biases and prejudices into the media's news product, and in women being limited to covering certain issues, and remaining in low level positions within media houses.


DAILY SUN
SA's BIGGEST DAILY!
GREAT LAKES OF AFRICA
TELL ME... PAGE 30
PRICE: R1,30 countrywide
WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2005

BUCS CAPTAIN ON RAPE RAP!

The Citizen 18 Sept. 2001

No sex please, we're Swazi

NHLANGANO – The Swaziland Government has announced a five-year sex ban for young women in a bid to combat the spread of HIV/Aids.

The ban was announced by the leader of Swaziland's young women, Lungile Ndlovu, who said the elders of the nation had deemed it fitting.

"During this period you will be expected to observe a five-year sex ban, no shaking of hands with males, no wearing of pants and you will be expected to wear woollen tassels wherever you go for the next five years," Ndlovu said at the end of lengthy celebrations to mark the Swazi king's 33rd birthday.

Ndlovu did not specify what age group the ban was trying to target, but said women who were in relationships and older than 19 years would be expected to wear red with black tassels, and those who were still virgins will wear blue with yellow.

Her announcement was met by howls of protest.

The ban follows an announcement by King Mswati III on Friday that Swaziland would revive the "umchwasho" chastity rite to preserve virginity among girls and combat Aids.

Under the rite, the girls wear woollen "do not touch me" tassels of different colours depending on their ages.

Ndlovu said the tradition of preserving maidens' chastity – (known as Imabal YeMaswati or Flower of the Nation) – will be policed by traditional chiefs, who still rule over much of Swazi society.

Any man who failed to observe the rules would be fined 1 300 Emalangeni (R1 250) or one cow.

More than 50 000 people have died of Aids in Swaziland, which has a population of about one million. – *Sapa-AFP.*

The existence of policies will eliminate problematic headlines such as these.

Who are the policy-makers?

The policy-makers within media institutions include the owners or publishers, and senior managers of all sections, including editorial.

The green light for the development of a policy is often given by the highest governance structure of an institution – the directorate (owners or their corporate representatives). Therefore when beginning the process of introducing new policy frameworks, it is important to ensure that one starts at the top.

The directorate makes many of the financial and managerial decisions, while editors (news, features, business, etc. including sub-editors) decide on the content of the media product and serve as the link between the directorate and journalists and other staff.

For policy to move beyond paper, and for it to be seen as a credible process by all staff, commit-ment from the highest level becomes essential since policy entails the allocation of human and financial resources.

In terms of editorial policy, key editorial managers are the shapers and drivers of policy. The primary function of journalists is story production. While it is important to communicate and discuss policy with them, editorial directions from within the editorial hierarchy guide them.

When everyone is on board, there is a higher chance of the policy being owned and implemented.

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Writer's Bio

Patricia Made is a Gender Links Board member and former Director-General of IPS. This article is the republication of a chapter in the forthcoming publication *HIV and AIDS and gender policies in media houses: Media Action Plan Handbook.*

Policies in Southern Africa

In 2003 the Southern Africa Editors Forum (SAEF), Gender Links and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network undertook a research study to determine the number of media houses in the SADC member countries that have policies on HIV/AIDS and gender[1].

The research aimed to establish what policies are in existence with a view to gather existing resources and materials; determine possible approaches and tools to be used in support for the roll out of such policies; as well as develop a handbook to guide the process.

Findings

					HIV/AIDS Policy			Gender Policy		
Country	Media houses listed	Media houses interviewed	Media houses with policies	Media houses without policies	Yes	In progress	No	Yes	In progress	No
Total	404	366	37	329	33	14	319	23	10	333
Percentage		90,59%	10,11%	89,89%	9.02%	3.83%	87.16%	6.28%	2.73%	90.98%

The research shows that only 10.11 percentof the 90.59 percent[2] media houses interviewed have policies on gender and / or HIV/AIDS. More media houses have HIV/AIDS policies (9.02%) compared to gender policies (6.28%). In addition, more media houses (3.83%) are in the process of developing or are willing to develop HIV/AIDS policies, unlike those on gender (2.73%). The study also shows that media houses lack a clear understanding of:

- ***Why they should develop and implement HIV/AIDS and gender policies***

  Some of the respondents expressed negative sentiments regarding what the value of having a gender or HIV/AIDS policy would be to the company. Others said that they were already addressing gender and HIV/AIDS at the workplace and therefore saw no need to have a written policy. For instance, some respondents said that they did not require a gender policy because they had many women employees. Those that claimed to have an HIV/AIDS policy said they did not require a gender policy because, they argued, women are the ones most infected and affected by the pandemic and since they have an HIV/AIDS policy, women's issues were being addressed.

- ***What a gender or HIV/AIDS policy is***

  During the interviewing process, some respondents indicated that they had an HIV/AIDS or gender policy. However, after asking them if they would to the questionnaire, they said that they did not have a written policy. Regarding gender polices, generally there is more emphasis on numbers of women employees in media houses rather than on main-streaming gender to completely transform the over-all work environment to be responsive to gender concerns.

- ***How HIV/AIDS and gender issues can be mainstreamed into their programmes and general strategies***

  The policies are mainly workplace oriented. They did not commit to incorporating HIV/AIDS and gender issues in their editorial content, packaging or general reporting style. Only three respondents (Capital Radio Malawi, Mazabuka Community Radio (Zambia) and Moletsi Community Radio (South Africa) indicated that their media houses have committed to incorporating gender and HIV/AIDS issues in their editorial guidelines.

More information on the Media Action Plan can be found on the Gender Links website at www.genderlinks.org.za

Notes

[1] The study forms part of the Media Action Plan on HIV/AIDS and Gender which is a collaborative effort by the Southern African Editors Forum (SAEF) and NGO partners to improve coverage of HIV/AIDS and gender, as well as mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the media industry.

[2] A total of 405 media houses were listed, but only 365 were interviewed. Responses could not be obtained from the other media houses and in other instances, the telephone numbers did not exist.



Does South African media policy pass the test of diversity?

By René Smith

Abstract

The article provides some of the legislation impacting traditional and new media in South Africa – with specific reference to the extent to which policy engages issues of diversity and gender. It contends that media diversity necessitates an engagement with gender equality and equity at a policy level, both internally and at a macro level.

It argues further that media diversity is often assessed from a liberal pluralist vantage, and foregrounds questions to be interrogated as South Africa navigates its second decade of democracy and associated freedoms. The article advances consistency between domestic and regional policy as a necessary requirement for regional harmonisation.

Key words

gender integration, liberal pluralism, media diversity, policy and regulation, regional harmonisation

Over a decade after democracy and almost 10 years since South Africa's new Constitution, "consumers" are better placed in terms of the variety of media at their disposal. The general public is fed a diet of what is trumped as "popular public broadcasting" (whatever "popular" may mean), commercial broadcasting and commercial public broadcasting, the latter of which are sometimes indistinguishable.

In addition, contrary to the expected demise of newspapers (in particular) following the insurgence of new media, the print industry appears to be growing in the diversity of product available. Papers targeting black (African, Indian and coloured) and white Afrikaner working class people, for example, demonstrate increased readership and circulation. But are these signs of a diverse media landscape? Are we reading or hearing everyone's stories? Or are we reading the same stories, told differently in a way that sells? Should there be increased regulation (when over regulation often underlies a fascist state)? Or should we engage systematic approaches to media literacy and education, which create a demand and expectation for quality and choice in the kinds of stories and product on offer?

While South African legislation advances media and cultural diversity, very often diversity is conflated with pluralism and at times is used to veil aggressive

liberalisation. Diversity is thus "naturally" associated with pluralism, which in turn is construed as an increased number of products – minus the political economy and inherent power relations. Pluralism is often seen as a "natural" consequence of democracy, which allows for difference and divergent politics, opinions, cultures, tastes, beliefs and so forth.

Yet a glance at the current status quo suggests that the boundaries between apparently distinct media products are becoming increasingly blurred. As the *Daily Sun*[1] for example, delivers consumers, so the *Sowetan*[2] repositions itself in pursuit of the same winning formula. And while *Nova*[3] offers to talk to a new, untapped market, how different is its allocative control from that of the *Daily Sun* or the (weekly) *Son*[4]*?* All three are Media 24 products, and the extent to which they can be regarded as "oppositional" or even "counter-hegemonic" texts remains the subject of increasing debate (cf. Wasserman, 2005).

Similarly, the regulator, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) has dealt with complaints about indistinguishable radio formats. These include complaints about stations sounding like their competitors. For example in October 2000, East Coast Radio (a radio station in the province of Kwa Zulu-Natal [KZN]) lodged a complaint against P4 (also in KZN) arguing the station moved from their licensed format of smooth contemporary jazz to adult contemporary. In 2004, the station complained that Radio 2000 (SABC) had changed their format to sound like East Coast Radio. Significantly these cases demonstrate the slippery terrain of format definitions and notably the lack thereof at a policy level.

Yet media diversity is not simply about different papers or formats. It is about diversity of media ownership, empowerment of previously disadvantaged groups and diversity in terms of portrayal. To this extent, internal media policies and legislation should not only integrate gender, but also promote corrective action in terms of stereotyped portrayals that perpetuate the dominant patriarchal ideology. Yet this is often a site of contestation, as complaints about the potential impact of stereotyped portrayals are often legitimately dismissed on the basis of legalities and the promotion of other guarantees afforded by the Constitution. It is often the application of the "balance" of human rights and the test of "reason" that underpins decisions to dismiss gender-related complaints. Indeed, a critical issue that needs to be debated is the extent to which complaints about the portrayal of women (for example) focus on obscenity and promoting "pornography" as opposed to infringing one's right to dignity.

It remains critical for lobby and advocacy groups to monitor not only the media, but also the legislative environment within which they operate to ensure gender equality and equity.

Media diversity is about diversity of media ownership, empowerment of previously disadvantaged groups and diversity in terms of portrayal

The Constitution

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is widely regarded as a progressive piece of legislation that advances human rights consistent with universal and regional treaties. Significant in this regard is the right to freedom of expression; including freedom of the press and other media; access to information and the establishment of an "independent authority to regulate broadcasting in the public interest, and to ensure fairness and a diversity of use broadly representing South African society" (s192, 1996).

Human dignity and diversity is explicitly spelt out in the Bill of Rights, which states:

"The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth" (s9(3), 1996).

In addition, citizens are also provided institutions, which support constitutional democracy. These include the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) and the South African Human Rights Commission, which are expected to promote respect for gender equality and human rights, respectively (cf. Chapter 9).

Regulation

Consistent with the Constitution, broadcasting and telecommunications is regulated by ICASA. While the powers of the regulator are contained within the ICASA Act (2000), this Act will soon be amended to reflect the



The *Daily Sun* is the biggest selling newspaper in South Africa. Photo: GCIS

delineation of powers between the regulator and that of the Minister of Communications as outlined in the Electronic Communications Bill (2005) (previously known as the Convergence Bill).

The creation, production and distribution of films, interactive computer games and certain publications are regulated by the Film and Publications Board (FPB). The countries' self-regulatory bodies include the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa, (BCCSA), the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) of South Africa, Internet Service Providers' Association (ISPA) and the South African Wireless Application Service Providers' Association (WASPA).

The MDDA is mandated to help create an enabling environment for media development and diversity

The public is able to access complaints structures of the above as well as the Broadcasting, Monitoring and Complaints Committee (BMCC) provided for in terms of the Independent Broadcasting Act (IBA) (1993) and soon to be replaced by the Complaints and Compliance Committee (cf. Electronic Communications Act). In addition, democratic participation and public consultation processes are provided for by section 28 and section 27 of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (1993) and the Telecommunications Act (1997), respectively.

The Media Development and Diversity Agency

The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) is a statutory body, established in terms of the MDDA Act (2002), with financial support from government and commercial media players. According to the Act, the MDDA is mandated:

"*... To help create an enabling environment for media development and diversity that is conducive to public discourse and which reflects the needs and aspirations of all South Africans.*"

In the past financial year, over R8.7 million (approximately US $1.4 million) in support was approved. This included support to a feminist "media project" towards the development of a web site based training programme and upgrading of equipment as well as the production of one edition of a journal per year for three years, and towards strengthening institutional capacity of an organisation promoting "Women and ICT's".

Of the organisation's 74 projects supported since January 2004, 14 were community print, 16 commercial print and 34 community radio. The MDDA's support for community television includes a national study on sustainable business models and evaluation of a special-events broadcast for a Gauteng-based station and the production of a Community TV manual.

While the MDDA has provided support to over 100 projects across the country since 2004, it remains critical to assess the extent of the MDDA's work in terms of the promotion of diversity and development. This is vital to the sustainability of the agency. Significant in this regard is the extent to which decisions taken by the regulator ICASA, impact on the work of the MDDA.

For example, how does the non-renewal and/or revoking of community radio licences, concomitant lawsuits and subsequent delays in terms of broadcasting for alternative stations granted the same frequency, impact the funding for existing and future community sound broadcasters? To what extent is the MDDA involved in consultation with the regulator around diversity issues in particular? To what extent is the MDDA involved in the rollout of digital equipment and the national strategy to ensure digital migration?

It is equally important to ask whether it is the responsibility of government or (media) sector organisations to ensure the levelling of playing fields in terms of the prioritisation of applications from digital broadcasters (cf. Convergence Bill, 2005) or whether the existence of a single, dedicated agency provides a sustainable strategy to deal with media diversity issues, or if civil society organisations should be capacitated to provide long-term support to the various media projects instead.

Policies, codes and guidelines

In addition to the above, there exists a (revised) code of conduct for broadcasters, the code of conduct of the BCCSA, the ASA Advertising Code, the WASPA Code of Conduct and the FPB's Classification Guidelines. Moreover, following the release of ICASA's Subscription Broadcasting Services Position Paper (2005), a code of conduct for subscription broadcasting services will need to be developed before June 2006.

It is often concern regarding editorial independence, violence, pornography, concentration of ownership and protection of children and local language and cultures that necessitates the drafting of regulation and policies. The inclusion of gender is at times dismissed as the promotion of a feminist agenda in particular and thus rarely accepted as fundamental to the development of regulation.

The "protect versus promote" debate is equally significant in terms of gender

Recent interventions and public processes at a policy and regulatory level e.g. the ICASA Amendment Convergence Bill, Review of Community Sound Broadcasting Discussion Paper (2005) provided an opportunity for lobbying and advocacy around gender integration and mainstreaming. Yet few (if any) gender-based organisations sought to proactively engage policy development in this regard.

Significantly, at the end of 2005, ICASA organised a roundtable where broadcasters, Internet Service Providers (ISP's) and the respective regulatory bodies were encouraged to address the issue of adult content on broadcasting and telecommunications and standardisation in advisory categories for television and film (cf. ICASA Approaches to Adult Content regulation and Media Literacy: Roundtable, 2005).

This presents an imminent opportunity for intervention. Critically, it requires an understanding and appreciation of the benefits of media education and literacy to provide the public with the necessary tools for proactive engagement with media policy and regulation as well as participation in democratic processes in general. Significantly, the "protect versus promote" debate is equally significant in terms of gender as evident in the Japanese Forum for Citizen's Television and Media (FCT) commitment to media literacy:

"It takes the view, that it is better to work towards public understanding of gender portrayal issues than to impose ill-conceived controls on the media" (Gallagher, 2001: 39).

"Engendering" diversity

Both the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (1994) and the Broadcasting Act (1999) (amended in

2003) provide for regulation in the public interest, so as to: promote the provision of a diverse range of sound and television services on a national, regional and local level; encourage ownership and control of broadcasting services by persons from historically disadvantaged groups; encourage equal opportunity employment practices by all licensees; promote the empowerment and advancement of women in broadcasting services; encourage the development of human resources and training and capacity building within the broadcasting sector especially amongst historically disadvantaged groups; and contribute to gender equality and nation building.

Similarly, the Telecommunications Act (1997) states that in terms of under-serviced area licence applications:

"Due regard shall be given to applications – (i) by persons from historically disadvantaged groups, and (ii) from applicants which are managed and controlled, or owned by women (s40A 2(b))."

Diversity of ownership is critical to South Africa's attempts to address concentration of ownership: white capital in particular. And while certain personalities are testimony to black economic empowerment (BEE), it is increasingly difficult to identify benefactors who are not of a particular gender or class.

Diversity of ownership is critical to South Africa's attempts to address concentration of ownership

While gender and the empowerment of women is not listed as a specific objective of the Convergence Bill (2005), gender indicators and "preferential procurement policies" of the ICT Charter (which addresses economic empowerment of women and sets targets for BEE) will hopefully provide leverage in this regard. This includes policies that promote women's empowerment both in terms of the gender composition of governing boards and other management positions as well as women as beneficiaries.

Yet, "52.3 percent of women are unemployed and constitute 44.8 percent of those earning less than R1 600 per month" (http://www.genderstats.org.za/). Furthermore, studies focusing on gender integration in media policies and broadcasting legislation in particular illuminate an unfortunate trend of legislation that refers to women as part of broad, often undefined categories such as historically disadvantaged groups and/or alongside children (Orderson, 2002; Primo, 2001).

And, while gender stereotyping or negative gender portrayal is addressed in the ASA's revised Code of Advertising Practice and the "P"' (prejudice) advisory symbol is used in both film and broadcasting ratings, it is clear the advisory category which deals with gender, ethnic, racial and religious stereotyping is the category most members of public are unaware of (Human Sciences Research Council, 2004).

It is thus critical for gender-based organisations to ensure public awareness campaigns around advisory symbols; complaint structures and processes reflect gender integration and mainstreaming. It is equally significant to ensure domestic policy is consistent with regional and international Charters, Declarations and Protocols.

Conclusion

It is important that the development goals and objects of policy and legislation are not diluted by liberalisation and that gender be integrated and mainstreamed in editorial and human resources policies as well as national legislation.

It is essential that South African legislation and policy governing media become more explicit in terms of addressing gender concerns. Equally important is the need to institute processes through which regulatory authorities and media structures are obliged to submit reports that detail efforts towards responding to these concerns. South Africa's national media policies and legislation must be aligned to the broader objective of advancing gender equality, equity and mainstreaming consistent with African Union obligations. Regional integration necessitates harmonisation in terms of policy development to the extent that the overall political and socio-economic contexts allow. It is about:

"[...] creating a common approach, complete with institution, by states in a region, around economic, political and social issues" (Landsberg and Mckay, 2005:4).

A careful balancing act is necessary to align national policy with the unfolding tensions around the distinctly dichotomous relationship between the various economies in South Africa and across the region. Critically, it is imperative to acknowledge

the intrinsic relationship between the presence of women and the "[…] marked gendered impact on institutional culture, attitudes, laws, policies, and service delivery (Mongella, 2003).

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Writer's Bio

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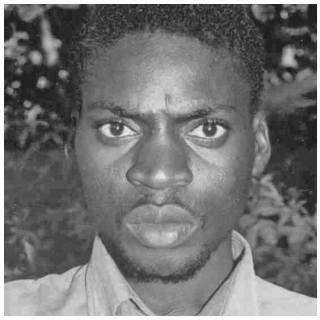
Notes

[1] The *Daily Sun* is a tabloid (content) newspaper that targets mainly urban, black, working class readers. According to the *Daily Sun*, "[t]hese readers are predominantly black, English literate with a minimum high school education". It is the biggest daily newspaper in SA (http://www.media24.com/ENG/newspapers/dailysun.html).

[2] The *Sowetan* is a daily that used to be tabloid in size only, but which now boasts content similar to that of the *Daily Sun*.

[3] *Nova* is a Gauteng Daily newspaper, which targets the 24-35 year old market that are "not regular readers of newspapers". At the time of writing, the paper faces closure as it appears to have failed to break into its market.

[4] *The Son* (previously called *Kaapse Son*) is an Afrikaans language tabloid targeted at working class, primarily coloured, people.



Zimbabwean legislation works against media diversity

By Davison Mudzingwa

Abstract

This article presents an analysis of the state of media diversity in Zimbabwe by examining key policies and legislation that govern media in the country. While it has been argued that the new policies and legislation are an attempt to correct historical imbalances, the article shows that their implementation threatens media diversity in the country.

Key words

media law, ownership, Zimbabwe, regulation, policy

The policy-making process in Zimbabwe that led to the creation of legislation such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) heralded a new chapter for media diversity in Zimbabwe. Despite a constitution that guarantees citizen's freedom of expression, which according to a Supreme Court ruling "…is one of the most precious of all the freedoms and is a vitally important right and an indispensable condition for a free and democratic society" (Feltoe, 2003) Zimbabwe's media face a number of challenges, which have been compounded by the new legislation.

Media laws

AIPPA was signed into law in March 2002 after the Parliamentary Legal Committee condemned numerous sections of the bill as "*ultra vires*" (unconstitutional). After its passage, the AIPPA included a provision that led to the establishment ofa Media and Information Commission. The Act states:

"The operations of the Commission shall, in accordance to this Act, be controlled and managed by a Board, subject to subsection (3), the Board shall consist of no fewer than five members and not more than seven members (at least three of whom shall be nominated by an association of journalists and an association of media houses) appointed by the Minister after consultation with the President and in accordance with any directions that the President may give him."

The BSA which was promulgated in 2001 saw the creation of yet another media regulatory body, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ). The Act gives the Minister of Information and Publicity the prerogative of appointing the trustees in consultation with the President. BAZ is a statutory body that regulates the broadcasting industry and advises the Minister on a range of issues such as whether or not a broadcasting licence should be issued. The BSA states that a licence for broadcasting stations can only be issued to citizens of Zimbabwe who are resident in the country, or to a corporate body in which citizens of Zimbabwe hold powerful interest.

Impact of legislation

The introduction of the two pieces of legislation had a major impact on media in Zimbabwe. The Acts were the first major step by the legislature since independence to impose a "corrective" benchmark on what was seen as segregatory policy by the pre-independence government. For example Section 27 of the 1957 Broadcasting Act provided for a state monopoly over all broadcasting in Zimbabwe. In September 2000, Capital Radio challenged this provision in the Supreme Court which ruled that the Broadcasting Act was unconstitutional. This court ruling triggered the promulgation of the BSA in 2001.

Unfortunately, the anticipated reform did not materialise in the new Act. Media diversity advocacy organisations such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa's Zimbabwe chapter (MISA Zimbabwe) fiercely contested the provisions of the BSA as unconstitutional and undemocratic as it allows for government to appoint members to the BAZ and excludes public involvement either in the form of public hearings or public nominations.



Dr Tafataone Manoso, chairman of the Media and Information Communication. Photo: Davison Mudzingwa

MISA Zimbabwe also argued that the BSA does not promote media diversity with only one state controlled broadcaster (Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) offering diffusion services. The existence of only one broadcaster in both fields of television and radio MISA Zimbabwe argues, points to the fact that government is not working in tandem with the principles of promotion of freedom of expression as well as access to information in the country. Since its inception BAZ is yet to award operating licences to private players. A similar situation exists in the print media sector where the Media and Information Commission (MIC) has deregistered five publications including *The Daily News, The Daily News On Sunday, The Tribune, The Business Tribune and The Weekly Times.*

Under the BAZ, no indepen- dent broadcaster has been granted an operating licence. Munhumutape African Broad- casting Association (MABC), an aspiring television broadcaster was denied a licence. Oscar Kubara, MABC director is on record threatening to cross Limpopo to neighbouring South Africa to establish an enterprise there. Ernest Mudzengi a media expert and lecturer at the Zimbabwe Open University asserts that:

"There is nothing much to talk about in terms of media diversity in Zimbabwe. The people of Zimbabwe are severely deprived of media diversity to give them a platform for social, economic and political discourses. An ideal situation must see a three-tier system that is commercial, community and public media. This is not the case in Zimbabwe where we only find state owned and private media[1]."

Ownership

The AIPPA and BSA have also impacted on media ownership patterns and distribution. Chapter 10:27 of the AIPPA states that a mass media owner including news agency must register before it carries out mass media services activities. The registration is for period of two years and renewable. Operating without a licence is classified as a criminal offence that attracts a maximum penalty of a fine not exceeding level 12 or two years imprisonment or both.

The people of Zimbabwe are severely deprived of media diversity to give them a platform for social, economic and political discourses

Mass media services are defined in Chapter 12:06 of the Act as:

"including any medium or media consisting in the transmission, circulation or distribution of voice, visual, data or textual messages to an unlimited number of persons, and includes an advertising agency, publisher, production house or, except otherwise excluded or specially provided for in this Act, a news agency or broadcasting service as defined in the Broadcasting Services Act."

The BSA's approach to ownership has sparked criticism. The Act states that no foreigner or foreign investment is allowed to have a stake in the local media. The provision has presented a barrier in terms of foreign

direct investment in the industry. Considering the expertise and technological fusion that is needed in serious broadcasting, the provision has only served to bar Zimbabwe from advancing in the digital age with the rest of the world. The BSA also limits ownership to a maximum of a 10 percent stake for local investors. This has impacted negatively on the growth of the broadcasting industry as no serious investor has so far shown commitment to investing in an expensive enterprise like radio and television broadcasting against the background of the restrictive provisions of the BSA. In short the legislative framework and restrictive conditions governing media in Zimbabwe have contributed to the shrinking of media ownership in the country (MISA Zimbabwe, 2006).

The legislative framework and restrictive conditions governing media in Zimbabwe have contributed to the shrinking of media ownership in the country

Responses

The restrictive media environment however has had unforeseen and exciting consequences as media practitioners and owners respond to the challenges posed by the BSA and AIPPA.

The unceremonious closure of newspapers coupled with the stringent broadcasting laws has seen a proliferation of new media in Zimbabwe. More than five online news bodies were established over the past three years. These include *Zimonline, Zimdaily, NewZimbabwe, Zimbeat* and *Business Online*. Interestingly, all are hosted outside the country. Their establishment is widely regarded as a desperate measure by unemployed journalists and ordinary Zimbabweans to quench the thirst of diverse news after the closure of streets editions.

An equally interesting scenario has taken place on the airwaves with the emergence of "pirate" radio stations broadcasting from outside the borders of Zimbabwe. Radio stations like *SW Radio Africa, Radio Voices of the People, and Studio 7* are some examples. *Studio 7* is based in Washington DC's *Voice of America* headquarters, *SW Radio Africa* in the United Kingdom and *Radio Voice of the People* in the Netherlands, although it maintains its staff and offices within the country.

Unlike their online news edition counterparts the radio stations were subject to state harassment. *SW Radio* was founded after the state hampered initial moves to broadcast within the country as *Capitol Radio*. Incessant jamming led to the depletion of funds as the station tried to broadcast on multiple frequencies in a bid to circumvent the jamming. *Radio Voice of the People* had its production equipment burnt after a petrol bomb descended on its offices. A raid on the station's offices in December 2005 resulted in the seizure of production equipment and the arrest and detain- ment of three members of staff for four days. At the time of writing, the director of the station, John Masuku and six trustees were on remand after being charged for broadcasting without an operating license.

However, the tide appears to be turning as the government of Zimbabwe, under immense international criticism, has indicated that reform amendments to the AIPPA and the BSA are on the cards. This shift in their position comes after pressure from the African Commission. Organisations such as MISA-Zimbabwe, Independent Journalists Association of Zimbabwe, and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLFHR) were at the forefront of lobbying the continental body to act on Zimbabwe's repressive media laws.

Conclusion

Despite government's indication that the repressive laws will be reviewed, media diversity and freedom of expression and information remain under threat in Zimbabwe. In a country left with only three legitimate privately owned publications – *The Zimbabwe Independent, The Standard* and *The Sunday Mirror* – it is critical that media and human rights watch dogs continue to put pressure on government to commit to a process of law re- form. Unless this happens, any hopes for a flourishing and diverse media in Zimbabwe will crumble.

We have international, regional and national instruments on our side. We must cite the African Charter on Human and People's Rights Article 9

which states that:

"Everyone shall have the right to receive information… Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his/her opinions within the law."

We must invoke Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights which upholds that:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression: this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

And we must use Section 20 of Zimbabwe's Constitution, which provides for the protection of freedom of expression and freedom of information. We must guard our media freedom jealously, unless we do, media diversity will remain elusive in Zimbabwe.

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Writer's Bio

Davison Mudzingwa is a practicing Journalist based in Zimbabwe. He has vast experience both in broadcasting and new media with a special interest in gender and advocacy issues.

Notes

[1] Interview with Ernest Mudzengi, February 2006.



Sexual harassment policies and diversity in Zimbabwean newsroom

By Loveness Jambaya

Abstract

This article explores whether sexual harassment has contributed to a lack of gender balance in employment in Zimbabwean newsrooms. It also begins an investigation to establish whether the extent to which sexual harassment impacts on media diversity.

Key words

sexual harassment, policies, discrimination, legislation, research

"Media shapes public views of minority communities, as well as views on the causes and scope of social problems and the best solutions… . To ensure an accurate depiction, all sectors of society must participate in media outlets, which can be accomplished through media ownership and employment" (Schwartzman and Desai, 2005:1).

Media ownership and employment policies have a major bearing on the extent to which diverse viewpoints are made public through the media. Previous research such as the Global Media Monitoring Project (2005) and the Southern Africa Gender and Media Baseline Study (2003), have shown that there are more men than women in newsrooms particularly in top management. Two questions arise: firstly, why are there so few women in newsrooms, and secondly does this impact on media content?

Various arguments have been put forward to explain why there are so few women in newsrooms. These include that women are not suitable to occupy these positions, pay inequalities between men and women, lower remuneration compared to alternative employment such as public relations jobs, sexist attitudes, amongst others (Lowe Morna, 2001). This article does not intend to examine these arguments, but rather to begin an exploration into whether sexual harassment has contributed to the gender imbalance in media employment. It also investigates whether mainstream media in Zimbabwe have sexual harassment policies and how this affects media content in the country.

The article is based on a review of five mainstream media houses in Zimbabwe and interviews with key role players. One of the key findings of this study is that sexual harassment in newsrooms is an area that has been under-researched. Despite this, gender and media activists agree that sexual harassment in newsrooms works against gender equality. As Patricia Made argues:

"Unsafe places for women journalists to work will further push them out of a profession where their numbers are already low, and their ability to have a voice and use the right to communicate as journalists will slowly disappear" (Made, 2005:88).

Context

Section 8 of the Zimbabwean Labour Relations Act was amended by the Labour Relations Amendment Act in 2002. However, a 2004 audit of measures taken by Southern African governments to advance the rights of women and to end gender violence found that in Zimbabwe:

"While the [labour relations] amendment is seen as a huge step forward, the reference to the offence as an 'unfair labour practice' is still not viewed as enough" Lowe Morna and Moolman, 2004:80).

While research has been undertaken by the Training and Research Centre (TARSC) and the Child and Law Foundation around sexual harassment in the workplace since the amendment, this has not specifically addressed sexual harassment within media houses.

However, the research shows that many women do not complain of sexual harassment until they are challenging dismissal. This has had the effect of questioning women's credibility as the complaint is retrospective. In many cases sexual harassment most often only arises as a defence by victims, which has a negative impact on court outcomes as the onus of proof is shifted to the victim by the law of evidence (Khan and Nuyanungo, 2004). Considering this many women who have experienced incidents of sexual harassment believe it is futile to report incidents to management let alone take legal action.

One could then reasonably conclude that women and possibly men journalists and media practitioners may have experienced sexual harassment and left newsrooms to escape the harassment but not reported it for the reasons expressed above.

Definitions

The definition of sexual harassment as expressed in the *Gender in Media Training: A Southern African Tool Kit* is provided below. It is consistent with international and Zimbabwean labour laws as well as best practice.

- *"Sexual harassment is unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. Both men and women can be victims of this kind of harassment, and its effects on a workplace can be profound and long-lasting, as well as opening the organisation up to legal action.*
- *Physical conduct: this ranges from inappropriate touching or strip searching someone in the presence of the opposite sex to sexual assault and rape;*
- *Verbal conduct: this could take the form of jokes, suggestions or comments with sexual overtones; insults or comments about a person's body; inappropriate enquiries about a person's sex life; wolf-whistling;*
- *Non-verbal conduct includes unwelcome gestures; indecent exposure; unwelcome displays of sexually explicit pictures and objects in the workplace (such as pinups, screen-savers etc.);*
- *Quid pro quo harassment occurs when a person undertakes to influence the process of employment, promotion, training, dismissal or salary increments in exchange for sexual favours;*
- *Sexual favouritism occurs when a person in a position of authority only rewards those who respond to his/her sexual advances, while those who do not submit are denied promotion, merit ratings, and increases"* (Lowe Morna, 2002).

Many women who have experienced incidents of sexual harassment believe it is futile to report incidents to management

Although the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) has defined diversity in terms of broadcasting the definition applies across media genres. Principles of freedom of expression and broadcast regulation define diversity as implying: pluralism of broadcasting organisations, of ownership of those organisations and of voices, viewpoints and languages within programming as a whole, as well as employment, representation, policies, codes of conduct, issues raised etc. (MISA, 2002).

Despite many incidents of sexual harassment occuring in newsrooms there is concern over a lack of policies to effectively deal with these cases. Several incidents of sexual harassment have been reported in Zimbabwean newsrooms, but the response by authorities including police, has been lukewarm. In many cases little or no action is taken against the offenders.

Findings

Out of Zimbabwe's five mainstream media houses that the research focused on[1] none have stand-alone sexual harassment policies while one has a Code of Conduct which provides guidance on the handling of reported cases.

Institution	Organisation policy
1. The Zimbabwe Newspapers Limited Group (Zimpapers): governs all the state-controlled mainstream newspapers: *Herald, Sunday Mail, Kwayedza/ Umthunywa, Chronicle, Sunday News* and *manica Post.*	Code of Conduct
2. Zimbabwe Independent Publishers: publisher of two leading weekly newspapers - *The Zimbabwe Independent and the Standard.*	None
3. Zimbabwe Mirror Newspapers Group (Pvt) Ltd: publishers the only private owned daily newspaper - *The Daily Mirror* and sister paper *The Sunday Mirror.*	None
4. The Financial Gazette.	None
5. Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH): the only broadcaster in Zimbabwe and is state controlled. Governs *Newsnet, Zimbabwe Television (ZTV), Radio Zimbabwe,Spot FM, National FM* and *Power FM.*	Could not be established

While it is commendable that *Zimbabwe Newspapers Limited* has a Code of Conduct and Grievances Procedures[2] that must be applied "uniformly" throughout the group in order to "ensure fair and consistent treatment of all employees", closer inspection shows that the code is insufficient to ensure justice and fairness.

It is difficult to quantify the number of incidents of sexual harassment that take place in newsrooms

Sexual harassment is listed in Section 6.3 as: "Indiscipline, willful disobedience or disorderly conduct as the last item (x)". It is further referred to as a dischargeable offence. However this has not been enforced in most of the reported cases within the newspaper group.

The remainder of the privately owned media examined do not have such policies. The Zimbabwe Independent publishers indicated they were in the process of drafting a code of conduct to guide such cases[3] . The question is why has it taken them so long to develop these policies? *The Financial Gazette*, another privately owned weekly paper, is guided by the labour law in dealing with such cases[4]. The organisation does not have its own specific policy. The same applies to *The Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror*.

Upon querying this situation, one of the respondents – an editor with one of the paper titles contended in an interview:

"It is because the newsrooms are dominated by the men who find it unnecessary to come up with these policies… Women shun influential positions as they realise they do not like the profession. It is not because they are being sexually harassed or abused."

Given this problematic and sexist attitude, which anecdotal evidence shows is pervasive in Zimbabwean newsrooms, it becomes imperative to explore whether there is a link between the absence of sexual harassment policies and the decisions taken by journalists to leave media institutions or in extreme cases the profession altogether. And if there is a link, it must be taken further to examine the impact this has on media diversity.

It is difficult to quantify the number of incidents of sexual harassment that take place in newsrooms as most go unreported for fear of victimisation, loss of employment, etc. (Khan, 2005). Also, even with incidents that are reported it is difficult to obtain these figures, as organisations are not willing to disclose this information for fear it will tarnish their image.

However there are a number of recorded cases that illustrate the lack of adequate policies and organisational will to address sexual harassment. Policies that are not adequately implemented are of no use. For example it is evident from the examples below that the clauses in the Zimpapers Code of Conduct are do not necessarily offer sufficient relief to victims of sexual harassment.

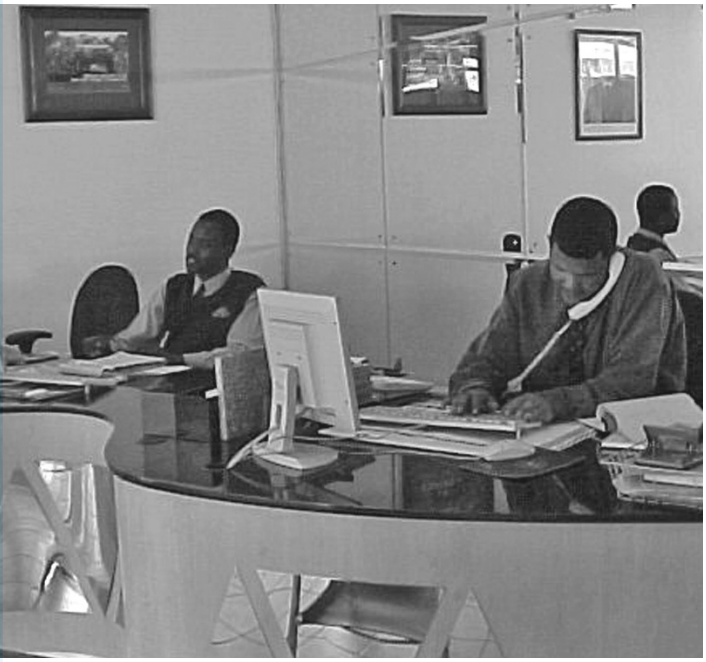
Cases of harassment in newsrooms

In August 2004, a Midlands State University student on attachment alleged that a superior at the *Herald* had followed her to a function in Chitungwiza, drove to her

flat and then to his cousin's flat where he allegedly attempted to rape her. He tried to do the same when he escorted her to her home in Sunningdale on a different day. The case was reported and a written report submitted to *The Herald* management.

In another case a senior male editor with the same paper, assaulted a female journalist, Thelma Chikwanya in the newsroom on 10 July 2005. This incident occurred in the presence of fellow employees. The matter was reported to the police. The Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) intervened by writing a letter to the editor, which was copied to the general manager and Chief Executive officer. ZUJ also wrote to the Information Minister. All four are yet to respond.

In the first case, employees held a demonstration to protest against what had happened. However, no action was taken by management or against the editor who remains employed at the newspaper. In the second case the senior editor paid an admission of guilt fine. Management took no action against him while the woman journalist's contract was terminated a few weeks later. The editor is on record as having threatened other staff members saying that he will deal with them in the same way if they turned against him.



While research has been done on sexual harassment in the workplace, none has focused specially on newsrooms. Photo: Trevor Davies

The number of sexual harassment cases that were reported from the same stable house necessitated that the ZUJ seek intervention from the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communication. A dossier was presented to the committee chronicling some of these incidents. However information regarding what action will be taken including the timeframes in which the matter will be handled has not been made public.

This is not to say that sexual harassment does not occur in private media houses. While anecdotal evidence shows its prevalence, the absence of official information makes it difficult to undertake any meaningful intervention to address the situation.

So, does this compromise media diversity? I argue that one of the consequences of sexual harassment in newsrooms is the missing voice and viewpoints of women practitioners in mainstream media as they leave newsrooms for fear of or experiences of sexual harassment. Chikwanya says: "There are a lot of cases being swept under the carpet and there is need for extensive research in this area." She stresses that the prevalence of sexual harassment has "stifled the efforts" of women in newsrooms to the extent that in many cases they have not reached their full potential and see leaving as their only option.

One of the consequences of sexual harassment in newsrooms is the missing viewpoints of women practitioners

Recommendations

According ZUJ coordinator, Chakanyuka Bosha:

"The enactment of the Sexual Offences Act[5] at national level shows there is some level of commitment to deal with would be offenders. The government has finally responded to pleas from stakeholders after a long struggle[6]."

However media organisations have yet to demonstrate their commitment to domesticating and contextualising the legislation in their own organisations through developing sexual harassment policies. Of equal importance is the existence of adequate enforcement mechanisms once policies are adopted and implemented.

There is need to establish a formal mechanism for

employees to report incidents of sexual harassment.

The following recommendations were made at a consultative meeting with civic organisations and government departments on sexual harassment in partnership with the Child and Law Foundation:

- Develop a standard reporting procedure.
- Develop and implement sexual harassment policy.
- Gender sensitivity training for staff.
- Provide for anonymous tip offs.
- Create awareness on sexual harassment.
- Provide training for skills for handling sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Provide support to those sexually harassed.

Conclusion

The MISA Gender Policy points out that gender equality is intrinsic to a pluralistic and diverse media. Gender-based violations such as sexual harassment should be recognised as an impediment to the work of media practitioners. This can be observed from the examples provided in this article.

I urge gender and media activists to generate more debate and undertake research into the prevalence of sexual harassment, the existence of specific sexual harassment policies, and the extent to which sexual harassment has an adverse effect on media diversity in the region.

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Writer's Bio

Loveness Jambaya is the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network country representative in Zimbabwe. She works at the Media Monitoring Project, Zimbabwe.

Notes

[1] Time limitations did not allow for an examination of the 10 state controlled community newspapers that are published in the 10 provinces in Zimbabwe.

[2] Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980) Ltd, Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedure, Deloitte & Touche.

[3] Interview with Human Resources Manageress, 23 January 2006.

[4] Interview with Human Resources Manageress, 24 January 2006.

[5] One of the shortcomings of the Act identified in the in the SADC audit, is that "the Act is silent on reparation for survivors of violence and rehabilitation of offenders." Another critique is that "while provisions seek to discourage the exploitation of women and young girls, the use of penal provisions leads to repression and censorship through the use of measures that are not always in consonance with human rights standards" (Lowe Morna and Moolman, 2004:80)

[6] Interview with Chakanyuka Bosha coordinator of the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) secretariat in an interview on this subject.



Reviving SAMTRAN: taking media training to new heights

By Ruth Ansah Ayisi

Abstract

The writer shares her vision for the Southern Africa Media Trainers Network which she coordinates. The need for a dynamic network is urgent she writes, especially if journalism in the region is to be strengthened.

Key words

SAMTRAN, training, curriculum, journalism, information

I clearly remember one of my first media training workshops in Mozambique some years ago. I felt prepared. I had observed and even participated in a full week's gender training in Zimbabwe on the same issue – gender violence, and I had a comprehensive training package of materials. I knew my material, felt passionate about it and I had practiced. What more did I need to know?

I soon found out as a group of sceptical-looking journalists glared at me. While some were smiling interestedly, a glimpse of a couple of them who looked like they felt they were wasting their time unnerved me. I could feel my heart pumping, my mouth drying out. I wished I was at home simply writing a story; being a journalist and not a trainer.

As advised I started off with an ice-breaker, which eased my tension at least. Then I asked what the journalists wanted to get out of the workshop. A cynical-looking young man said he had only just participated in another gender training workshop so he was "not sure" what his expectations were. The tension returned. I asked myself: would I be repeating what they had learnt? What materials did they use then? How was I going to keep them interested for five days?

Although I did not know at the time, it turned out all fine in the end. The training materials were different, topics more broad and were tackled in a creative way. Judging by the positive evaluations it actually complemented the previous workshop.

While preparing for the workshop I would have welcomed access to a network of media trainers in the region who shared their experiences, materials and information about what training had already been done with journalists. It would have also been comforting to know that there was a database of media trainers who might have assisted had my co-facilitator had suddenly dropped out.

The 50 media trainers attending a workshop hosted by Rhodes University in 2001 had similar ideas. Participants came from eight countries in Southern Africa and established the Southern African Media Trainers' Network (SAMTRAN) on 9 September 2001.

They represented universities, technical colleges, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in-service training

institutions, commercial and independent media trainers, community media; in-house training departments of media institutions and national media training associations and networks. Four major areas for closer collaboration amongst media trainers were identified: information sharing and networking, curricula and methodology, study materials and standards setting and accreditation.

However, five years later, the potential of SAMTRAN is yet to be realised. The network has not had consistent funding and as such has been without a regular coordinator. As the new coordinator of SAMTRAN, I am in the process of garnering support for the revival of the network.



Media trainers at a workshop on gender and politics in Angola. Photo: Ruth Ayisi

Speaking about the potential of the training network, Patricia Made[1], an independent consultant and media trainer based in Zimbabwe says:

"SAMTRAN can and does play a valuable role in linking independent media trainers who work outside formal media training institutes and universities in the region. It can be strategic in keeping this network of trainers abreast of the latest research in media training and needs, media trends, training materials and the move towards convergence so that new journalists are trained to embrace the new technologies… [SAMTRAN] can help to build their capacity in training techniques by serving as a clearinghouse for fellowships and learning opportunities for this group of trainers who form a large group of media specialists in the region."

Continuous learning is part and parcel of being a good media professional

"The area of in-service continuous training for media personnel continues to be the route journalists and editors already in the profession take to learn new skills and areas since many cannot leave their work to return to school. SAMTRAN can be an important vehicle for developing with trainers within media and communications studies programmes, curricula of short-term courses that can be conducted in cooperation with formal training institutes to serve this group of media professionals. Continuous learning is part and parcel of being a good media professional, and by expanding the options for the media in the region to learn and improve their skills in informal settings, SAMTRAN can make a valuable contribution to media development."

Using technology

SAMTRAN's website has been revamped to mobilise trainers in the region as part of our work to revitalise the training network. This has been possible through the voluntary contributions of Lydia Levin, an Information Technology (IT) expert based in Canada, and to key faithful members who send in contributions.

The Chair of SAMTRAN, John Mukela, who is also the Executive Director of NSJ Media Trust in Maputo, has appealed to users to "send your information, questions, queries, announcements, pictures, etc." (www.samtran.org). Mukela highlighted the discussion space as a key component of the new website.

But it has not all been smooth sailing. An online discussion on new technologies failed dismally. Despite the best efforts of the moderator Dorothy Ntone-Brislin, only two people responded throughout the month long online discussion. Responding to this challenge however, SAMTRAN member Rob Tyson who lectures at Namibia University proposed a workshop to update members on new relevant technologies that are on the market.

Members have since proposed online discussions on how new technologies are impacting the ethics of journalism; the relevance of short courses, and how to get editors on board after training.

A face-to-face encounter with members and the executive committee of SAMTRAN is also on the cards. This interaction is critical as it will allow media trainers

to make direct input into the direction the network will take.

In an interview Donna Mpengula[2], a media trainer of the NSJ Media Trust, said that commitment from every institutional member in the region is critical for SAMTRAN's revival to be successful: "There should be one person assigned from the institutions whose job it is to share the materials on a regular basis."

"It is important to have such a media trainer's network where media trainers can tackle [pertinent] issues. It will enrich the region and the knowledge of trainers, and will trickle down to uplift the quality of journalists in the region."

Mpengula, a former lecturer in mass communication at the University of Zambia, pointed out that one area that might continue to be a challenge is the sharing of research and training materials: "Some academics in mass communications may not want to share their material unless they are paid for doing so."

However, the website has proved to be a space for information sharing. For example, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) has posted information on scholarships available for women in the media; Gender Links, the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network, NSJ Media Trust, the Southern African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) and the University of Namibia have provided SAMTRAN with information on training courses in the region and trainers are sharing their ideas and queries through the website.

The following post to the website by Rob Tyson in which he shares information about a training workshop, points to how members' work contributes to media diversity.

His posting was about a one-day workshop he conducted at the beginning of February 2006 with the Namibian NGO, The Rainbow Project. The organisation works for the promotion of equal rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Namibia and present a weekly programme on Katutura Community Radio called "Talking Pink". Tyson's posting read:

There should be one person assigned from the institutions whose job it is to share materials

"My one-day course will try to cover the basics of community radio and its potential. With this audience I think radio is really going to be able to speak to people who are 'in the closet' and in any other circumstance would never wish [others] to find out about their sexual orientation. A radio programme can give them a lot of confidence to come out or, at the least, to realise that they are not alone. Because radio is private and personal I think it is a very important medium for minorities [to harness].

We will also look at some programme formats that can be used. I have managed (with great effort!) to download some examples of gay and lesbian radio programming from the Internet. I want to expand the minds of participants so the potential of the medium can be exploited to the full – not just dull old interviews and panel discussions, but something a little more exciting."

As 2006 takes off we hope that that contributions such as Tyson's will continue to be posted to the SAMTRAN website as well as information on training events, curricula, training materials, innovative ideas and new research so SAMTRAN can fulfill its potential and become the dynamic and diverse network that is our vision.

Writer's bio
Ruth Ansah Ayisi is the coordinator of the Southern Africa Media Trainers Network, a board member of Gender Links and a journalist.

Notes

1 Interview with Patricia Made, February 2006.
2 Interview with Donna Mpengula, February 2006.



A regional teaching and learning programme for media coverage of the SADC region

By Jeanne Prinsloo

Abstract

This article[1] provides an overview of media coverage in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in order to consider the possibilities for a progressive curriculum within the context of media education and training institutions in the region. It outlines the draft curriculum that was envisaged as appropriate to this challenging context.

Key words

regional integration, education and training, curriculum, media coverage

In a recent initiative the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Information 21 Project[2] set out to develop a teaching and learning programme that could be introduced at journalism education and training institutions in the SADC region. Its intention was to produce a curriculum that focuses on coverage of regional development and integration.

It is noteworthy that SADC should consider the issue of media coverage of the region as important enough to undertake as a dedicated project. This initiative indicates their sense of the role of the media as significant in shaping social understandings, attitudes and values.

Working from a position that the media potentially can further concern for and awareness of issues of social justice, this article sets out to discuss and reflect on the extent to which the Information 21 Project provides an opportunity to nurture journalistic and media practices that promote democratic thinking. It does this by first contextualising SADC, its objectives and concerns. Then, against this backdrop it moves to an overview of SADC's media and the nature of media coverage of SADC in order to consider the possibilities for a progressive curriculum within the context of the media education and training institutions in SADC. Finally, it sketches an overview of the draft curriculum (approved by a number of media educators from across the region) that was envisaged as appropriate to this challenging context.

Regionalisation and SADC

The emergence of inter-governmental organisations within "regions" has become an established form of economic and political organisation across the globe. The establishment of regional or inter-governmental organisations in Africa can be viewed as a response to the fragmentation and problems of economic survival encountered by individual states. Such regional

organisations such as SADC have set themselves objectives to pursue in line with regional development and integration which are intended to lead to concrete implementation.

SADC was established in 1992 by the previous "front-line states" that had supported the South African democratic movement and (at the time of writing) consists of 13 countries. It proposes that its ultimate aim is to achieve "sustainable peace and prosperity in the sub-region."

This focus on "sustainable peace and prosperity" declare SADC's position firstly in relation to a particular notion of development, one of neoliberal modernisation within a global frame and a commitment to creating a regional common market, and, secondly, as a force for peace and security and national stability (Lambrechts, 2001). While the 13 countries are signatories of numerous agreements, this does not mean they have necessarily implemented the treaties in all or many cases.

For SADC to play its stated role in relation to peace and prosperity in this exceedingly complex region requires that it and its member states be held to their declared goals. Clearly the media are important players in the political, economic and cultural realms of the SADC polity. Because of the fragility of democracy in the region, the news media can potentially play a variety of roles that might work against social injustice. These have been variously debated and described, from watchdog to participatory and civic/public media. Given that these are not the roles necessarily foregrounded by state and privately owned media in the region, the foregrounding of democracy and governance in the media is pressing.

SADC media

The 13 SADC member countries have established media both in terms of print, broadcast and increasingly new media forms and have been described in terms of the various combinations of state, public and private ownership and imperatives.

Bearing in mind potentially contesting understandings of the desired role of the media, it is important to note that the establishment of SADC has not been accompanied by any significant shift in media coverage of the sub-region or that offers a SADC identity for its audiences, in addition to their other identities. In line with global trends, the media tend to foreground economically and politically powerful personalities and associated events occurring in or relating directly to their own country of origin and to propose a national or more local sense of identity rather than one of the SADC sub-region.

Perhaps as a consequence of prevailing media practices, many citizens of SADC countries remain largely unaware of the workings and goals of SADC. News media coverage of SADC has tended to be event based and consequently superficial. The visual representations usually present images of national political leaders (generally men as well) rather than of ordinary members of communities.

The media are important players in the political, economic and cultural realms of the SADC polity

Dominant or prevailing media practices and conventions derive from particular libertarian models of journalistic practice that need to be made problematic in the developmental context of SADC. The tendency for event driven news similarly mitigates against coverage of processes and issues and remains a challenge for the media in representing regional development. In addition, repressive media laws and state control in some member countries as well as commercial imperatives work against democratic news practices.

The state of media education and training

Media education and training institutions exist in all SADC countries. The number of media education and training institutions in the region has increased in recent years and include tertiary institutions, such as universities, technical universities and colleges, and non-governmental training and education bodies for in-service journalists. However, students are frequently "trained" in skills in line with the assumed and unproblematised demands of an industry, rather than educated as the reflective and critical media practitioners necessary for democratic and socially concerned media coverage. While some programmes might include modules that focus on development journalism, gender issues and democratic practices, these are generally marginal.



Journalism students at the university of stellenbosch in South Africa at a gender and media workshop. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

SADC curriculum intervention on regional media coverage

The possibility of a regional learning and teaching programme provokes the question of the value of a programme that foregrounds regional development and integration that is available for SADC national media training institutions. Arguably, this is two-fold. On the one hand, the media can play a constructive role in relation to critical understandings and be a constructive part of regional development. They have a significant role to play in producing and distributing in-depth knowledge and understandings of events and processes occurring in the region, and for placing SADC on the media agenda.

On the other hand and in tandem with coverage of SADC is a more complex and less tangible aspect. Beyond "information" the media play a crucial role in providing ways for thinking about the region and in enabling people to imagine themselves in that world. The media, with other institutions, seek to validate particular subject positions – these can vary from that of democratic citizen to the obsequious "loyal" subject position that is a prerequisite for sovereignty-boosting governance. Just as the media play a role in shaping national and other identities, they have the potential to play an important role in providing a broader frame through which to view the world – one that incorporates an identity as a democrat and a citizen of the sub-region.

The media play a role in shaping national and other identities

If this project presents such opportunities, it also presents challenges. First, all SADC countries and citizens do not automatically share the principles of integration and regional development to the same extent, for integration can be experienced as a threat to national or cultural identities. Certainly this is an issue in those countries (for example, Swaziland and Zimbabwe) whose forms of governance could be characterised as "sovereignty-boosting" or "shadow governance" where major actors in a regime use the state apparatus to engage in lucrative market activities rather than in public interest (see Söderbaum, 2004). Second, it cannot be assumed that the public will necessarily find SADC concerns interesting. And, finally, what for me is more worrying is the real possibility that journalists could construe their role as SADC PR agents, as the "loyal" subjects that some of the regional leaders call for.

The draft curriculum

The draft learning programme (Prinsloo, 2005) was produced in line with the above thinking. The general aim of the programme is identified as fostering an approach to media coverage of SADC which serves the development of the region while promoting critical and democratic journalism.

This curriculum programme does not foreground isolated skills. Rather, it sees the challenge as one of developing broad understandings to inform the work of journalists and media practitioners in relation to civic or "development" journalism and SADC.

Structure

As the programme seeks to provide appropriate knowledge for journalists to cover the SADC sub-region from a citizen-centred paradigm, a three pronged structure was developed which media educators can use flexibly and according to their perceived needs. It includes two sections of knowledge and one section is devoted to practical production. Inadequate research skills among journalists were identified as a concern and consequently research skills and practice need be incorporated at every stage.

i. Informed understandings of SADC as a sub-region, the countries that constitute it, and a greater understanding of their political, economic and developmental needs

This section seeks to introduce regionalism as a global phenomenon and to consider it in relation to SADC, to explore the institution of SADC and its political agenda, to develop a broad knowledge base about SADC as a region, as well as to construct a convincing rationale for media practitioners to cover SADC more thoroughly, more regularly and in line with the concerns of citizenship in the region.

ii. The development of different forms of journalism – media frames and perspective

This section provides an overview of the ways in which public and "development" journalism has been practised, the forms it has taken under particular circumstances, and the implications of these. The aim of this section is to develop an understanding of how concerns with citizenship have been articulated in different forms of journalism since its inception. The purpose is not to provide a prescriptive model to guide media coverage of SADC. Instead, it provides a set of perspectives that talk to the underlying issues of citizenship in media coverage, which can then be drawn on thoughtfully by media practitioners in different locations, working in different forms of media, and talking to a range of different audiences.

iii. Strategies for media coverage of SADC

The aim of this section is to establish an explicit strategy for media coverage on the SADC region that draws on the knowledge and understandings developed in the previous sections. It is directed to producing media that covers SADC in relation to those develop-mental processes pertinent to the sub-region and to reflect on the journalistic practices used. It fore-grounds the principles of civic or "development" journalism and focuses on intensive media production from a citizen-centred approach. Intrinsic to this is a problematised view on news values, the role of the journalist and corresponding ethics or a sense of responsibility to civil society. Again this can be adapted to other forms of international and civic journalism.

Conclusions

This article has described the first stage of the initiative taken by SADC to enable a focussed learning programme on SADC media coverage on regional integration and development. The draft curriculum seeks to include and to frame particular journalistic approaches through a chosen lens – one that seeks to promote critical dialogue and to offer in-depth understandings of the region. However, the success of the programme will finally depend on the quality of the materials. SADC has subsequently gone ahead with material production. This really will be the crux of the whole enterprise and the jury must remain out until we see the final programme.

For media educators and practitioners in SADC countries with highly repressive media environments it might be seriously challenging to manage the envisaged programme. Sovereignty-boosting and shadow forms of governance foreclose the opportunities for critical engagement in numerous ways. If the concern of such leaders is with their own rather than public good, civic-minded media has to be an anathema to them. While this article does not propose strategies explicitly to address this, arguably such a curriculum or selected course is important precisely in those spaces.

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Writer's bio

Jeanne Prinsloo is the MA coordinator, Department of Journalism and Media studies at Rhodes University.

Notes

[1] *This is an edited version of a paper presented at the Taking stock: ten years of journalism education and training colloquium held at Rhodes University in June 2005. I undertook to develop the concept paper and draft curriculum for SADC. The contribution of my colleague from the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, Lynette Steenveld, was invaluable in envisaging the curriculum structure and content*

[1] The SADC Information 21 Project is a three year project that aims at creating awareness of SADC objectives, programmes and activities.
"The project is an information and communications partnership between the Government of Belgium the funding partner through the Belgian Technical Cooperation and the peoples and governments of the region represented by the SADC Secretariat" Southern Africa Development Community: www.sadc.int





Training journalists for a brave new world

By Vanessa Malila and Chris Kabwato

Abstract

The Highway Africa conference celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. Over the past nine years it has grown into the largest annual gathering of African journalists in the world. This article reports on a training workshop in which journalists who have participated in a three year process fine tuned the practical skills they acquired on reporting on the information society.

Key words

Highway Africa, information society, information technology, training

There is a revolution taking place in our midst. We are told it is a technological revolution. The meeting of the computer, telecommunications and broadcasting via the internet has re-defined the media landscape. It has also brought new challenges to the fore in terms of teaching journalism and upgrading journalists' skills.

Over the past few years Highway Africa[1] has sought to keep up with global trends in the training of journalists in the use of new media. The training has become more focused with the launch of our dedicated virtual news agency, Highway Africa News Agency.

In the three years of training journalists from 10 African countries we have experimented with various approaches. Our vision has been to create a network of journalists who understood the Information Society (IS) and information and communication technology (ICT) issues; who use ICTs in their work; and reported on IS and ICTs.

A training workshop that took place in September 2005 illustrates our vision. The workshop was the culmination of a three year process (in partnership between Highway Africa and the Belgian Technical Co-Operation (BTC) aimed at empowering African journalists with the skills, critical thought and understanding required to cover the IS.

The workshop began on 5 September 2005 and ended with the participants producing a daily newspaper for the duration of the Highway Africa conference between the 12 and 14 September. It brought together journalists who had attended the first and second Highway Africa/BTC training courses (run in 2003 and 2004) to further develop the skills they had acquired and develop new and more practical skills in their coverage of IS issues.

Of the 21 journalists who attended the training, 12 had previously attended Highway Africa /BTC training courses. Others had very little knowledge of the IS. Importantly, the workshop provided the space for participants to engage and to share the range of skills, knowledge and expertise they had gained over the three year process.



Journalists from the Highway Africa News Agency hard at work. Photo: Chris Kabwato

Training programme

The practical training on covering the IS was a direct response to the needs of the Highway Africa News Agency which required a team of highly skilled and well rounded journalists. It was also a response to the desire expressed by participants of the 2004 training workshop to take the theoretical knowledge to another level by acquiring practical skills to cover a range of issues and situations.

A range of practical training sessions (with a number of trainers) were developed to equip participants with skills they would use to cover the ICTs in the information society. The skills included the following practical elements:

- Writing for the web
- Basic HTML
- Moblogging and blogging
- Photography and photojournalism
- Audio editing and recording

The workshop provided the space for participants to share the range of skills, knowledge and expertise they had gained over the three year process

These practical skills combined with more theoretical and issue-based sessions (such as an update on the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) process and Africa's involvement in the WSIS) allowed the journalists to become multi-skilled and contributed towards multi-platform coverage of the Highway Africa conference.

Programme objectives and achievements

The outcomes of the training course were divided into three skill areas. For each of these participants were required to have accomplished a number of requirements.

Skill Area	Outcomes
Practical journalistic skills	• Demonstrate advance use of ICTs in context. • Demonstrate a specialised knowledge and understanding of the Information Society and its relevance in Africa.
Subject knowledge skills	• Be well informed and able to communicate about IS debates, technologies and developments. • Be able to work in teams using a combination of new technologies.
Team work skills	• Use new technologies in a content management system to report on IS issues.

In order to assess whether participants achieved the outcomes set for the training programme, they were required to submit details of stories they produced using different media during Highway Africa. The result was that participants produced written stories for the Open Source newspaper during the conference as well as for their own publications, took photographs for the newspaper, and published using a range of media for the Highway Africa News Agency website (http://hana.ru.ac.za) including text, audio and images[2].

Seeing participants who had never imagined working with HTML produce a high quality newspaper was seeing the vision of Highway Africa come to life

Conclusion

Seeing participants who had never imagined working with HTML or taking photographs produce a high quality newspaper was seeing the vision of Highway Africa come to life. These journalists took every challenge in their stride and accomplished more in 10 days of intensive training than many had imagined.

The outcomes of the programme were thus several and included:

- Coverage of the Highway Africa conference at the highest level with a daily newspaper for the duration of the conference,
- Coverage of the conference and its issues for the HANA website using a number of media,
- African journalists skilled in a number of platforms, media and skilled with the conceptual and critical understandings required of journalists in the Information Society today.

Highway Africa hopes to continue training journalists in new media in the period 2006 to 2008 with donor support.

More than 500 journalists from 40 African countries are expected to attend the 10th anniversary of the Highway Africa partnership in September 2006. The event will be a time for critical reflection on and celebration of the role that New Media has played – and will play – in democracy and development. This watershed conference will assess the state of African media, especially in regard to harnessing new technologies, by looking ahead as well as reflecting on where we come from.

Writer's bio

Vanessa Malila is a junior lecturer in New Media at the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University.

Chris Kabwato is the Director of Highway Africa.

Notes

[1] Highway Africa is an annual conference held in Grahamstown at the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University. The conference aims at bringing together journalists, policy-makers, civil society, and academics in discussing issues around Journalism, ICTs and New Media

[2] Some of the stories published on the HANA website by the course participants can be accessed by going to: http://hana.ru.ac.za



WSIS Tunis outcomes disappoint gender activists

By Brenda Zulu

Abstract

The article looks at the outcomes of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society from a gender perspective. Despite seven years of lobbying by gender advocates, the two outcomes documents fall far short of expectation, writes the author.

Key words

WSIS, information society, ICTs, digital divide, gender

The second phase[1] of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) took place in Tunis in November 2005. The Summit has been hailed as a resounding success by the 174 national delegations and many participants from more than 800 entities including United Nations agencies and private sector companies.

But not everyone is celebrating. Civil society organisations, including gender activists have expressed disappointment with the outcome of the WSIS. They argue that the two Summit outcomes documents – the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, do not reflect the seven years of lobbying efforts they undertook.

But there is some evidence of the gender advocacy work. The Tunis Commitment contains one paragraph on women that is constructed more or less in its original form. Paragraph 23 reads:

"*We recognise that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide in society and we reaffirm our commitment to women's empowerment to a gender equality perspective, so that we can overcome this divide. We further acknowledge that the full participation of women in the Information Society is necessary to ensure the inclusiveness and respect for human rights within the Information Society. We encourage all stakeholders to support women's participation in decision-making processes and to contribute to shaping all spheres of the Information Society at international, regional and national levels.*"

In contrast, the Tunis Agenda was extremely disappointing as it excludes key issues from the Geneva Declaration including the call for ensuring that the information society promotes gender equality, women's empowerment and full participation in decision-making processes, the removal of gender barriers to ICT education, training for girls and women and the need for a gender-sensitive curriculum to enhance women and girls' ability to produce their own ICT content.

But the difficulties of getting gender concerns captured in the outcomes documents are a reflection of a broader challenge that women's rights and gender activists face in multiple arenas.



Gender Caucus meeting during PrepCom III in Geneva. Photo: Brenda Zulu

"The problem is that gender is viewed as a separate issue, and not regarded as something that underlies many other issues related to ICTs. This attitude resulted in governments successfully arguing for the removal of the gender provisions saying they were peripheral to the "core" issues of ICTs.

Another problem at WSIS is that very few government delegations included persons with expertise on gender equality, according to Karen Banks from the Association for Progressive Communications. Instead governments sent persons whose expertise was ICTs and telecommunications. Banks also noted that gender advocacy is primarily regarded as 'women's work' and would have been overlooked even in civil society groups and caucuses during the WSIS process, had not gender advocates been lobbying to ensure that these issues were built into core ICT issues and processes" (Thompson and Suarez Toro, 2005:3).

Negotiations were frustrating in the WSIS process as "gender language" had not been captured in the documents

Addressing WSIS delegates, Lettie Longwe Gender Caucus Interim Chairperson said:

"We cannot claim that we are building a World Information Society without assuring the channels and means for the full participation of all women and men" (WSIS Gender Caucus press release, 18 November 2005).

Longwe said the Geneva and Tunis Commitments will only be possible through the inclusion of women's skills, leadership, different ways of communication and women's rights as key values of the operation and implementation mechanisms.

The WSIS Gender Caucus called on all national governments to adopt a multi-stakeholder consultative approach that would benefit both women and men on an equal footing, to provide funding for projects aimed at bridging the gender digital divide, to support the use of appropriate ICTs such as community radio, and to ensure the participation of women in all information society decision-making structures.

Dr Heike Jesen, member of the steering committee of the WSIS Gender Caucus said that negotiations were frustrating in the WSIS process as "gender language" had not been captured in the documents.

"We have supported old wording, new concepts and tried to remain on the UN level.

These issues do not capture what new information communi cation technology (ICTs) have to do for women" said Jensen (Gender Caucus meeting, 16 November 2005).

Florence Eta from the African caucus has observed that while the Gender Caucus made the policy-makers aware of the gender issues in the WSIS process:

"After lobbying and struggling, the Gender Caucus made a statement in plenary. [But] women are not sitting there when it is being drafted. We the Africa caucus believes in numbers equal numbers and value documentations" (Gender Caucus meeting, 16 November 2005).

What next?

It was clear that during the WSIS process that it was mostly men who were doing the talking in plenary sessions. It is essential that there is equal representation of men and women during these forums.objectives of WSIS. We need to continue sending the message that integrating gender concerns are a critical if we are to create a world information society that supports and promotes human development and an improvement in quality of life for all people.

Gender advocates must evaluate the WSIS process and determine what steps can be taken to integrate genderconcerns in individual country ICT policy documents. If there is appropriate attention paid to gender equality and women's perspectives, the world information society will benefit by facilitating the inclusion of women's leadership, communication styles and values.

In the post-WSIS phase, there is an urgent need to strengthen education and awareness and to main-stream ICT issues into existing human rights monitoring systems. Towards this end an independent commission could be established to review national and international ICT regulations and practices to ensure compliance with international human rights standards.

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Writer's Bio

Brenda Zulu is currently the Regional African Editor for the Genderit.Org website which is a project of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). She creates and manages content for the web site. She has created a mailing list for African women journalists interested in reporting on ICTs in Africa.

Notes

[1] The first phase took place in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003 and the second phase in Tunis, from 16 to 18 November 2005. The objective of the first phase was to develop and foster a clear statement of political will and take concrete steps to establish the foundations for an Information Society for all, reflecting all the different interests at stake. Nearly 50 Heads of state/government and Vice-Presidents, 82 Ministers, and 26 Vice-Ministers from 175 countries as well as high-level representatives from international organisations, private sector, and civil society attended the Geneva Phase of WSIS and gave political support to the that were adopted on 12 December 2003. The objective of the second phase was to put Geneva's Plan of Action into motion as well as to find solutions and reach agreements in the fields of Internet governance, financing mechanisms, and follow-up and implementation of the Geneva and Tunis documents.



Who's doing the talking? Monitoring radio talk shows

By Susan Tolmay

Abstract

The article presents the findings of a media monitoring project undertaken in Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe[1]. The project titled "Who talks on talk shows" is the first gender audit of radio talk shows to be conducted in Southern Africa. The study found that women are the missing voices in radio talk shows: whether as hosts, guests or callers.

Key words

radio talk shows, monitoring, women, attitudes, audience

Radio as a news medium has significant reach into both rural and urban areas that have little other media presence. Radio therefore has the potential to open avenues to participation for marginalised groups of people and can be an important and accessible link to the wider community. Some of the key challenges facing radio broadcasters are to educate, inform and entertain, change mindsets and attitudes and ensure that the voices, opinions and experiences of the whole population are heard.

Radio talk shows offer people the opportunity to participate and become involved in public life. They play a potentially large role in promoting political participation as they can be a forum where ordinary citizens are able to bring their concerns, opinions and complaints into the public sphere, question key decision-makers and to hold them accountable – thus strengthening democracy.

Despite this, women are the missing voices in radio talk shows – as hosts, guests and callers. Although women would like to discuss more social topics, including gender equality, these are generally missing in the programme line ups. To the extent that gender issues are raised in chat chows, they often reinforce stereotypes about the role of women and men in society and these go unchallenged by the predominantly male hosts of the shows.

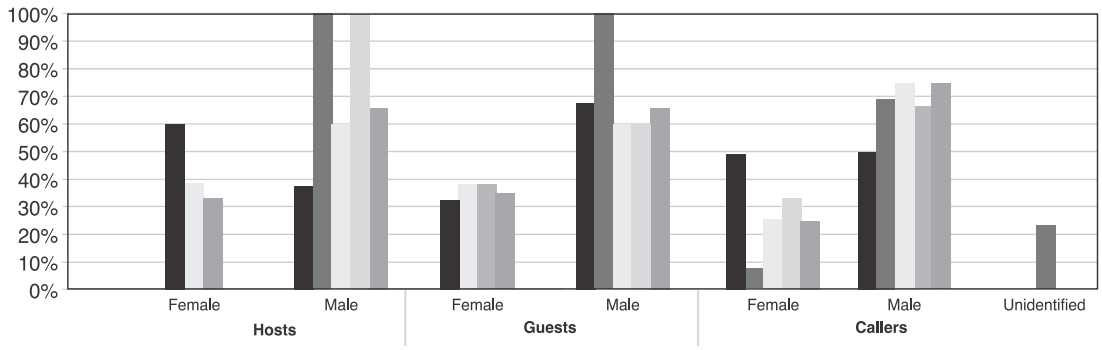
These are the key findings of a survey of 11 radio talk shows in four Southern African countries [2] (Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe) conducted by Gender Links in partnership with country chapters of the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network from June to July 2005.

Guests, hosts and callers

The study found that women make up only 25 percent of callers to radio talk shows. On average they constitute only 36 percent of talk show guests and 32 percent of hosts. The reasons for the generally low participation by women in radio talk shows are complex. In South Africa, the two shows hosted by women had the highest proportion of women callers and many

complained about the approach of male hosts in other programmes which women seemed to find intimidating. However, having more women guests did not seem to change the extent to which women called the show with the greatest gender balance with regard to guests also had the lowest proportion of women callers.

Host, guests and callers of radio talk shows disaggregated by sex per country



	Hosts		Guests		Callers		
Lesotho	62%	38%	33%	67%	49%	51%	
Malawi	0%	100%	0%	100%	8%	69%	23%
South Africa	40%	60%	39%	61%	25%	75%	
Zimbabwe	0%	100%	39%	61%	33%	67%	
Average	32%	68%	36%	64%	25%	75%	

But why this absence of women's voices from radio talk shows? Are the hosts "putting women off" so to speak with their attitudes? Are women not interested in calling in and sharing their views? Are the topics selected not interesting to women? And if this is the case, then surely it would make more financial sense for media to diversify topics and redesign shows to cater for the needs of both female and male audiences?

A number of findings suggest that the topics discussed could have a bearing on women's participation. In South Africa for example, participation by women increased visibly in a show normally dominated by male callers when the topic switched from current affairs to health.

The audience survey conducted as part of the monitoring showed that listeners in all the countries (and especially women) want to talk about gender equality and women's empowerment. This is supported by the findings of the recent Gender and Media Audience Study in which men cited politics and sports as their favourite news topics, whereas women rated social issues more strongly.

Despite this, only nine percent of the 55 shows monitored focused specifically on gender-related issues. This ranged from 20 percent in Lesotho to no such programmes in Malawi.

A host in Zimbabwe suggested that social and economic factors are at the root of women's reluctance to call into programmes:

"During the phone-in segment, most callers are men. I don't know whether that is influenced by the fact that phones are regarded as the property of the man within the home or not. And also, I think this might be because women are generally afraid to express themselves in public."

While this could be a possible reason, the study also found that the attitude of presenters was a factor. While presenters did try to be fair, women guests and callers were sometimes addressed in patronising and demeaning ways. For example, in South Africa a talk show host asked a woman who called in to a current affairs talk show on a case of corruption if she knew anything about politics.

Yet women's participation in talk shows actually

affects the quality of the show. Although audiences did not seem to think it made a difference whether or not more women called in, the qualitative monitoring showed that debates in shows that had a greater gender balance displayed a broader range of perspectives that made for interesting debate. For example, a talk show in Zimbabwe in which a male panelist challenged the view of a woman panelist that young women should finish their education before they get married on the grounds that "they may not find a husband" led to a robust debate. In addition, having women participate as experts and callers on whatever subject also sends out a strong message about their equal status in society.

From a commercial point of view, marketing departments have a keen interest in ensuring a strong following by women on chat shows as women are seen by advertisers as playing a decisive role in spending decisions. Growing female audiences are therefore a key commercial imperative for all radio stations.

Writer's Bio
Susan Tolmay is a researcher and publications manager at Gender Links.

Recommendations

- A number of recommendations arose from the study including:
- Media decision-makers make a conscious decision at policy level to ensure that chat shows have women and men hosts (possibly even to co-facilitate shows) and that equal numbers of men and women are invited as guests.
- Talk show hosts engage with the findings of this study and undertake gender awareness training to assist them in being equally accessible to male and female callers; in being able to pick up on pertinent gender issues as part of mainstream debates and in recognising and challenging gender stereotypes.
- Gender and media activists and networks work closely with media houses in giving feedback on monitoring; compiling a database of potential women guests and conducting media literacy campaigns to encourage more women to participate in talk shows.
- Media regulatory authorities include a requirement in annual reports by broadcasters as part of licensing conditions that broadcasters report on what they have done to advance gender equality through all their programming, including talk shows.
- Given the importance of radio as a means of communication in the region, and the possibilities offered by radio talk shows for citizen participation, this medium is critical to grow media audiences as well as deepen democracy. Gender equality is intrinsic to both of these.

Notes

[1] This article is based on a report titled: "Mirror on the Media: Who talks on talk shows?" edited by Susan Tolmay. The full report is available on the Gender Links website: www.genderlinks.org.za.

[2] Each country monitored a minimum of two radio stations including a mix of public and private media as well as current affairs and socially-oriented shoes. Five radio talk shows were monitored for each station over a staggered week and the monitoring included both quantitative and qualitative analysis. To reflect on the findings of the content analysis from the perspective of listeners, the research included interviews with 20 regular listeners of each show (10 women and 10 men).





Tanzania: positive sign as more women in parliament?

By Joyce Mkinga and Rose Haji

Abstract

As more women occupy decision-making positions in Tanzania's government, there is optimism that they will make a difference in the lives of ordinary Tanzanians.

Key words

Tanzania, decision-making, governance, cabinet

Tanzania has joined Mozambique and South Africa to become only the third country to have reached the 2005 target of 30 percent of women in decision-making set by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

The December 2005 elections saw women's representation increase from 21.4 percent to 30.2 percent, giving the country the highest representation of women in a constituency system to date.The new cabinet, led by President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete is the largest ever in Tanzania's history, including 16 women (26 percent) comprising six Ministers and 10 Deputy Ministers. The previous cabinet included only four full ministers and five Deputy Ministers. Significantly, women have been appointed to the head the Finance and Cooperation and Foreign Affairs ministries, making history in Tanzania as these positions have never been held by women since the countries' independence. Zakhia Meghji has been appointed the Minister of Finance and Cooperation and Dr Asha Rose Migiro, Minister of Finance.

Other ministerial posts that have been assumed by women include Margreth Sitta in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Mary Nagu in Justice and Constitution Affairs, Sofia Simba in Gender, Children and Community Development and Hawa Ghasia, the Minister of State in the Presidents Office.

Of the 98 women Members of Parliament (MPs), 20 were elected in constituencies and 75 from special seats. In the previous election, only four women were elected MPs. The elected MPs came from three political parties including the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the main opposition Civic United Front (CUF) and Chama Cha Demokrasia na Mandeleo (CHADEMA).

When President Kikwete launched his party's election campaign in August 2005, he said that if elected into

power, he would ensure that women's representation in leadership positions would be increased.

"The party decided to take women on board. [It is] not that men in such areas do not qualify or are not needed by the party, but we recognise the importance of having women in leadership" he said.

At the unveiling of his cabinet on January 5, Kikwete reiterated his commitment to women's leadership and argued that in some incidences women perform better than men do. "I have decided to put many women in my cabinet to show my trust in women," he said.

There is disappointment however that the 30 percent target in Tanzania's cabinet has not been met and activists argue that more could have been done to ensure this.

Speculation has already begun in the country around whether the women appointed by Kikwete will be able to meet expectations and perform well within their portfolios. But the women ministers have vowed to work hard to improve the quality of life of ordinary Tanzanians and to show that women's leadership is an important contribution to social change. "I am determined to work hard. Since the President trusted me and gave me this position, I will not let him down," said Minister of Finance, Zakia Meghji.

However many Tanzanians are optimistic that the new cabinet, with its increased numbers of women, will increase efficiency, especially following the restructuring and formation of new ministries.

While we wait to if our new women leaders meet our expectations, for now there are positive signs that they are determined to make a difference.

Writer's Bio

Rose Haji is the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network country representative in Tanzania

Joyce Mkinga is a Tanzanian journalist.

NEW BOOKS



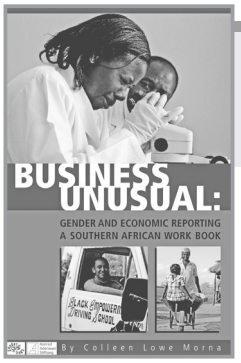
Women, Quotas and Politics
Edited by Drude Dahlerup
Published by: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group

This is the first world-wide, comparative study of the controversial new trends of gender quotas now emerging in global politics. The book presents a comprehensive overview of changes in women's parliamentary representation across the world.

The book is important reading for all those working to increase women's influence in politics, because it scrutinizes under what circumstances gender quotas do increase women's representation – and why they sometimes fail.

The book covers almost all major regions of the world: Latin America, Africa, the Arab world, South Asia, the Balkans, The Nordic countries and Europe, New Zealand, Australia and the U.S.A. Using a comparative perspective, this book contains analyses of the discursive controversies around quotas; it gives an overview over various types of quotas in use from candidate quotas to reserved seat systems, and it throws light over the troublesome implementation process. When do gender quotas lead to actual increase in the number of women in parliament? When are quotas merely a symbolic gesture? What does it imply to be elected as a 'quota woman'? Tackling these and many more key questions, this is a major new contribution to the field.

Making an important contribution to our knowledge of gender politics worldwide, this book will be of interest to NGOs, students and scholars of democracy, policy-making, comparative politics and gender studies.

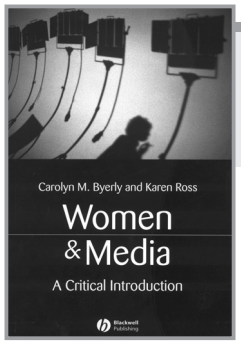


Business Unusual:
Gender and economic reporting a Southern African work book

As a region, the Southern African Development Community seeks to better the lives of its citizens, women and men, through closer regional co-operation. Yet the gender dimensions of macro-economic policy, budgets, trade, work and business are among the least understood by policy-makers, media decision-makers and practitioners. Despite the enormous role that women play in the economies of all Southern African countries this contribution remains undervalued and invisible.

Business Unusual is a practical work book of 8 chapters, 13 fact sheets and a CD-Rom with 30 case studies which address women and the economy and which will help media practitioners and trainers to see the economy through gendered lens.

Cost: R50/ $10

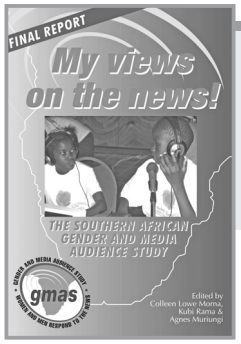


Women and media:
A critical introduction
Carolyn M. Byerly and Karen Ross
Blackwell Publishing

Women and Media is a thoughtful cross-examination of the ways in which women have worked inside and outside mainstream media organisations since the 1970s. The book provides an overview of the key issues and developments in feminist media critiques and interventions over the last 30 years, beginning with the extant literature in this growing field and ending with a new study of women's media activism in 20 nations. The authors recount and analyse the first-hand narratives of nearly 100 women media activists whose work has contributed to the making of a feminist public sphere that has moved women leaders and agendas more forcefully into their societies.

The highly original empirical base, and the Model of Women's Media Action that the authors developed from it, provides a unique account of women's struggles to improve, create and otherwise employ media in pushing for social change. The text is written in a concise, engaging style laying out the central concerns about the women-media relationship as it has operated in a variety of political / critical contexts.

Watch out for a review of the book in the next issue of the Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal.



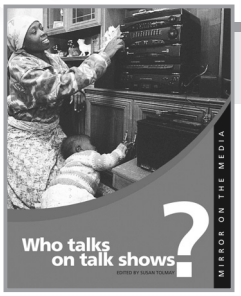
My views on the news!
The Southern African gender and media audience study.
Final report
Edited by Colleen Lowe Morna, Kubi Rama and Agnes Muriungi

A sequel to the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) conducted in 2002, the Gender and Media Audience Stysy (GMAS) is both the first ever major regional study on media consumption patterns generally in Southern Africa, as well the gendered dimensions of this. This study conducted by Gender Links in partnership with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), the Gender and Media Southern Africa Network (GEMSA), universities and media advocacy organisations, with technical support from the South African Media Monitoring Project (MMP) covers 13 Southern African countries.

The study is a must read for all those involved in the production of news; for those who are tired of being passive medias consumers; and for those committed to strengthening democracy by making every voice count.

Cost: R75.00/ $12.00

NEW BOOKS

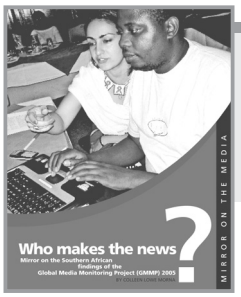


Who talk on talk shows? Edited by Susan Tolmay

Women are the missing voices in radio talk shows - as hosts, guests and callers. Although women would like to discuss more social topics, including gender equality, these are generally missing in the programme line ups. To the extent that gender issues are raised in chat shows, they often reinforce stereotypes about the role of women and men in society and these go unchallenged by the predominantly male hosts of the shows.

These are among the key findings of a survey of eleven radio talk shows in four Southern African countries (Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe) conducted by Gender Links in partnership with country chapters of the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network from June-July 2005.

Cost: R50.00/ $10.00



Who makes the news? Mirror on the Southern African findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2005 By Colleen Lowe Morna

Southern Africa has made significant progress towards achieving greater gender balance in the news and in newsrooms, but it still far from achieving equality by any one of the measures used in the third Global Media Monitoring Project. While women sources have increased from 17 percent in the regional Gender and Media Baseline Study conducted by Gender Links and the Media Institute of Southern Africa in 2002 to 19 percent in the GMMP conducted across 76 countries in 2005, this is below the global average of 22 percent. However, nine out of the 13 SADC countries showed an improvement, with South Africa (26 percent) now leading the way, followed by Swaziland, Mauritius, Namibia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Angola, with 13 percent women sources tails the list.

These are some of the key findings of the GMMP 2005, a snapshot of the representation and portrayal of women and men in the news on one day of the year that has been conducted every five years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Cost: R50.00/ $10.00

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MEDIA DIVERSITY: GOOD FOR DEMOCRACY, GOOD FOR BUSINESS

The Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network, in partnership with Gender Links (GL) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), will be holding the second Gender and Media (GEM) Summit from 6-8 September 2006 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Who

GEMSA is an umbrella organisation of individuals and institutions who work to promote gender equality in and through the media. GEMSA has its roots in the historic Southern African Gender and Media Summit attended by 184 participants from around the region in September 2004. Since its inception GEMSA has signed up 218 individual and 13 institutional members from 13 countries.

Target participants for the summit are:
- GEMSA members and country chapters.
- Media practitioners.
- Media decision-makers.
- Media monitors.
- Gender activists.
- Academics.
- Researchers.
- Other interested individuals or groups.

Why

The second GEM Summit will be preceded by a General Meeting of GEMSA that will:
- Take stock of progress made since the first Gender and Media Summit, as reflected in the recent Global Media Monitoring Project and related research.
- Affirm the progress that has been made through the holding of the second Gender and Media Awards.
- Share best practices in gender and the media in Southern Africa and globally.
- Provide an opportunity for the media, media trainers, gender activists, academic institutions, researchers and others to develop strategic partnerships.
- Strengthen and ensure the proper governance of GEMSA.

What

Under the banner, *"Media Diversity: Good for Democracy, Good for Business"* the Summit will include parallel seminars on gender and the media in the following categories:
- **Enabling environments**
- **Professionalism in the media**
- **Diversifying media markets**
- **Policy and practise**
- **Research and monitoring**
- **Media training**
- **Media literacy**
- **Media activism**

Costs:
International participants will be expected to fund their own costs to participate. GEMSA country chapters will fund raise for the participation of their members. Limited funding is available for other categories of experts and participants based on need and merit.

When

The GEMSA General Meeting will be held on the afternoon 5 September 2006. The Second GEM Summit will be held from 6-8 September 2006. These dates have been chosen to enable participants wanting to go on to Highway Africa at Rhodes University starting on 11 September to be able to do so.

6-8 September 2006

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal

Why?

The journal fills a critical gap between media theory and practice as it publishes analytical and reflective content on media practice for those involved in media – as news producers, news consumers and news shapers. It creates the space for critical reflection, debate, criticism and arguments for media diversity in Southern Africa. Underpinning the journal is the idea that knowledge is produced in multiple sites and that good media practice reflects this in content, policy, training, research and ownership.

The journal aims to:

- Develop and share a body of knowledge on media diversity in Southern Africa.
- Promote more probing journalism.
- Promote more analytical and contextual journalism in the region.
- Illustrate the links between media theory and practice.
- Build on and feed into the bi-annual Gender and Media Summit.

What?

The bi-annual journal is a joint project of Gender Links and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network supported by UNESCO. The resource provides up-to-date and cutting edge information on media diversity in Southern Africa and the space for the dissemination of research findings and projects; case studies; campaigns, policy developments; and opinion and debate on media practice in the region.

The journal is supported by an editorial advisory committee consisting of the policy and training committees of GEMSA as well as GEMSA members with expertise, knowledge and networks in this field.

The Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal targets media workers and owners, policy-makers, researchers, lecturers, student journalists, activists and those individuals and organisations working towards media diversity in the region.

Contributors are commissioned to write for the journal by the editor and a moderate honorarium will be paid for accepted contributions. Contributions must be accompanied by relevant visual material.

Each journal will focus on a different thematic area identified in consultation with the editorial advisory committee.

Future issues will tackle themes such as HIV/AIDS and the media; media ownership; race and ethnicity and other critical issues facing the region.

Each journal will contain:

A: Introduction – editorial and news briefs
B: Thematic focus
C: Advocacy
D: Training and education
E: Research and monitoring
F: Policy
G: Information technology
H: Opinion and reviews
I: Governance

Overview and in-depth articles will be between 2000-2500 words including references and supporting articles between 1000-1500 words. The editor will advise contributors of length when commissioning content.

When?

The second will be published prior to the second bi-annual Southern Africa Gender and Media Summit in September 2006 with the theme: "Media diversity: good for democracy, good for business". We encourage you to send us ideas for articles, reviews, etc.

For further information contact:

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