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4/2013

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The current issue is the fourth to be exclusively digital. The journal is no longer available in print.

Members and Subscribers can download and print a complete PDF of the journal or individual articles.

The 1/2014 issue of Media Development will focus on the communication rights of families and children in the light of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014.



It was in 1792 that the British writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights, Mary Wollstonecraft, published *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*. Her book is a plea for gender equality at a time of political and social ferment the repercussions of which would last more than two centuries.

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman was written against the background of the American and French Revolutions, and that of intellectual debates pursued by Enlightenment philosophers such as Diderot and Rousseau.

Wollstonecraft had also read government minister Talleyrand's report to the French National Assembly in 1791, which supported the notion of public education, but stated that women should only receive domestic training. She launched a broad riposte:

“Contending for the rights of woman, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue; for truth must be common to all, or it will be inefficacious with respect to its influence on general practice. And how can woman be expected to co-operate unless she know why she ought to be virtuous? unless freedom strengthen her reason till she

comprehend her duty, and see in what manner it is connected with her real good?”

Wollstonecraft was tackling a social injustice that is still prevalent today: gender stereotyping – preconceptions concerning the roles of women and men that for women result in discrimination and oppression. She took society to task for treating women in ways that were dismissive or belittling and which resulted in domination.

Stereotyping is an attempt to diminish human dignity, reinforcing prejudice and ignorance, and weakening those structures that offer protection in society. In a mass mediated society, stereotypes, especially about women and men, can easily become ingrained, ultimately contributing to repression and leading to violence.

Consequently, it is vital for social communications – mass, community, and social media – to represent people, no matter who they are or where they come from, in a more balanced and gender-sensitive way.

Moreover, it is important for those responsible for media content – including what has become known as user-generated content – to counter gender bias wherever it occurs.

As Claudia Florentín, a contributor to this issue of *Media Development*, points out:

“It is for all women and men to construct how they want the media to reflect society in general and women in particular. That is to say, to take

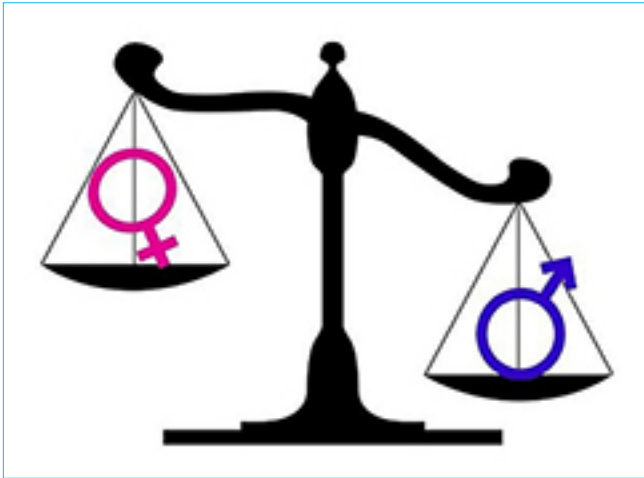
account of histories, practices, discourses that allow women to be seen, to take them out of invisibilization, to give them the possibility of constructing reality according to their way of speaking and viewing, and not to carry on reproducing the discourse of the dominant powers and patriarchies that pervades cultures, economies and religions.”

Gender stereotypes are one of the most persistent causes of inequality between women and men in all spheres, impacting both their professional and private lives. Media content influences the way people perceive reality and contributes to shaping gender roles.

Yet, women (and sometimes men) are often poorly represented in the media. The findings of WACC's Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) confirm that:

- * Only 24% of the people heard or read about in print, radio and television news are female. In contrast, 76% - more than 3 out of 4 - of the people in the news are male.
- * News continues to portray a world in which men outnumber women in almost all occupational categories, the highest disparity being in the professions.
- * As persons interviewed or heard in the news, women remain lodged in the “ordinary” people categories, in contrast to men who continue to predominate in the “expert” categories.

- * 18% of female news subjects are portrayed as victims in comparison to 8% of male subjects. In contrast, women are now twice as likely to be portrayed as survivors than men.
 - * 46% of stories reinforce gender stereotypes, almost eight times higher than stories that challenge such stereotypes (6%).
- Steps are being taken towards remedying this



situation and some governments are even getting behind action plans.

On 10 July 2013, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a “Recommendation on gender equality and media”. It forcefully stated that:

“Democracy and gender equality are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The inclusion of women and men, with respect for equal rights and opportunities, is an essential condition for democratic governance and sound decision-making. Gender equality means equal visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation of both women and men in all spheres of public life, including the media... Gender equality is an integral part of human rights. Freedom of expression, as a fundamental right, goes hand-in-hand with gender equality.”

Mary Wollstonecraft would surely have applauded, but as articles in this issue demonstrate there is still a long way to go. ■

Media Development

An international quarterly journal dedicated to the theory and practice of communication around the world.

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Media pluralism and gender: Not just a question of numbers

Ammu Joseph

“Media pluralism is the key that unlocks the door of freedom of information and freedom of speech.” – Miklós Haraszti¹

During the mid-2013 summer of discontent in Turkey, crowds of young Turks gathered outside television stations to protest against the virtual blacking out by much of the country’s news media of the demonstrations at Taksim Square, which were extensively covered by international media. Despite the fact that Turkey boasts at least a dozen big TV channels and around 50 nationally available newspapers, besides hundreds of local radio operations, the democratically elected government headed by Recep Tayyip Erdogan was evidently able to exert enough pressure on media organisations to dissuade coverage of the popular uprising, especially in the early days. As the headline of a press comment on the situation pointed out, “Numbers alone do not guarantee media pluralism.”²

Yet discussions on media pluralism – now widely accepted as a vital aspect of freedom of expression in general and press/media freedom in particular – tend to focus primarily on numbers, along with structures, regulations, technologies and ideologies. The relationship between media pluralism and human beings, their experiences, opinions, needs, aspirations and entitlements has received far

less attention than it deserves.

Accordingly, mandatory references to the need for “informed citizens” to be exposed to “a wide range of viewpoints across a variety of platforms and media owners”³ if democratic societies are to function properly presume the existence of an archetypal citizen with equal access to various resources, including media and information, and to various rights, including freedom of expression.

They also appear to assume that multiple platforms and owners will automatically guarantee independence and diversity. Similarly, allusions to the roles, rights and responsibilities of “journalists” presuppose a level playing field where all journalists – or at least those employed in news organisations – have equal opportunities to enjoy the “journalistic freedom” that is a prerequisite of “a free and pluralistic media environment.”⁴

Such assumptions are clearly flawed. Fortunately, there are now welcome signs of broader interpretations of media pluralism, highlighting the imperatives of diversity in general and inclusiveness in particular. This is the context within which a gender perspective on media pluralism becomes important.

Media pluralism and gender

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) was a front-runner among freedom of expression organisations when its 2002 gender policy explicitly stated that “gender equality is intrinsic to a pluralistic and diverse media.”⁵

Despite the emergence of various, increasingly holistic, conceptions of media pluralism, however, perceptions of how gender fits into the evolving scheme remain limited. For example, of the five dimensions of media pluralism identified as “risk domains” by a group of experts developing pluralism indicators, only one refers to women: cultural pluralism in the media. This is described as the presence in the media of a plurality of themes and voices, multiple opportunities for access to and participation in the media (with options for different forms of interaction), and the representation of diverse values, viewpoints and roles in the media, enabling citizens belonging to various cultural and social groups – such as national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, women, disabled people and sexual minorities – to recognise themselves.⁶

While these are, no doubt, necessary conditions for media pluralism, they may not be sufficient if pluralism is to engender an informed and empowered citizenry. A more dynamic view of media pluralism as “a normative value that refers to the distribution of communicative power in the public sphere ... understood in terms of its ability to challenge inequalities and create a more democratic public sphere”⁷ allows for a better understanding of why gender (and other socio-economic and cultural variables) needs to be factored into any assessment of media pluralism.

As Kari Karppinen has pointed out, “If media pluralism is to serve as a critical concept it must also acknowledge broader questions about the role of media with regard to the distribution of power and influence in society ... Markers of plurality in the media should...rest...on the actual success of a media system in representing and giving voice to different members of society.”⁸

Gender and media ownership

It is widely recognised that ownership and control are critical aspects of media pluralism, particularly “external” aspects of pluralism (i.e. diversity across/between media enterprises). Concentration of media ownership is generally acknowledged as a threat to pluralism, allowing for the “disproportionate influence of one or few economic, social and/or political powers.”⁹ The fact that gender and power are closely linked and that lopsided gender representation can result in such disproportionate influence is rarely conceded.

The current paucity of gender-disaggregated data on media ownership reflects the limited understanding of pluralism that has prevailed so far.¹⁰ But the considerable evidence that does exist of the under-representation of women in media professions (particularly in governance and decision-making positions within both management and editorial structures), as well as in media content, suggests that they are unlikely to be well-represented among owners.

Gender and the media workforce

According to the High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism in Europe, “the journalistic profession should ... reflect the diversity in the general population and media outlets must be encouraged

to reflect the diversity of the population in their newsroom and on-screen.”¹¹ This requirement relates primarily to “internal” aspects of media pluralism (i.e. diversity within media enterprises).

Gender balance is an obvious prerequisite for pluralistic media reflecting the diversity of any given population. Notwithstanding the growing and visible presence of many successful, high profile and highly regarded media women, both internationally and in individual countries, recent global research covering over 500 media companies in nearly 60 countries has revealed that in most parts of the world women continue to be under-represented as professionals working in both print and broadcast media.¹² The picture that emerges from the only recent, extensive global study of its kind is largely corroborated by findings from separate surveys in at least one region and several nations.¹³

Gender and voice in the media

“If media freedom provides the possibility to express oneself and to access information, then media pluralism is the degree of outreach of this freedom – i.e. the outcome being that every group in a society can enjoy this freedom.”¹⁴ The issue of voice refers to both external and internal aspects of pluralism, but is particularly relevant to the question of whether or not “social and political diversity are reflected in media content” through the “representation of different cultural groups in the media as well as divergent political or ideological opinions and viewpoints.”¹⁵

Media pluralism is intrinsically about enabling the presence of a range of voices, values and perspectives in the media and thereby facilitating inclusive public debate, generating open discussion between various sub-groups and systems within a society, and reflecting diverse interests and concerns. This is of crucial importance because “a society’s most inclusive conversations with itself are conducted through the media. If those media do not reflect society in all its facets, all its complexity, that conversation becomes distorted and simplistic in ways that nourish intolerance.”¹⁶

One element of the need for diverse voices involves media professionals and the extent to which they are able to make their voices heard on a variety of events and issues. There is considerable evidence to suggest that women’s voices are not proportion-

ately heard in the media, especially on certain critical issues. Surveys in the US and UK, for example, suggest that the overwhelming majority of public voices continue to be male.¹⁷

Another component of voice concerns representation in media content as sources of news, information and opinion. Here, too, the available global data is discouraging. Despite the slow but overall steady increase in women's presence in the news over the past decade (from 17% in 1995 to 18% in 2000, 21% in 2005 and 24% in 2010), the world depicted in the news media still remains predominantly male.¹⁸

The picture is not significantly better in different parts of the world covered by the Global Media Monitoring Project.¹⁹ There are bound to be honourable exceptions among individual countries, but they may merely prove the rule since the GMMP data is more or less corroborated by smaller studies across the world, both regional and national.²⁰

Gender and new media

There is widespread acceptance of the idea that the rapidly evolving media and information environment, facilitated by the apparently incessant innovations in information and communications technologies over the past couple of decades, has significantly democratised the media space. Many believe that the Internet and digital technology have breached the boundaries of availability and access to such an extent that media pluralism is no longer as vital an issue as it once was or, at least, that it is pertinent only to the "old" media, which are no longer central in the new scheme of things.

They point out that the abundance and ascendancy of bloggers, citizen journalists and social networkers have narrowed, if not eliminated, the gap between professional journalists and others using interactive, participatory new media to express themselves, report events, analyse issues and exchange views.

However, several experts are evidently not convinced that the technological and socio-cultural changes in the contemporary media environment have actually led to real diversity and a meaningful plurality of voices. They acknowledge that some of the new communication technologies can and do support more diversity and pluralism than others but suggest that it is unwise, if not naïve, to assume

that the Internet and other technological advances will automatically eliminate problems related to media pluralism.

According to them, the indisputable increase in new media does not guarantee pluralism, and communicative abundance alone does not make questions about the distribution of communicative power and political voice obsolete – it merely reconfigures them in a more complex form. They point out that disparities in the opportunities offered by new media largely reflect previously recognised socio-economic inequalities.²¹

From a gender diversity standpoint, the latter stance appears to make sense, especially in view of continuing gender differences in access to information and communication technologies.²² Beyond access, there are questions about the nature and perceptions of women's use of new media. While the gender gap among bloggers appears to be reducing, there seems to be a persistent gender divergence in terms of the topics covered by male and female writers even in the new media.²³

And, although several studies have established women's substantial and active presence in social networks (outnumbering men in most),²⁴ perceptions of the relative importance of male and female social networkers seem to vary, with leading publications evidently not taking women's activities as seriously as those of men.²⁵

The Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 included a pilot survey of Internet news which may well be the first international research on gender in online news. The findings suggest that the underrepresentation of women in traditional news media has been carried over into the virtual news world.²⁶ There are, of course, honourable exceptions, such as the international citizen media news site, Global Voices, which boasts equal participation by women.²⁷

Beyond the issue of representation among users and sources, there are growing concerns about new hierarchies of power and forms of concentration that are specific to the new media. Several critics call attention to the fact that, despite all the diversity, plenitude and complexity, concerns about concentration of power and homogenisation of content have not actually disappeared. According to them, even if in principle the Internet provides an almost infinite diversity of voices and greatly expands the

number of information sources, in practice the structure of the medium tends to create a high degree of concentration of content among a small handful of sites.²⁸

According to an independent policy report commissioned by the European Union, “It is a fact that while the new technologies lower the entry barriers, thus facilitating the entry of new players, their real impact on media pluralism is still questionable.”²⁹

This does not mean that the democratic potential of the Internet and the many opportunities it offers can or should be discounted, let alone dismissed. However, it is clearly important to examine closely what the Internet means for media pluralism and how media pluralism can be protected and promoted through the Internet. This appears to be a crucial issue to scrutinise through a gender lens, too.

Gender and alternative media

Women have historically created and creatively used alternative media, at least partly because of the hurdles in their path to accessing “mainstream” media. Feminist media, specifically designed to serve as spaces enabling women to share experiences, information and opinion on events and issues of special relevance and importance to them, have flourished in many parts of the world in different languages and forms since the 1970s. Print, radio and, more recently, the Internet have all been effectively utilised to establish such parallel forums. Some have been more successful than others, some have survived longer than others, but all of them have played an important role in providing platforms for women to express themselves and their concerns – as long as they were independently established and autonomously run by women.

The importance of ownership and control even within alternative media is brought home by the experience of community radio in some parts of the world. Community radio is widely seen as one of the most inclusive of media, which has enabled a range of women (including poor, illiterate, rural women) in several countries to exercise their communication rights.

Even so, in 1990, women involved in the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), who felt the need for a parallel forum within the organisation to push for a stronger and more equal role for women within the emerging

community radio movement, set up the Women’s International Network (WIN). After a WIN survey revealed that women were relatively marginalised at the decision-making levels in the community radio sector, a gender policy for community radio was adopted by AMARC in 2010 and efforts to promote the equal participation of women and men are continuing.³⁰

Conclusion

If media pluralism is understood as “the scope for a wide range of social, political and cultural values, opinions, information and interests to find expression through the media,” efforts to monitor and evaluate the state of media pluralism must factor gender – and other, often cross-cutting, socio-economic and cultural factors (such as class, caste/race/ethnicity and creed) – into the equation.

The gender dimensions of media pluralism need to be officially recognised as a crucial aspect of freedom of expression and media development if “the fair and diverse representation of and expression by ... various cultural and social groups, including ethnic, linguistic, national and religious minorities, disabled people, women and sexual minorities, in the media”³¹ is to become reality.

It is axiomatic that media pluralism will be achieved only when the media environment offers “a wide range of views and opinions” and also reflects “the diversity of a country’s population”³² in terms of ownership, personnel and content. ■

This article is partly based on research done for a chapter on gender and media pluralism in the UNESCO report on World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development scheduled to be released in November 2013.

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Return to Bangkok: Two decades of interventions on gender and media

Sarah Macharia

Almost twenty years after the Women Empowering Communication 1994 conference,¹ communicators return to Bangkok in December 2013 to consider questions about gender equality and women's empowerment in and through the media. This year's meeting, dubbed the Global Forum on Gender and Media and convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in partnership with others, is expected to result in the establishment of a Global Alliance on Media and Gender to coordinate systematic follow-up to Critical Area "J" of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on "Women and the Media".²

The profile of participants in the 2013 conference is significantly broader than the 1994 meeting, drawn from the media industry, government and civil society organisations. The configuration of convenors is also different, led by a multilateral body in partnership with others, including civil society, while the earlier conference was primarily a civil society event. Nevertheless, the symbolism of this return to Bangkok, however coincidental, should not be overlooked.

It presents an opening to take stock of progress, or lack thereof, during the intervening two decades.

To what extent have the aspirations voiced at the 1994 conference and subsequently immortalized in the Bangkok Declaration adopted by participants been met? Does the evidence point to greater awareness and responsiveness to identified gender issues in media? What does civil society have to show for two decades of work on gender equality in and through the media?

Flashback to 1994: Women Empowering Communication

Teresita Hermano explained the impetus behind the Women Empowering Communication conference:

“After sponsoring and organizing numerous regional and national consultations on women and the media, the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) proposed a global women’s conference to reassess the communication developments and strategies of the last decade and plan new lines of action for the future.”³

WACC approached the New York-based International Women’s Tribune Centre and ISIS-International Manila to partner in convening the conference. The usual conference fare of plenary presentations, workshops, resource displays and field trips was programmed in the four-day event. What set this global conference apart however was the preponderance of women as participants and the markedly different atmosphere in contrast to other global conferences at that historic moment. Keynote speaker Kamla Bhasin summed up the conference as “a much needed stopover” for women like her who often worked in isolation.⁴

Out of the conference emerged a remarkable document, the Bangkok Declaration, a statement of resolutions by 40 working groups that immortalized participants’ aspirations. The Declaration affirmed the need to:

“Promote forms of communication that not only challenge the patriarchal nature of media but strive to decentralise and democratise them: to create media that encourage dialogue and debate; media that advance women and peoples’ creativity; media that reaffirm women’s wisdom and knowledge, and that make people into subjects rather than objects

or targets of communication. Media which are responsive to people’s needs”.⁵

At the same time the Declaration recognized an imperative to hold mainstream media accountable to women. It exhorted the conference convenors to “organize one day at the start of 1995 for the monitoring of all media and use data as the basis for an analysis of where women are.” Thus, the idea of the Global Media Monitoring Project was mooted.

The Global Media Monitoring Project

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is designed to provide a one-day snapshot of women’s presence and participation in the news, gender bias, stereotyping and other gender-in-media indicators. The snapshot is taken every five years since 1995 through media monitoring research carried out by teams of volunteers in several countries worldwide on the same day. The GMMP is a multi-faceted initiative whose process is just as important as the media monitoring findings and the follow-up actions.

The process seeks to build skills in critical media literacy of the broad base of volunteers, increasing knowledge on how to apply a gender lens to read, understand and analyze media content. The monitoring findings offer the tangible evidence necessary to demonstrate gender gaps in media output and suggest directions for redress. Follow-up actions present a platform for fostering active citizenship, building productive media-audience relations and shaping a more inclusive public sphere.

The GMMP media monitoring findings are comprehensively documented in the report *Who makes the news? The global media monitoring project*. However, I evoke here a few illustrative results. The 4th GMMP monitoring research revealed that while the rate of increase in women’s presence in the news has remained constant since 2005 (at 3 percentage points every five years), gross gender imbalances remain. Women comprise only 24% of persons seen, heard or mentioned in the news, in contrast to the real world in which at least 50% of the population is female.

The research evidenced a welcome increase in news media content that challenges gender stereotypes: from only 3% of stories in 2005 to 6% in 2010. A pilot monitoring of internet news websites

found that gender biases became even more acute as content moved from traditional mediums onto digital platforms; this was true for all indicators monitored, from women's presence in the news, to gender portrayal in audiovisual multimedia accompanying stories and to gender stereotyping.⁷

That differently located stakeholders participate in the GMMP monitoring is an asset that becomes clear in the follow-up actions. Stakeholders located

dominance. By interrogating not only media's portrayal and representation of women, but also that of men, the symbolic construction of the masculine as the "norm", and the feminine as "deviant", is revealed.

The GMMP has inspired innumerable initiatives the world over, from further research to document the status of women in media in Pakistan,¹¹ to building critical media literacy skills of grass-

Communication is not only about providing information. Communication is shaping public opinion. It can drive the development of the world or hinder its progress. (Photo by Vu Viet Thanh for Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development, Hanoi, Vietnam.)



in the academy make invaluable contributions to furthering the analysis in a way that is not technically feasible at the global one-day snapshot level. In France for instance, in-depth qualitative analysis of news articles monitored in the 4th GMMP concluded that media manufacture, rather than reflect reality.⁸

Marlène Coulomb-Gully asserts that, "the feminists were not wrong when in the sixties they put a finger on the media, denouncing media conservatism and pointing to media's responsibility in maintaining women in traditional roles assuring the continuation of masculine domination and patriarchal society."⁹ As Simone de Beauvoir wrote in *The Second Sex*, one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.¹⁰

As technologies of power, media now more than ever participate in the process of gender socialization, locking in place unequal gender power relations of feminine subordination and masculine

roots women in Nepal,¹² and to informing content development in media education resources in the U.K.¹³ In November 2012, Argentinean high-level State officials discussing gender-related clauses in the new audiovisual communication law cited GMMP monitoring findings to underscore the imperative for gender-responsive public media.¹⁴

Civil society interventions and analytical contributions

Kamla Bhasin's assertion at the Bangkok 1994 conference that communication alternatives need to emerge from feminist critiques of the present world order and vision for the future remains true today. Feminists are not just concerned about how women are portrayed in the media or how many women work in the media – they are concerned about what kind of lives women lead, women's status and the kind of society that prevails.¹⁵ An analysis that draws the links between media portrayal to materi-

al realities and gender inequalities and inequities in people's lived experiences is necessary.

Such an analysis is perhaps one of the most significant contributions made by civil society organisations, whose critiques underscore the tendency in media portrayal and representation to separate women from their social, historic and political-economic contexts, with dire consequences for gender relations. To illustrate, the prevailing critique in Latin America about media portrayal of women in politics asserts that media discourse is often characterized by a simplistic narrative that fails to acknowledge the rootedness of female political leaders in a broader context, their paths into politics through social movements, unions, community organisations or professional associations.

Civil society has broached the problem from the angle of media professional ethics, underscoring gender-just portrayal as a requirement of professional practice if "gender" is understood as cutting across the basic elements of ethical codes such as balance, accuracy, objectivity and fairness. This recourse to media professional ethics to encourage media output that is responsive to critiques of sexism, objectification of women, trivialization of issues of concern to women, etc. is made necessary by the neoliberal capitalist profit-oriented context in which media operate. Notwithstanding, definitive transformational change is likely to remain elusive until the male-centric assumptions – of a fictitious predominantly male audience for instance – underlying the *modus operandi* of factual media are understood and overturned.

Various national, regional and international instruments have provided a basis for civil society activism to compel states and other actors to take action on rights violations. In recent years, civil society actors have turned to instruments on freedom of expression to lobby for media accountability to *all* publics, women included. (See for instance the General Assembly resolution on the role of freedom of opinion and expression in women's empowerment.)¹⁶

Civil society actors call for a journalism that recognizes multiple axes of vulnerability or marginalization. Further, they insist on an adoption of language that is not only non-sexist but also rights-oriented and supports social justice efforts.¹⁷

They trace the links between on the one hand,

media sexism and objectification of women and on the other hand, all forms of violence women suffer, where violence is defined as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."¹⁸

Gender-just media proponents in civil society exhort journalists to build their knowledge on the topics they cover, to guard against superficial reporting and deepen the narrative with statistics and voices from women's and community organisations. It would be impractical to expect journalistic expert knowledge of every issue. However the civil society message is for media professionals to develop depth in their understanding of the issues they cover, in addition to seeking multiple perspectives from state and civil society experts.

There is a striking boldness in Latin American civil society critiques of gender dimensions in media policy and practice not readily visible elsewhere. Evidence from several countries in the region points to a clear articulation of the problem – beyond questions of professional ethics to questions about trampling upon women's rights. The analysis leads to a response that demands an approach to journalism in which issues are articulated from a human rights perspective.

Insights from Argentinean civil society reveal that journalism with a human rights approach springs from an understanding of people as subjects with rights and the power to demand the rights, not as objects with needs. Such journalism chooses to speak in terms of promoting human rights and not about satisfying needs. It articulates the persons as beings entitled to rights claims.¹⁹

It points out, for instance, that women are *entitled* to social protection because they are holders of rights enshrined in a State's Constitution or other legal frameworks, and steers clear of presenting the women as objects *worthy of support*. Human rights-oriented journalism is rich in possibilities, with potential to increase civil society and state consciousness and action, incorporating the views of citizens on issues that affect them.

Such journalism keeps issues in the public limelight, continuously reiterating the rights claims for the public to check if a response from the State is

obtained and if this response is consistent with the magnitude of the problem.

A panoramic view of lessons and good practices emerging from civil society interventions to encourage gender-responsive media is provided in the *Learning Resource Kit for Gender-Ethical Journalism and Media House Policy*.²⁰

Return to Bangkok

Two decades after the Women Empowering Communication conference, a critical mass has been established around gender and media concerns. The GMMP is responsible for drawing together grassroots groups, national-level civil society organisations, media professional associations, unions and academia into one formidable “gender justice in and through media” movement spanning more than 100 countries. Over two decades the initiative has become the connective tissue linking otherwise isolated stakeholders engaged in particular and distinct ways on gender and media work, whether research, critical media literacy training, media capacity building or activism.

Civil society engagement has contributed to advances in deepening the analysis from predominantly technical questions on portrayal and representation, towards troubling the normative base on which mainstream media policy and practice are founded. It is likely that the unwavering commitment has played a significant role in broadening the base of actors now readying for return to Bangkok.

Civil society groups attending an international consultative meeting earlier this year emphatically declared the need for a 5th GMMP in view of the initiative’s value in building solidarity and generating empirical evidence to support our collective efforts. Convening a fifth global monitoring exercise becomes even more important in view of lessons from feminist calls that incessant vigilance is necessary to ensure that issues remain salient and alive in the relevant spaces.²¹ The need to hasten the snail’s pace rate of change towards media that support gender-justice objectives remains.

The varied interventions may have laid the groundwork necessary for the planned broad-based global alliance on media and gender to flourish, an alliance that in turn could catalyze the emergence of the type of media described in the Bangkok Declaration. ■

Notes

1. Convened by the London-based World Association for Christian Communication, the New York-based International Women’s Tribune Centre and ISIS-Manila, the conference brought together 430 participants to “reassess the communication developments and strategies of the last decade and plan new lines of action for the future” (Teresita Hermano, in *Media Development*, 2/1994.)
2. See Forum website at www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/crosscutting-priorities/gender-and-media/global-forum-on-media-and-gender/homepage/
3. Hermano in *Media Development*, 2/1994.
4. Ibid.
5. *The Bangkok Declaration*, Women Empowering Communication conference, 12-17 February, 1994. www.whomakesthenews.org/images/documents/bangkok%20declaration.pdf
6. Defined as the years in which the monitoring is undertaken and/or the results published. 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010.
7. See global, regional and country reports at www.whomakesthenews.org/index.php/gmmp-2010/reports.
8. Coulomb-Gully, Marlène (coord.). *Médias : La fabrique du genre* Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2012:83 w3.pum.univ-tlse2.fr/~no-83-Medias-La-fabrique-du-genre~.html
9. Ibid.
10. Beauvoir, Simone, 1971. *The Second Sex*. Alfred A. Knopf.
11. Uks Research Centre, 2013. *Who’s telling our story? A situation analysis of women’s portrayal and representation in media in Pakistan*. http://www.ukresearch.com/PublicationsPDFs/1_3_2IN1.pdf
12. ASMITA Women’s Publishing House, Media and Resource Organisation has over several years worked to build the capacity of rural women to “read” and respond to media content with a gender lens.
13. See Firth, Lisa. (ed.), 2011. *The Media*, Issues; v.210, a series by Independence Educational Publishers Cambridge published for students in the U.K. The section on ‘who makes the news’ exposing gender trends in news media is informed by GMMP 2010 monitoring findings.
14. See video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJwFvY5V0Ic#t=43
15. Kamla Bhasin, in *Media Development*, 2/1994.
16. United Nations, 2013. *The role of freedom of opinion and expression in women’s empowerment*, A/HRC/RES/23/2, Adopted by the General Assembly, Human Rights Council, 24 June 2013.
17. See for instance: Asociación Civil de la Azotea, 2012. *Manual hacia un periodismo conciencia de género: creando buenas prácticas*; Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género, 2013. *Mejorar la comunicación para expandir los derechos – Herramientas para incorporar el enfoque de derechos en las coberturas periodistas*.
18. United Nations, 1993. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, A/48/629. Resolution 48/104, Adopted by the General Assembly on the report of the Third Committee. www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.

[asp?symbol=A/RES/48/104](#).

19. Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Genero, 2013. *Mejorar la comunicación para expandir los derechos – Herramientas para incorporar el enfoque de derechos en las coberturas periodistas*.
20. Macharia, Sarah & Pamela Morinière (eds.), 2012. *Learning resource kit for gender-ethical journalism and media House policy*. Book 1-Conceptual Issues. Book 2-Practical Resources. Toronto: World Association for Christian Communication & Brussels: International Federation of Journalists. www.whomakesthenews.org/index.php/resource-kit
21. Drawing from Annabelle Sreberny in *Media Development*, 3/2005. www.waccglobal.org/en/20053-women-reclaim-media/539-Why-Sis!-Gender-WSIS-and-Tunis.html

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Global Forum on Media and Gender

The first Global Forum on Media and Gender will be organized by UNESCO, UN Women, and media and NGO partners globally from 2 to 4 December 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The key objective of the Forum will be to form a Global Alliance for Media and Gender. The Forum will foster debate, provide training, encourage the sharing of experiences and host a high level session, which will be informed by the consensus of all stakeholders, and which will design the Global Alliance for the “Women and Media Follow-up” of the Beijing Declaration (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/beijingdeclaration.html>) and Platform for Action (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>).

The Forum will be attended by representatives of media houses, broadcasting and journalists’ unions/associations, community media networks, NGOs advocating for gender equality and women’s empowerment, journalism education organizations and other related training institutions, media self-regulatory bodies, policy makers, relevant government bodies etc.

The process commenced long before December 2013 and included preparatory online consultations and meetings linked to other related and already planned events in all regions.

UNESCO invites donors and other stakeholders to join forces to address one of the most important development issues of our time, gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Visit UNESCO’s website for further information.

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/news-and-information-focus-articles/all-news/news/online_registration_opens_for_the_global_forum_on_media_and_gender/#.Ukwx4IZ6bhg

Gender equality and communication in Africa

Amie Joof

Communication is a key factor in tackling Gender Inequality. It can play a crucial role in empowering people to challenge gender norms, promote gender justice and positive relationships among all genders. For gender activists and advocates the challenges are numerous and daunting as stated by one journalist who is also a gender and women's rights advocate.

“In 1999 when I had the opportunity to work with a sub regional organization in Dakar, Senegal, I had the daunting task of sensitizing and convincing my colleagues about gender issues. I remember the first time I mentioned the word ‘gender’ and suggested that we needed to have gender responsive policies and programmes within the organization, some of my colleagues looked at me as if I was coming from a different planet. I had very negative reactions that alluded to the fact that I was calling for a revolution. Some even told me bluntly that I was trying to propagate some foreign ideas and would therefore face resistance from members of the association. Despite several hurdles, by the time I transitioned from that organization in 2001, we had started the process of doing what is called today a gender audit of ministries and departments of gender and women’s affairs of member states of the organization. Today, the organization has been transformed into a sub-regional gender centre!”

The above experience is one of numerous examples that advocate for gender equality and equity face daily in their mission including the struggle to ensure that equal participation in and access to the

media become a reality in society. There are many other challenges ranging from internal resistance within institutions and organizations where gender advocates work, sidelining of gender issues within the media, lack of awareness, and lack of gender responsive policies that would ensure that gender is factored into media coverage to mention just a few.

However, despite the challenges, some progress has been made. The results of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) from 1995 to date coupled with the Media and Gender Audits in Africa have contributed significantly to the process of setting up concrete targets to advance the commitments on “women and the media” contained in Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Other factors include the IFJ Seoul 2001 action plan, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa commonly known as the Maputo Protocol. Volunteers from various regional bodies have conducted advocacy work and training programmes to address gender inequality in the media in Africa.

Brief historical overview

In 1975 the First World Conference on Women was organized by the United Nations in Mexico City. It was at that meeting that the UN hatched the idea of having a Women’s Decade. From then on African women including women journalists continued to play a pivotal role in national and international consultations, policy advocacy and programmes on women’s rights and later on gender equality. African women have contributed significantly to subsequent world conferences such as in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), Dakar (1994) and Beijing (1995).

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), adopted unanimously by 189 Member States of the United Nations’ Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, acknowledged the media as one of twelve “critical areas of concern”. The inclusion of a section on media and communication was seen by many as a historic breakthrough.

Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action addressed gender and the media focusing on universal concerns about both the content of the media in regard to women and the representation of women



within the media. Key areas highlighted included:

- * the lack of gender-responsiveness of the media through persistent gender-based stereotyping;
- * the reinforcement of women's traditional roles and the absence of women's diverse lives and contributions;
- * the targeting of women as consumers;
- * the use of women to promote consumerism by media advertising;
- * the projection of negative images of women (women as inferiors) as well as degrading images of women (women as sexual commodities) through pornographic or violent media representations;
- * Women's lack of participation in decision-making within the media, as well as in media regulatory bodies.

A number of media houses and organizations had in fact already started coverage of women's rights as far back as 1975, mostly in the area of women's empowerment and development. But with the advent of Section J in the Beijing platform for action, new

perspectives on women and media emerged such as portrayal, representation, participation, ownership and giving a voice to women to decide what goes into news and programmes and how much space should be allocated to those issues.

After the 1995 Beijing conference several governments and non-governmental organizations started the process of integrating gender into their policies and programmes. Quite a number of them established women's desks or gender desks, although initially a lot of them assigned those roles to women based on the misconception that gender is synonymous with women and that gender concerns were only relevant to women.

What has been done?

Gender-focused media monitoring has contributed to increasing the gender awareness of media practitioners within the FAMEDEV network and its partners, particularly the Africa office of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and gender focused groups, media organisations and people focusing on gender issues (in West and Central Africa, mostly women and men journalists, communicators

and CSO representatives) who have coordinated the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), gender audits, and gender and media advocacy programmes.

It is worth examining the different programmes and activities undertaken which have been informed to a very large extent by the GMMP and other gender and media related programmes in Africa and the world. The GMMP has enabled most actors to take actions at individual levels and working with others in partnership.

In 2002, the West African Journalists' Association (WAJA) organized its Fifth Congress in Dakar, Senegal. One of the highlights was the setting up of a commission on "Women in the Media" to produce guiding principles for a gender policy for WAJA. It also called on the unions, associations and organisations of journalists and communicators to develop training programmes to promote women in the media, to ensure women's participation in their decision-making bodies and to guarantee a balance in recruitment and promotion of men and women to all positions of responsibility based on merit.

Between 2002 and the 2005 GMMP, several programmes were undertaken such as a study on the status of women journalists in Togo, reporting NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development)

from a gender and rights perspective and several training programmes on women's leadership and management for journalists in West and Central Africa. Studies were also conducted in Cameroun, Congo, Republic of Central Africa and Chad looking at issues of democracy, governance and gender in the media. A regional seminar on Media and Gender Advocacy for Francophone African Countries in 2007 following the 2005 GMMP using the Gender and Media Advocacy toolkit developed by WACC.

Lobbying with and using the GMMP findings and the subsequent media and gender advocacy trainings, the IFJ Africa office in collaboration with its affiliates and FAMEDEV network carried out media and gender audits in over 25 countries in Africa. The audits were carried out in four sub regions in Africa (Western, Eastern, Central and Southern).

The 2006 audit aimed to identify and map out a framework to integrate a gender perspective in policy, planning, programme implementation and evaluation of the activities of the IFJ office in Africa as well as Media Houses, Media regulatory bodies, Media NGOs and Media training institutions. It was conducted in eight countries in West Africa namely: Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Niger and Sierra Leone.



The gender audit was meant to indicate the status of gender equality and equity within five key categories of the media landscape namely: Journalists unions and Associations, Media Houses, Media regulatory bodies, Media NGOs and Media training institutions.

The 2007 audit was conducted in close collaboration with the Eastern Africa Journalists Association (EAJA) with a view to map out gender manifestations and profiling within the media in the Region. The nine countries covered were Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The EAJA study looked at issues of violations of rights of women in the media, opportunities for training, levels of education, the work environment, media coverage of gender issues, portrayal of women, and whether women are equally represented in decision making levels and in leadership positions. It did a situational analysis in media institutions, journalists' unions and associations with a view to proffering solutions to address the inequalities that exist.

In 2009, two studies were conducted in Central Africa and in Southern Africa. In collaboration with the Union of Press Unions in Central Africa (USY-PAC), the audit in Central Africa was carried out in six countries, namely, Cameroun, Central Africa Republic, Congo, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad.

It aimed at mapping the rights and working conditions of women in the media, gender equality in media houses, the status of women in the journalist unions/associations as well as how gender issues are reported in the media. The study targeted all categories of media workers such as Journalists, reporters, animators, technicians, photographers and other collaborators.

The Southern Africa audit was conducted by the Southern Africa Journalists Association (SAJA), in six countries (Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho and Botswana). Covering newsrooms and unions, the audit aimed at gathering data on the overall proportion of women and men in the media, overall proportion of women and men in the unions, leadership levels of women in the unions, conditions of service, gender portrayal in the media as well as gender policies in the unions/associations and an analysis of union/association's constitutions.

What was discovered? A huge gender gap in the representation of women

The gender and media audits revealed stark realities. In some cases very similar situations emerged which can be categorised and summarised under the following headings:

- * Training and Level of Education
- * Career advancement, Conditions of work and work Environment
- * Leadership and Decision Making – “The Glass Ceiling”
- * Portrayal and Giving prominence to gender issues

The Africa GMMP 2010 regional report shows that currently there is a huge gender gap in the representation of women in both print and electronic news media in terms of their contribution as news sources as well as in reporting news. The research highlighted gender inequality and stereotypical coverage which may be addressed through appropriate legislation and regulations guiding media laws and regulatory frameworks in the region.

The challenge, therefore, is to devise appropriate legislative and media policy regulations targeting media houses to compel them to adopt appropriate laws to promote gender equality and women advancement in the news media.

The several gender and media audits and studies conducted by different stakeholders and the different GMMP findings provide substantial research and thinking on gender and media. The research is gradually informing and stimulating more thinking in the area of programme design, policy formulation, programme implementation and evaluation. Quite a number of media practitioners now see the need to use a gender lens to cover events and issues and in the day to day running of media houses. Based on the findings of research conducted in West and Central Africa, FAMEDEV and WACC have developed a resource kit in French on gender and the media for media practitioners and professionals and members of civil society who work on gender and media issues.

Significant efforts are also being made to introduce gender responsive policies in media houses, having gender desks, gender focal points and ensuring that gender is an issue that concerns both men

and women journalists and cuts across all coverage of developmental issues. In terms of creating awareness among media practitioners, reporters and decision makers a lot has been done over the years. But are we able to measure the desired impact?

Another challenge is how to make policies more beneficial to women to ensure a balance between men and women in the media in terms of leadership and in terms of meaningfully addressing gender in media development programmes. A number of questions come to mind:

- * How systematic and effective are our programmes?
- * Are we getting information that will enable us achieve the desired results in terms of the roles and status of women and men in the media over a period of time?
- * What impact do our programmes have on gender relations – conditions and relations between men and women – in the news rooms, media organisations and in society as a whole?
- * How do we continually reinforce the resources and capabilities of media practitioners and media and gender institutions to make them more effective?
- * How are we addressing the challenge of exclusion of people who do not identify as “men” or “women” or even children?

African Women’s Decade 2010-2020

It is important to point out that the African Ministers of Gender and Women’s Affairs at their Extra-Ordinary Meeting in Maseru, Lesotho, in December 2008, called on the African Union (AU) to declare 2010-2020 as African Women’s Decade. They further urged the AU to undertake wide consultations to ensure that the Decade is successful. This proposal was subsequently adopted by the AU Assembly.

The Decade was launched in October 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya on the theme “Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment”, which is intended to create opportunities for African women and others to take ownership of the Decade. Its aim is to reinvigorate and advance gender equality by accelerating implementation of Dakar, Beijing and AU Assembly Decisions on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE), through a dual top down and bottom up approach which is

inclusive of grassroots participation.

The ten themes of the Decade include: Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women and Entrepreneurship, Agriculture and Food Security, Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV&AIDS, Education, Science and Technology, Environment and Climate Change, Peace and Security and Violence against Women, Governance and Legal Protection, Finance and Gender Budgets, Women in Decision Making Positions, and Young Women Movement.

But still there are questions:

- * Are gender activists and media practitioners taking advantage of the African Women’s Decade by ensuring that gender related policies are implemented at all levels?
- * Are issues of gender equality and the media well covered in a cross cutting manner by the themes of the African Women’s Decade?
- * How do we engage and sustain a relationship with the African Union Commission and our respective governments to advance these themes and to promote gender equality in and through the media?
- * How can we use the opportunities offered by the Decade to put gender and the media on the agenda, build synergies with governments, mobilize resources and build institutions that will enhance attainment of our objectives?

In addition, media practitioners have a responsibility to find out what has been done since the launch of the Decade in October 2010, identify critical gaps and challenges, the level of resources allocated and spent, ways of addressing challenges and show case good practices towards the achievement of the AWD objectives.

The Fund for African Women is supposed to serve as a vehicle for mobilising resources for the decade activities, under the AU’s Development Pillar in its 2009-2012 Strategic Plan. To what extent has this been done? In each member state it is expected that national committees would be set up composed of all segments of the society.

These Committees will propose one good practice Project for each theme per year. In this case one Project per country will be supported per theme per year from the AU Fund; as a result 54 projects will

be supported for each of the 10 years, leading to 540 projects being supported during the Decade, under the AU Fund for Women.

It will be worthwhile as journalists, media practitioners and gender advocates to keep track of progress made at national, regional and continental levels since the launch of the Decade in 2010. Linking up with the different departments that are responsible for women, gender and development, peace and security, communication and information, political, social and economic affairs at the levels of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the different regions will enable synergies between their programmes based on the information generated from the GMMP and other media and gender audits done over the years.

We can develop sustainable partnerships with them and other CSOs and mutually reinforce human, material and financial resources of partners concerned. ■

The photos in this article show media monitors at work in Senegal. Photo credit: FAMEDEV.

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Construyendo comunicación no sexista

Por Claudia Florentín

Los y las periodistas tienen la posibilidad y la responsabilidad, desde su tarea cotidiana, de contribuir a la modificación de estereotipos e imágenes negativas, mutando a construcciones que permitan ver a todas las personas como ciudadanas con iguales derechos y como protagonistas sociales valiosas y relevantes en el desarrollo de las sociedades.

Sabemos que entre múltiples formas de discriminación y violencia mediática, existe un trabajo de invisibilización permanente de la participación de las mujeres en nuestra sociedad y de una construcción del discurso que sostiene y promueve estereotipos que generan imágenes reducidas y prejuiciosas de la realidad, alimentando la desigualdad de poder en las relaciones de género.

Hoy, más que nunca, necesitamos movernos en el mundo de la comunicación desde una mirada crítica, sospechando, generando dudas sobre los fines que buscan los medios de comunicación –sobre todo los masivos–, al elegir poner un tema en agenda, al enfocar esa temática desde una posición u otra, y al ignorar ejes y realidades. Muchas veces estos tapan la realidad, la distorsionan con el fin de generar subjetividades e imponer ideologías que respondan a sus intereses.

Es un trabajo de todas y todos construir cómo queremos que los medios reflejen a la sociedad en general y a las mujeres en particular. Es decir, tener en cuenta historias, prácticas, discursos que permitan ver a las mujeres, sacarlas de la invisibilización, darles posibilidad de construir la realidad desde sus voces y miradas, y no seguir reproduciendo el discurso de los poderes hegemónicos y del patriarcado,

que atraviesa culturas, economías y religiones.

Eso fue lo que trabajamos, no sin luchas y discusiones, desde los primeros tiempos de la Coalición Por una Radiodifusión Democrática en Argentina, ese espacio donde generamos los 21 Puntos que se convirtieron luego en la base de la ley de medios (ley 26522). La WACC fue parte de ese espacio casi desde sus inicios.

La comunicación inclusiva: un derecho a ejercer

Si queremos y buscamos ser protagonistas en la vida social y política de la sociedad, debemos preguntarnos: ¿Cómo hacemos visible en los medios de com-

unicación con perspectiva de género, esta ley posibilitó la incorporación de artículos que buscan garantizar un abordaje no estereotipado ni sexista de las mujeres e implementa sanciones contra aquellas producciones que tienen contenidos sexistas y violentan la integridad de las mujeres.

El Artículo 3, inciso m, dice: *Promover la protección y salvaguarda de la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres, y el tratamiento plural, igualitario y no estereotipado, evitando toda discriminación por género u orientación sexual.*

También la ley 26.485 de “Protección integral para prevenir, sancionar y erradicar la violencia



unicación los derechos que tenemos? ¿Cómo nos hacemos visibles como personas en toda su riqueza y diversidad y no como objetos o sujetos de segunda categoría?

La Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisuales 26.522 abrió el debate sobre los monopolios y las empresas de comunicación en la Argentina, y en el proceso de elaboración de la ley distintos grupos sociales y políticos contribuyeron a la norma con propuestas para que los medios de comunicación incluyan la perspectiva de género en la información y se puedan restringir y sancionar imágenes, publicidades y noticias claramente sexistas.

Esta ley propone una visión distinta de la comunicación. Ya no es considerada una mercancía, sino un derecho de la ciudadanía, permitiendo de este modo acceder a una mirada plural de la realidad política, económica y social.

En lo que respecta específicamente a la comuni-

cación con perspectiva de género, esta ley posibilitó la incorporación de artículos que buscan garantizar un abordaje no estereotipado ni sexista de las mujeres e implementa sanciones contra aquellas producciones que tienen contenidos sexistas y violentan la integridad de las mujeres.

El Artículo 3, inciso m, dice: *Promover la protección y salvaguarda de la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres, y el tratamiento plural, igualitario y no estereotipado, evitando toda discriminación por género u orientación sexual.*

También la ley 26.485 de “Protección integral para prevenir, sancionar y erradicar la violencia contra las mujeres en los ámbitos que se desarrollan sus relaciones interpersonales”, establece entre algunos de sus objetivos “garantizar la remoción de patrones socioculturales que sostienen la desigualdad de género”.

En su Artículo 6 establece dentro de las Modalidades de Violencia, la Violencia Mediática: *f) Violencia mediática contra las mujeres: aquella publicación o difusión de mensajes e imágenes estereotipados a través de cualquier medio masivo de comunicación, que de manera directa o indirecta promueva la explotación de mujeres o sus imágenes, injurie, difame, discrimine, deshonre, humille o atente contra la dignidad de las mujeres, como así también la utilización de mujeres, adolescentes y niñas en mensajes e imágenes pornográficas, legitimando la desigualdad de trato o construya patrones socioculturales reproductores de la desigualdad o generadores de violencia contra las mujeres.*

La posibilidad de avanzar en el cumplimiento de ambas leyes y de modificar patrones culturales está vinculada, entre otras cosas, a que el Estado promueva elementos para una lectura crítica de medios y que genere espacios para la producción con una visión no sexista, que los medios, los y las periodistas generemos contenidos alternativos, en respeto y diversidad, que las voces de todos los sectores tenga lugar en la pluralidad.

Justamente con la apertura legal y en tiempos de explosión de medios digitales, se da un auge importante de los llamados “medios autogestivos”. Considero que ellos son herramientas valiosísimas para construir una comunicación diferente, con perspectiva de género, por ejemplo, ya que no sufren las presiones de los medios hegemónicos ni sus miradas sesgadas de negocios, pero sí pueden sufrir aun de los males intrínsecos al patriarcado.

Como se dice en un proyecto de ley de medios autogestivos en Argentina (ya que no quedaron incluidos en la mencionada nueva ley): “*es importante la tarea social que cumple el sector autogestivo, la batalla que allí se libra cotidiana y sostenidamente contra la monopolización no sólo de productos, sino de contenidos. No sólo de voces, sino de estéticas. No sólo de ideas, sino de futuros posibles*”.

Pero lo cierto es que un renovado marco legal o un nuevo soporte de medio, no significa automáticamente nuevas miradas. Y cuando hablamos de comunicación no sexista estamos hablando de transformaciones importantes, fundantes. Y transformar exige primero comprender. Por eso, aunque se tengan las herramientas, hacer comunicación no sexista exige comprensión, apertura y el asumir que es algo que nos concierne a todos y todas, y no solo a las mujeres, como se suele creer.

Mirar, ver, tomar partido

Generalmente los medios hablan “de” las mujeres en fechas específicas, hasta a veces parece que esos días se intenta incluir miradas y temáticas inclusivas, pero al pasar esos hitos de calendario (8 de marzo, etc.) quedan olvidadas en las agendas de medios. La omisión informativa y la falta de herramientas que permitan abordar de manera integral los asuntos de género, arman un panorama donde la sociedad ignora y/o invisibiliza la realidad de las mujeres.

La cuarta edición del Proyecto de Monitoreo Global de Medios (GMMP), iniciado en 1995 y co-

ordinado desde 2000 por WACC, analizó en 2009 un total de 1.281 diarios, canales de televisión y estaciones de radio en 108 países para concluir que sólo el 24% de las personas protagonistas de las noticias son mujeres (17% en 1995) y el porcentaje se reduce al 20% en los sujetos citados como portavoces o expertos en la información (15% en 2005)”.

El GMPP revela una “naturaleza sistemática de la exclusión de las mujeres en los medios noticiosos”. El prólogo del último estudio señala que “*en las noticias, la tendencia a ignorar a las mujeres o –en el mejor de los casos– hablar sobre las mujeres, en lugar de dirigirse hacia o a través de las mujeres está profundamente arraigada en las prácticas normativas culturales y, por tanto, en la forma como se recaban las noticias, lo mismo que en las rutinas generales de producción*”.

Además, es necesario advertir que progresar en el tema del periodismo de género no se simplifica en la simple difusión de información. También es relevante la manera en que se transmiten a la sociedad temas actuales y serios como la violencia sexual, política o social contra las mujeres; estos temas requieren que se sensibilice a la población, que se informen recursos, programas de ayuda, marcos legales y que se mantengan en agenda.

El enfoque de género es una opción política de hacer periodismo y cuando se toma partido por ella, toda la manera de hacer comunicación se amplía y cambia. Cuando doy talleres o clases a estudiantes de comunicación, siempre surge la pregunta si todos los temas pueden ser abordados con enfoque de género. Y la respuesta es: Sí. Por eso hablamos de Transversalización del enfoque de género. En todas las notas y secciones de los medios de comunicación puede aplicarse el enfoque de género.

Katrin Gothmann, en “Manual de género en el periodismo” (2001) afirma: “*La transversalidad de género en el periodismo consiste en la consideración y evaluación del impacto, para mujeres y hombres, de los temas políticos y sociales que son objeto de cobertura. Ello implica tomar en cuenta que hay diferencias en las necesidades y realidades de ambos sexos. El objetivo de la transversalidad en el periodismo es evitar discriminaciones y oponerse a las desigualdades existentes, aprovechando el poder que tienen las y los periodistas para promover la igualdad de género.*”

Recomiendo las [Herramientas de Aprendizaje para un periodismo de género ético y políticas en las empresas editoriales](#), publicadas por la WACC y la Federación Internacional de Periodistas. En variados ejemplos de noticias se puede ver como un artículo informativo simple, por ejemplo sobre la falta de lluvia en una región, puede servir para sacar a la luz historias desconocidas y proporcionar una mejor información, más equilibrada, haciendo visibles problemáticas que difícilmente entran al mundo de las comunicaciones, pero que resultan vitales para una sociedad más justa.

Todos los soportes y formatos, desde dónde se mira y cómo se elige contar, son elementos que se unen para que la tarea periodística perpetúe, sensibilice o modifique los estereotipos y las desigualdades de la sociedad. Por eso decimos que el cambio debe ser integral.

Sabemos que no es tarea fácil porque están naturalizadas las prácticas profesionales de tal manera que cuesta articular los saberes y las prácticas propias del campo con la necesaria reflexión acerca del sentido para el que se las pone en juego. Pero justamente, que no sea fácil convierte esta nueva práctica en un desafío que vale el esfuerzo realizar.

Creo que los medios nuevos, los soportes digitales, y por supuesto también los clásicos, pueden convertirse en un escenario siempre renovado para buscar las formas y los decires que permitan miradas frescas, historias inclusivas, modelos no estereotipados, pluralidad de voces. Esto es fundamental para construir, desde la comunicación y sus lenguajes, nuevas prácticas sociales y políticas donde quepamos todas y todos. ■

Fuentes

AFSCA: Autoridad Federal de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual, Argentina.

CEPAL: [Violencia de género: Un problema de derechos humanos](#).

IFJ- Federación Internacional de Periodistas.

PNUD-América Latina Genera: Gender mainstreaming y empoderamiento.

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La insoportable gravedad del androcentrismo mediático

Maximiliano Dueñas Guzmán

Cada cinco años desde el 1995, centenares de personas a través del planeta nos hemos dado cita para analizar cómo se representa a la mujer en las noticias de radio, prensa escrita, televisión y (en el monitoreo de 2009/10) en internet. Cada vez lo hacemos con la esperanza de que los resultados del Proyecto de monitoreo global de medios (GMGM) demuestren cambios significativos.

Lo hacemos con la esperanza de que no se podrán repetir los hallazgos de los monitoreos anteriores que revelan la escandalosa realidad que la mujer es casi invisible en las noticias. Lo hacemos con la esperanza de que la divulgación y diálogo social en torno a estos hallazgos en cada país que ha participado en el monitoreo, han convencido a los que deciden el contenido de las noticias –desde periodistas, hasta editores/as y dueños/as de los medios – a que dejen de encubrir el hecho que las mujeres forman un poco más de la mitad de la población mundial.

Lo hacemos con la esperanza de que las organizaciones de la sociedad civil y los/as ciudadanos/as en los países participantes hayan exigido a los medios que producen noticias a que respeten valores fundamentales del periodismo, como son la búsqueda de la verdad y el servicio a toda la sociedad y no sólo a los sectores de poder y privilegio. Lo hacemos con la esperanza de que educadoras/es aprovechen el cúmulo de datos y análisis arrojados por los cuatro estudios del Proyecto.

Sin embargo cada cinco años –desde el 1995–,

cuando se producen los resultados de cada monitoreo, constatamos que el progreso ha sido exiguo: en el primer monitoreo, en el cual se analizaron sobre 15,000 noticias de 71 países, las mujeres eran el 18% de personas en las noticias. En el 2010 –año en que se analizaron 16,734 noticias de 108 países–, quince años y tres monitoreos después, las mujeres eran sólo el 24% de las personas en las noticias.

La disparidad entre las esperanzas de los que participamos y apoyamos el *Proyecto de Monitoreo Global de Medios* y la anémica mejoría en los resultados cada cinco años pone de manifiesto el profundo arraigo del androcentrismo en la producción de noticias mediáticas a través del mundo. Surgen, entonces, muchas interrogantes: ¿Cómo entendemos las conexiones entre noticias y el arraigo de la ideología patriarcal? ¿Cómo está cambiando la producción de noticias? ¿Quiénes consumen noticias y a través de qué medios?

¿Qué conexiones podemos identificar y resaltar entre el conocimiento generado por el Proyecto y otras investigaciones/campañas sobre el machismo institucionalizado? Y vinculado estrechamente con la identificación de conexiones, ¿cómo ampliamos y profundizamos la articulación con otros/as actores sociales que comparten nuestro anhelo de avanzar hacia la equidad de género?

Es imposible abordar estas preguntas en forma amplia en este artículo, pues éstas requieren de análisis mucho más extensos y rigurosos, análisis que exigen la participación de muchas personas. Mi interés aquí es presentar pinceladas para contribuir a la conversación sobre cómo podemos mejorar aún más el *Proyecto de monitoreo global de medios*.

Lo medios y el poder social

El androcentrismo mediático es sólo una manifestación del complejo tejido ideológico que sustenta el poder patriarcal. ¿Vale la pena, entonces, concentrar tanta energía, y recurrentemente cada cinco años, en desenmascarar cómo el poder patriarcal se manifiesta a través de los medios? Creo que sí, pero tengo mis reservas. Primero explicaré el por qué de mi sí, y después explicaré el por qué de mis reservas.

Creo en el valor del Proyecto de monitoreo porque entiendo que la comunicación es clave para la legitimación del poder. Para ser más preciso, entiendo que los medios de comunicación son matrices de la producción y circulación de significados



sociales, y en este caso de significados que avalan la ideología patriarcal. Comparto dos lecturas recientes que contribuyen a fundamentar mi comprensión de la relación entre poder y significados sociales.

El primer texto, *Espacios de Libertad: Mujeres, violencia doméstica y resistencia* de Diana Valle Ferrer, es un estudio de 76 mujeres que han superado relaciones en las cuales su pareja las violentaba. Del análisis de la autora sobre cómo las mujeres sobreviven y superan instancias de violencia por parte de sus parejas, se desprende que esta superación depende de la construcción de nuevos significados. Es por medio de la transformación de estos significados –de quién es ella, quién es su pareja, qué es su relación y qué es el amor de pareja– que cada mujer logra liberarse. El texto de Diana Valle Ferrer va dirigido a identificar las estrategias que las mujeres víctimas de violencia pueden desarrollar para generar nuevos significados en el contexto de

la comunicación/poder interpersonal.

En el contexto de la comunicación/poder masivo, también hay estrategias para la transformación de significados, transformaciones que permiten subvertir y superar relaciones de opresión. Estas estrategias son las que enfoca Manuel Castells en su libro *Poder y comunicación*. Para este autor, “poder es la capacidad relacional que permite a un actor social influenciar en forma asimétrica las decisiones de otros actores sociales, en formas que favorecen la voluntad, intereses y valores del apoderado”.

Añade que “históricamente, pero aún más en la sociedad red, *el poder social opera principalmente a través de la construcción de significados en la mente humana por medio de procesos de la comunicación*. En la sociedad red, esto se realiza por medio de redes globales/locales de comunicación de masas, incluyendo la comunicación de masas personal/individual, o sea la comunicación organizada en torno a internet y otras redes de comunicación digital” (énfasis añadido).

Al centrar nuestros esfuerzos en la construcción noticiosa de la mujer, en los procesos de comunicación por medio de los cuales se (in)visibiliza a la mujer, las/os que participamos en el *Proyecto de monitoreo* estamos atendiendo un espacio crítico de la ideología patriarcal.

¿Quién consume las noticias?

Sin embargo, nuestra premisa—en la formulación e implementación del Proyecto—es que las noticias mediáticas son sitio privilegiado para la producción social de significados sobre género. Pero, ¿qué tan cierta es esta premisa? Entiendo que ya es tiempo que empecemos a complementar la pregunta, ¿quién figura en las noticias?, con otras interrogantes: ¿cómo se producen las noticias? ¿quién consume las noticias? y ¿cómo la gente escoge qué noticias consumir?

Las lógicas de producción de noticias están cambiando rápidamente. A modo de ejemplo, el Centro Pew de investigación del periodismo en Estados Unidos realizó un estudio sobre los cambios en noticieros de televisión entre el 2007 y el 2012. Sus hallazgos más relevantes incluyen: La cobertura de eventos en vivo se redujo de 33% de la programación noticiosa en el 2007 a 23% en el 2012; Para el 2012, el contenido de los canales de noticias en televisión era de 37% en noticias y 63%

en programas de opinión; En ese mismo año, sólo el 20% de las noticias en televisión local duraba más de un minuto, mientras el 50% duraba menos de 30 segundos; Y en ese mismo año, el tiempo dedicado al informe del tiempo, deportes y tráfico llegó a ser el 40% de la programación local de noticias.

Paralelamente, las audiencias de programación noticiosa se han reducido dramáticamente. El estudio del Centro Pew también ofrece estadísticas sobre esta tendencia. El por ciento de estadounidenses que consume noticias continúa disminuyendo, y esta tendencia es aún más alarmante entre personas jóvenes, las de edades entre 18 a 19 años. Del 2006 al 2012, según el estudio, el por ciento de estadounidenses que consume noticias por televisión, disminuyó de 54% a 48%. Entre jóvenes, la reducción fue de 42% en 2006 a 28% en el 2012.

En el mismo periodo, lectores/as de prensa escrito se han reducido de un 38% a un 23%. En el caso de las noticias por radio, la pérdida de audiencia ha sido menor, pero la tendencia es de disminución. El crecimiento de audiencia de noticias vía internet ha compensado algo el descenso en otros medios, pero en forma mínima. Para el 2012, sólo el 38% de estadounidenses consumía noticias por internet.

Estas tendencias no son tan negativas en otros países, pero aún así, existen indicadores sobre la fragilidad de la audiencia global de noticias. A modo de ejemplo, el informe de 2013 de World Press Trends incluye los siguientes hallazgos: menos de la mitad de la población mundial lee la prensa. Entre 2008 y 2013, la circulación de periódicos se redujo en 13% a través del mundo. Y, aunque más de la mitad de los que usan internet visitan portales de periódicos digitales, el consumo de éstos representa sólo el 1.3% del tiempo dedicado a internet y el 0.9% de las páginas visitadas. Todo parece indicar que los/as que consumimos noticias en el mundo, somos una minoría.

Ampliar/profundizar la conversación

Sí las tendencias sobre el consumo de noticias —la conversación global sobre lo que ocurre en el planeta— nos retan a reflexionar sobre cómo mejorar el Proyecto de monitoreo, su apropiación por parte de sectores aliados o potencialmente aliados también nos ofrece la oportunidad de buscar nuevas formas de pensar sobre el uso de los resultados que se producen cada cinco años.



Diseño: Sergio Morilla.

Aquí solo abordaré la apropiación de los resultados del *Proyecto de monitoreo global de medios* por parte de educadoras/es en el mundo hispanoparlante. Una búsqueda en los bancos de datos de revistas académicas escritas en español en las disciplinas de ciencias sociales y comunicación publicadas desde el 1995 hasta hoy, arroja que el proyecto es casi inexistente para estos sectores. De hecho el tema de la representación de género en los medios noticiosos es de poco interés. Sólo en México y España se han publicado más de un estudio sobre el tema, pero casi ninguno hace referencia al *Proyecto de monitoreo*.

Algo similar ocurre en la literatura en español sobre alfabetización en medios. Aunque los temas de sexismo y machismo y su conexión con el contenido de los medios se mencionan con alguna frecuencia, se hace poca mención del tema específico de la representación de género en las noticias y casi ninguna del *Proyecto de monitoreo*.

En otras palabras, en el mundo académico y his-

panoparlante ha habido una nula apropiación del *Proyecto de monitoreo global de medios*. Correctamente, nos hemos enfocado, hasta ahora, en compartir los resultados del *Proyecto*, con periodistas, editores y dueños de periódicos a través del mundo. Ellas/os son nuestras/os aliadas más lógicas, porque hay una relación directa entre la ética periodística y el trato equitativo de género.

Tal como se afirma en la publicación *Herramientas de aprendizaje para un periodismo de género-ético y políticas en la empresas editoriales*: “Una representación equitativa de género es uno de los temas que debe recibir prioridad si los medios desean reflejar plenamente el papel que las mujeres desempeñan en la sociedad.”

Pero creo que desde el Proyecto, debemos comenzar a pensar con mayor detenimiento sobre nuestras/os aliadas/as (potenciales y actuales) del lado de la audiencia. Desde esta perspectiva, y dado lo que he presentado, un área lógica es la educación en alfabetización de medios, desde escuela elemental hasta la universidad. ■

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UNESCO's Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media

The aim of Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM) is to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment in and through media of all forms, irrespective of the technology used. The main focus of the publication is on the equality and gender dimensions of social diversity in the media.

UNESCO's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment is pursued through gender-specific programming and gender mainstreaming with action in all of its fields of competence. UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector has engaged globally in a wide range of gender-specific initiatives.

The two perspectives, equality between women and men working in the media, and equality in news reporting on women and men, are of equal importance and are being stridently pursued.

It was against this backdrop that UNESCO, in cooperation with the International Federation of Journalists and many other partners, elaborated a global framework of Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media.

This is a part of a suite of indicators being developed across all sectors of the organization to enable effective assessment of diagnosis of areas within UNESCO's mandate of media development.

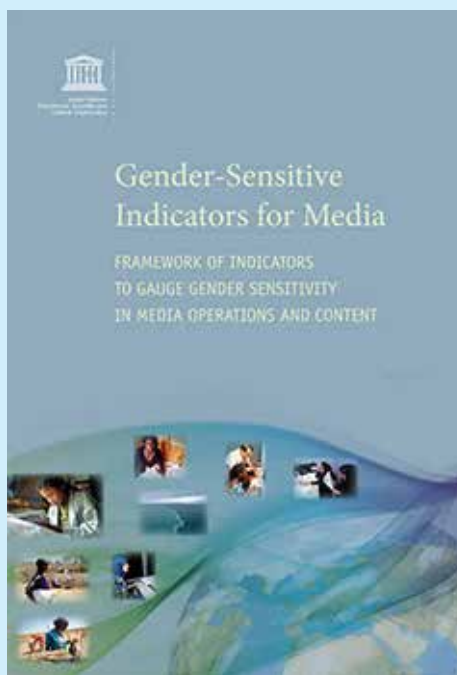
The process that led to the preparation of GSIM extended over a two-year period. It began in early 2010 with a global debate on the UNESCO Women Make the News platform. A first draft of GSIM was then prepared and a year later it was reviewed during an international consultation in Brussels.

Thereafter a second draft was prepared. In order to further enrich it, a second round of consultations was carried out with UNESCO media partners globally. This enabled UNESCO to underline that GSIM is not an attempt to limit freedom of expression and the independence of media, but to voluntarily enrich these cardinal characteristics.

UNESCO is confident that, if fully implemented and properly harnessed, GSIM will have an impact that should be detectable in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

The full publication can be downloaded here.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/gender-sensitive-indicators-for-media-framework-of-indicators-to-gauge-gender-sensitivity-in-media-operations-and-content/>



Policy-making: Where are women's voices?

At the end of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process, which culminated in two international gatherings at Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005), Annabelle Sreberny lamented “the tension between WSIS and the ‘real world’ politics of gender where the ongoing lack of gender balance in the political sphere, in media-decision-making, in business and academe around the world challenges the rhetorical gesture toward gender-mainstreaming” (Sreberny, 2005: 24).

What has changed? Leading up to the year 2015, the United Nations has planned a series of consultations to help shape the post-2015 agenda with support from civil society coalitions such as the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Global Call to Action Against Poverty, CIVICUS, and the Beyond 2015 Campaign.

APC has taken the lead in surveying “The status of critical communication rights ten years after the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) – a report documenting civil society perceptions”. A draft was published in April 2013 which can be found here: <http://www.apc.org/en/projects/communications-rights-ten-years-after-wsis-civil-s>

The purpose of the survey was to collate civil society perceptions of the changes that have taken place over the last ten years since the WSIS Declaration of Principles was adopted in 2003. The results are being used as input to the formal WSIS review process, as well as to strategise around civil society joint agendas and common positions. To that extent it contributes towards addressing two problems:

- * An apparent absence – in most parts of the world – of a people-centred approach to information and knowledge-sharing society

policy and regulation;

- * The fragmentation of the communications rights movement, which had mobilised so intensively to ensure that a people-centred approach informed the outcomes of WSIS.

APC also coordinated the development of a paper by its Women's Rights Programme as part of a global thematic consultation on “Addressing inequalities – The Heart of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Future We Want for All”. The paper is called *Going visible: Women's rights on the internet*.

It argues that with regard to information and communication technologies (ICT) and the Internet, “Women may not have been an active part of policy-making conversations when internet governance started, but the rapid pace of change online means they need to participate now to ensure that the future of the internet is shaped taking into account women's rights.”

The report quotes Frank La Rue, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, who in 2011 told the UN Human Rights Commission that:

“The right to freedom of opinion and expression is as much a fundamental right on its own accord as it is an “enabler” of other rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, such as the right to education and the right to take part in cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, as well as civil and political rights, such as the rights to freedom of association and assembly. Thus, by acting as a catalyst for individuals to exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Internet also facilitates the realization of a range of other human rights” (La Rue, 2011, para 22).

The report argues that it is important to include a women's rights perspective to move the development of Internet and ICT policies forward. It emphasised the need to strengthen the implementation of recommendations made during the WSIS process that reaffirmed the need to include women in discussions and decision-making about how such policies are implemented. Those recommendations

“not only lay the foundation for the development of global communications, but also the management of policies that impact on people’s rights.”

For women, the Internet is seen as a vital public sphere that help overcome barriers to media or political representation. Inequalities that women face in terms of economic power, education and access to resources also affect participation in shaping the Internet, its debates and policy. “For those who have little access to other kinds of ‘publics’ due to the multiple forms of discrimination faced – including based on gender, age, economic status and sexual identity – it can be a particularly important space for the negotiation and fulfilment of their rights.”

Going visible: Women’s rights on the internet concludes with the following recommendations:

To governments and international organisations:

- * Promote respect for human rights online and offline. Freedom of expression and opinion must be protected online, the same way they are protected offline. There is need to understand the nature of communications in the online and the offline worlds in order to correctly identify where these freedoms are exercised and what threats may be posed to these freedoms.
- * Promote ICT use and a strategy of information, education and communication in online spaces to combat violence against women and girls and to enhance women’s and girls’ rights.
- * Promote women’s and girls’ communication rights in ICT use and online spaces, encouraging their participation, content creation and freedom of expression.
- * Engage in the political discussion about the promotion of internet development and internet governance with a vision of gender inclusion, gender justice and respect for human rights.
- * Promote and encourage women’s participation in decision-making processes in ICT policies to secure that women’s and girls’ needs are properly considered, included and safeguarded.
- * Protection and promotion of women’s human rights cannot be left to private corporations, ISPs or individuals. States and international bodies have a moral and legal responsibility

to uphold and safeguard the rights of women, both online and offline. Transparent, accountable decision-making on decisions to block or restrict content, and a right to redress, for example, are vital in upholding women’s human rights.

To the private sector:

- * Internet and telecommunications businesses such as social networking platforms, web hosting companies and mobile phone operators should develop corporate user policies and practices that respect women’s rights. This includes the adequate representation of women in policy-making and standards-setting processes, and ensuring that policies and standards consider the safety and security of users.

To civil society organisations:

- * Women’s organisations are called on to take action and use ICT for activism to combat violence against women, promote equality and build solidarity. Women should take actions to control technology and change power relations in the ICT field.
- * Women’s organizations must actively participate in movements for communication rights on the internet and affirm women’s achievements and full participation in society, both online and offline. ■

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Media monitoring is a catalyst for transformation

Rosemary Okello-Orlale

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) has been a mechanism for transforming the media over the past 19 years and an anchor for gender reporting in many media houses. This article looks at its influence in some of the patterns and changes we see in the media today, especially in the coverage of new voices, the role of citizen journalism and how minorities engage the media.

When the media monitoring agency was first established in London in 1852 by a Polish newsagent named Romeike it only focused on print media.¹ It basically served the interests of artists who wanted to know how the print media portrayed them. And issues on how the women portrayed women were not given any prominence.

And years later when radio and television broadcasting were introduced in the 20th century, press clipping agencies began to expand their services into the monitoring of these broadcast media as a profit-making venture and this task was greatly facilitated by the development of commercial audio and video tape recording systems in the 1950s and 1960s which saw the services being used by the private sector. It eventually led to the importance of social media monitoring as a profitable business with a view to targeting the audience for markets.

With the growth of the Internet in the 1990s, media monitoring services extended their reach to the monitoring of online information sources using new digital search and scan technologies to provide output of interest to their clients. Many professionals and entrepreneurs in the media see monitoring as a tool for understanding their audiences, which

are ever changing, and they use the media for positioning their products in the market sector.

Gender media monitoring on the other hand has brought into sharp focus the role of the media in enhancing the right to communication for women, which is so critical to women's survival, and in ensuring that the coverage of any issues to be consistent with "freedom of expression".

But whereas gender monitoring and advocacy groups have existed since the 1980s, according to Margaret Gallagher, an international media consultant and researcher, it was not until the 1990s that the potential of this approach became noticed and people began to use it.²

When the Fourth UN Women's Conference took place in Beijing in 1995, it was seen as a defining moment for the formulation of actions to address issues that were affecting women at all levels and especially those exacerbated by poverty. The most critical commitment of all was the need to integrate a gender perspective into all aspects and spheres of society.

What is of great importance is the recognition on the role of media in addressing gender inequality in the society. It is no coincidence that in reports to the United Nations, among the 12 areas of the Beijing Platform for Action 53% of countries cited media as their top priority for achieving gender equality.

This meant that the media needed to start engaging with women and their issues differently as opposed to seeing them merely as selling points for commercial media. This necessitated analysing the media from a gender perspective and coming up with methodologies to identify the role of the media in enhancing gender equality in terms of portrayal, visibility, policies, opportunities and enhancement of freedom of expression.

Using research and media monitoring to build capacity in media

"The media do not merely represent; they also re-create themselves and their vision of the world... What they reproduce is chosen, not random, and not neutral, not without consequences... The media, for better and frequently for worse, constitute one of the major forces in shaping our national vision, a chief architect of... a sense of identity."

This observation by Patricia J. Williams, a feminist scholar at Columbia University, New

York, underlines the realization that the media are powered by awesome and fast changing technologies and, given their vast reach, the media represent one of the most powerful forces on earth today for shaping the way people think. And they continuously recreate the world for the public without proper presentation of women in their rightful roles but always portraying them as victims and in a stereotypical manner.

Critics recognized that the media had the power to change perceptions and attitudes and that I could be useful instruments for advancing the status of women and fostering equality between men and women. No longer regarded as a preoccupation merely of the urban middle-classes, the media were understood in Section J as playing a fundamental role in the perpetuation of unequal gender relations at all levels of society.³ This is because access to information and communication for social change is critical to all communities irrespective of their status.

However, during those years, gender in media was an uncharted realm of exciting and frightening realities as observed by Thenjiwe Mtintso, a former board member of Gender Links.⁴ She observed that it would challenge the status quo, which she referred to as the “lion’s den” where one was bound to encounter extreme difficulties.⁵

According to media scholar Liesbet Van Zoonen, the new perspective of feminist media researchers has brought in new ways of looking at media practice such as: How are discourses of gender encoded in the media text? How do audiences use and interpret gendered media texts? How does audience reception contribute to the construction of gender at the level of identity?⁶

These questions and arguments laid the ground for gender training in most parts of the world. Media began engaging with new ways of doing things such as gender-sensitive reporting, realizing that a good story told by the media can be accounted for by patterned differences in social roles and the experiences of both men and women in their daily lives.

Gender-aware reporting as it was soon to be known addresses issues around gender equality and challenges centuries of socialization, compounded by such “untouchables” as culture, custom and religion. It soon became apparent that there was need to build capacity of journalists to understand the

science of communicating gender issues through the media and this was taken up by organizations such as Inter Press Service (IPS), the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), Gender Links, African Woman and Child Feature Service, and the Intentional Media Women Centre based in Washington among others.

Since then research and capacity building has been implemented through the prism of the fact that the media could no longer afford to be gender neutral or gender insensitive. And, honing the skills of the media in gender reporting would transform the manner in which the media reported topical issues. Gender analysts argued that whether be it politics, economics, or business, both genders are affected differently and each gender should have the space and time to articulate their perspectives. Journalists have a professional and moral obligation to capture both sides of the story.

This understanding has seen several manuals developed in regard to reporting and writing on gender and other related issues in the media with the aim of building and strengthening relevant skills and techniques for effective reporting. For example the hand-book *Whose News? Whose Views; Southern African Gender in Media*⁷ was developed on the premise that the media can and should play a critical role in mainstreaming gender relations in society.

This handbook has since been used in Africa by media trainers and media practitioners to interrogate every sentence and angle and the language used. It has also been used to advocate for changes to editorial policies and to help media houses develop gender policies.

The *Mission Possible: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit* published by WACC (2006), which seeks to demystify gender and media and the use of media advocacy to change gender representation and portrayal of women in and through the media, has also been used to build capacity of journalists and gender activists globally.

A few media houses recognized the need to have a gender policy as an integral part of their editorial policies and to enhance the capacity of their journalists through training and partnering with the media – especially in the African region – to use calendar dates such as International Women’s Day to produce a pull-out or a program dedicated to women’s development.



One such was the Nation Media Group in Kenya which was instrumental in spearheading a women's pull-out on International Women's Day. Its then editorial director, Mr Wangethi Mwangi, commented during the launch of the pull-out in partnership with the African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC), "Gender issues not only make the story interesting, but it also makes economic sense."⁸

How the GMMP has become a catalyst for media transformation

While the aim of the GMMP in 1995 was to monitor news on television, radio and in newspapers on one "ordinary day" and release the results to coincide with the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, it brought with it the need to start looking at the media as a special case when it came to issues of gender.

For the first time, the GMMP gave women a tool which they could use to scrutinize their media in a systematic way and a means by which they could document media biases, stereotypes and how they portrayed women. The process brought together media practitioners, gender activists and lobbyists and created awareness of the pervasiveness of gender

stereotyping within the media. The study found that women constituted 17% of news sources.

GMMP research from 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 showed consistently that women's voices are silenced through stereotyping or lack of representation in news media coverage. The GMMP showed how, when unquestioned, the routines and practices of journalism frequently resulted in news stories that reinforced gender stereotypes.

Over the years it has generated a body of evidence on media bias, misrepresentation and over-commercialization which has since been used by various media houses either to develop gender policies or to change their editorial policies altogether. The GMMP for the first time has helped to create a detailed picture of the numbers of women and men in the world's news on a particular day, the different ways in which they make the news, the roles they play and so on.

For example, in Kenya, when the 2010 GMMP result was presented to the Kenyan Editors' Guild, it transformed the manner in which the 2013 General Elections were reported. The research findings were used as a resource to train journalists on reporting elections from a gender perspective.

Impact of GMMP in transforming the global media landscape

The uniqueness of the GMMP is found in the very fact that it brings together journalists, advocates, activists and researchers in an extraordinary global network, dedicated to documenting and changing patterns of portrayal in the news.

What each study has demonstrated is the power of collective effort in a common cause. The results have been used in countless ways – to illustrate global patterns in news content, to highlight the persistent lack of women in national news media, to start a dialogue between media advocates and media practitioners, and much more.

Most importantly, the study has impacted on individual lives of women across the globe, and even more so on women in political leadership who have found space in the media to articulate their views.

This unique project has introduced gender aware reporting in the many newsrooms throughout the world. It has also introduced a deliberate and conscious paradigm shift among media managers and a host of media policies to mainstream gender within its human resource framework, content, programming, news desks and among media consumers.

Conclusions

A continuous body of research such as GMMP has the potential to strengthen the professional work of media. There is also need for continuous capacity building and training for media managers to understand what gender mainstreaming is all about, media professionals to be able to write and edit well-balanced stories from a gender perspective.

The research can also be used to persuade advertisers not to promote adverts that further stereotype women and women's issues. It is through such approaches that media managers can challenge personal, institutional and systematic barriers to women's participation in the media.

Women are entitled to equal voice and participation in every facet of social, economic and political life. Integrating the gender dimension into media will be facilitated by promoting gender-sensitive reporting at all levels of professional media training and journalism education, by developing the critical abilities of young people to evaluate and produce media content with a gender perspective, by fostering media and information literacy and

by supporting initiatives to develop media outlets managed by both women and men. ■

The views expressed above are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Ford Foundation.

Notes

1. Romeike established the world's first press clipping agency in London in 1852. Actors, writers, musicians and artists would visit his shop to look for articles about themselves in his continental stock. It was then that Romeike realised that he could turn this into a profitable business. The agency later became Romeike & Curtis and is now part of Cision.
2. Margaret Gallagher (2001). *Gender Setting. New Agendas for Media Monitoring and Advocacy*. London: Zed Books and WACC.
3. Section J is on Women and Media in the Beijing Platform for Action adopted during the Fourth World UN Conference on Women in Beijing-China
4. Gender Links (GL) is committed to a region in which women and men are able to participate equally in all aspects of public and private life in accordance with the provisions of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development.
5. Thenjiwe's foreword to *Whose News? Whose Views*. Southern Africa Gender in Media Handbook.
6. Van Zoonen, Liesbet (2002). "A 'New' Paradigm" in *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, ed. by Denis McQuail. Sage Publications.
7. The book is edited by Colleen Lowe-Morna, Executive Director of Gender Links
8. AWC is a Nairobi-based media organization with an African regional outlook.

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Bosnia and Herzegovina is beginning the struggle for gender equality in the media

Abida Pehlic

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a nation that still maintains dominant stereotypes about women stemming from its patriarchal tradition. Women are generally perceived as inferior to men and often viewed only as sex symbols. This kind of misrepresentation of women is amply demonstrated in the country's media.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) inherited the journalism patterns of state-owned media in the former socialist Republic of Yugoslavia that used to glorify the one-political party system in which women hardly played any role. A few years ago new media, especially online, started to mushroom in B&H.

Many B&H journalists, both male and female, do not show any sensitivity in their work regarding gender equality. In B&H women are seldom made central news subjects, especially in key focus areas such as politics, economics and government, which are reserved for men. Stereotyping and unbalanced reporting from a gender perspective contribute to unequal gender power relations.

It is evident when looking at a B&H newspaper or visiting a B&H web portal that women are often displayed as objects like singers, actresses or poorly dressed starlets in sexy poses. With this

kind of gender portrayal, the B&H news media send a message to girls and women that they can only become successful in the entertainment business or that they can be, in the best cases, considered as “the more beautiful part of a couple.”

Due to this tradition, B&H journalists frequently place women in a passive frame, reinforcing the notion that it is very difficult for women even to think about being successful because of the media's influence. Newspaper policies usually do not favour the educated and intelligent women who have careers in the “typical men professions in B&H” and women find it difficult to take the step towards success because of the situation.

Politically, gender equality has never been high on the agenda in B&H. During the most recent election campaign held in September 2012, a web portal organized a beauty contest for women political candidates, whereas there has never been such a contest for male political candidates. This event can be interpreted as a statement that women can run for office (since it is a requirement in a democratic society), but they will only be considered as “decorations” and not as independent decision-making politicians. Even though there were quite a few female candidates in the last elections, they were hardly ever mentioned in the post-election news while the media was still covering the results.

Challenging media stereotypes

The NGO “Novi put” has been working with vulnerable categories of women and girls and has realized that B&H media tends to marginalize their role in society. Generally B&H women have been largely invisible in the focus and content of the media. The implementation of the WACC-sponsored project “Promotion of Gender Ethical Journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina” has enabled “Novi put” to increase media commitment to gender-ethical journalism and to the use of gender sensitive language in B&H media practice.

During the events organized as part of the project, which were attended by representatives of NGOs, the media and the general public, “Novi put” displayed media articles showing prejudices and stereotypes against women, sensationalism,

and violation of the human rights of women and underage girls. This demonstrated the need finally to start applying gender ethical journalism in B&H.

Confronted by obvious facts resulted in a very positive reaction from all participants, who agreed that it was vital to improve the quality of cooperation between media and women's NGOs and that both sides need to make efforts in order to overcome the issue in the media. They also stated the need to make the B&H public more sensitive to gender equality issues, since it was concluded that the media create prevailing images about the perception of women in B&H.

All media representatives who attended the events organized during the project's implementation stated that they had never actually considered gender ethical reporting important, but prioritized other issues, given the extremely difficult political and economical situation in the country. They also stated that the global trend in the media is also one that lacks gender sensitivity.

Participation of NGO and media representatives at the events organized by "Novi put" resulted in creating a platform for future cooperation. "Novi put" has also succeeded in getting the media as a partner and tool for getting across messages on gender equality and will continue along with other NGOs with strategic use of the media as a tool for advancing gender equality. The events were also used to identify ways in which the B&H media could contribute to the promotion of NGO activities, advocacy and raising awareness. The B&H media now has an opportunity to use expertise and the findings of women NGOs in reporting about the topics the NGOs have been dealing with.

This project has also increased the interest of participating media in women's NGOs and reporting about their work. The general conclusion was that the biggest problem is a lack of an active editing policy and media attempts to gain high ratings and circulation at the expense of gender-sensitive journalism. Not only has "Novi put" succeeded in getting the media to promote gender equality, but it will continue bringing gender justice to the public's attention through more projects, since the activities have mostly had positive impacts on participants and stakeholders, especially regarding treatment of trafficked persons, victims of domestic violence and abused children.

The project has had significant impact on gender equality issues. Reporting on non-governmental organizations dealing with gender issues has increased in B&H media. "Novi put" had more than 50 media stories during the project implementation period and in 2013 the media showed increased interest in all "Novi put" activities including detailed analysis of the issues involved. Media coverage has assisted "Novi put" to raise awareness about child pornography and paedophilia and also tackled the widespread issue of domestic violence in the country.

Since the training workshops that were held as part of the project, some media have increasingly used gender sensitive language in their articles. After the workshops, media started analyzing the issue of gender ethical journalism in a more detailed fashion. One article that dealt with the issue used parts of the "Novi put" leaflet that was designed for the purpose of the project.

Even though the general impact was very good, given overall gender-related attitudes, the project only "scratched the surface" so to say. It is necessary to continue working on this issue but on a larger scale, involving also relevant institutions such as the Regulatory Agency for Communication, the Gender Centre, media owners as key policy makers, and NGO representatives and other relevant stakeholders in order to achieve a long-term impact. Many journalists also recommended that it is also important to target young journalists and students of journalism.

Nevertheless, there are still many prejudices about women and their role in B&H society and some politicians tend to make discriminatory statements about women politicians. A B&H radio station, one of the project beneficiaries, published a reaction to the B&H Women Network and also emphasized the need for gender equality.

Complex political and social background

The [Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) was one of [Yugoslavia's](#) six federal provinces. Bosnia and Herzegovina is located in South-eastern Europe, on the Balkan Peninsula inhabited by Bosniacs (Muslims), Serbs (Orthodox) and Croats (Catholics). It was carved out of the former Yugoslavia and became an independent state on 3 March 1992 after Yugoslavia started to fall

apart. In the period from 1992 through 1995 B&H experienced a brutal war, in which all three ethnicities were sworn enemies fighting against each other. Besides total physical destruction of the country, the war resulted in more than 100.000 killed, mostly Bosnian Muslims, and hundreds of thousands of displaced persons and refugees.

The [Dayton Agreement](#) ended the [Bosnian war](#) in 1995. Under this agreement, the two entities – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (mostly inhabited by Muslims and Croats) and the Republika Srpska (mostly inhabited with Serbs) formed a single state. The war adversely impacted the social and economic landscape for the estimated four million people of all three ethnicities who nowadays call B&H home.

Political and ethnical tensions in B&H have never ceased, even though the war stopped almost 18 years ago and in some parts of the country, especially in Herzegovina region, they are getting worse. The war impact is still present and many media still support a division of the country along ethnic lines. Moreover, there are still some B&H media who deny the femicide, genocide and ethnic cleansing that occurred during the 1992-95 war in B&H. All three ethnicities ended up having their “own” mainstream media, both print and electronic, and many web portals, whose editorial policy is completely different when it comes to political and economic life of B&H.

Mary Ann Hennessey, Council of Europe Head of Office in B&H stated in April 2012 that “in B&H irresponsible media have been spreading unscrupulous propaganda for 20 years. This is the moment to think about our prejudices, the words and the responsibility that we bear for what we say. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country that is officially committed to compliance with the standards of the Council of Europe, human rights and legal system, and the media should follow these standards.”¹

According to the Freedom House Report on B&H media, press status is partly free.² The report says that political parties and leaders in B&H exert considerable pressure on the media. According to the survey B&H was in 95th place out of 197 countries. The report said that the pressures on the media have been increasing over the years so they have eventually been placed at the service of

political parties.

However, despite the fact that many B&H media outlets have completely different political views, they all have had one thing in common – a lack of a policy on gender equality. It is still necessary to initiate positive changes in terms of challenging stereotypes in gender portrayal in news, establishing partnerships between media and NGOs aimed at improving gender equality, and raising awareness about the need for proper reflection on women’s needs and concerns in media.

The project funded and supported by WACC enabled “Novi put” to start the discussion regarding gender ethical journalism in B&H and to begin to increase media commitment to it. “Novi put”, as one of leading B&H NGOs for prevention of human trafficking and gender-based violence, will continue its efforts to promote gender equality and gender ethical journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ■

Notes

1. <http://www.vijesti.ba/vijesti/bih/80807-Hennessey-Mediji-moraju-postovati-ljudska-prava-pravni-poredak.html>
2. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2012/bosnia-and-herzegovina>

Abida Pehlic is one of the founders and the President of the Association “Novi put” which works on prevention and combating of trafficking in human beings, domestic violence, child pornography and promotion of gender equality. “Novi put” also provides assistance to potential and actual victims of the aforementioned phenomena. Mrs. Pehlic has gained rich experience while working with many international organizations (UN, EUPM, OSCE, OHR) on the human rights issues.

Films to look out for from Cannes 2013

Denyse Muller

The 2013 Cannes Film Festival presented a richly diverse selection in the official competition. Four types of movies were screened.

There were very difficult movies like *Heli* directed by Amat Escalante (Mexico) – with unbearable scenes of torture that have not been seen before. There were also *A touch of sin* (Tian Zhu Ding,

China, directed by Jia Zhangke), *The shield of straw* (Wara No Tate, Japan, directed by Takashi Miike) and *Only God forgives* (directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, Denmark).

All these movies show our humanity in a realistic but dark way: when some people are victims of drugs and poverty while other are corrupt and sick of revenge and violence.

Nostalgic movies like *Un château en Italie* directed by Valeria Bruni Tedeschi (France) and *The great beauty* (La grande Bellezza Italy, dir. Paolo Sorrentino) where the filmmaker, in a Fellini-style, sees a depressed society in a beautiful Rome.

Movies about love and homosexuality: *Behind the candelabra* directed by Steven Soderberg (USA) reveals in a discreet way the fantastic life of Liberace, a virtuoso homosexual pianist. The movie *Blue is the warmest color* (La vie d'Adèle, France), directed by Abdellatif Kechiche, received the Golden Palm and Fipresci award.



Why didn't it get the Ecumenical Jury Prize? It seemed that in this very beautiful movie the sex scenes were too long, too realistic, too raw, on the edge of being pornographic. It is a love story between two women. We would have raised the same question of a story between a man and a woman: To what extent should the cinema show intimacy between two persons? Do these scenes remain provocative and shocking as we thought or do they (soon) become banal?

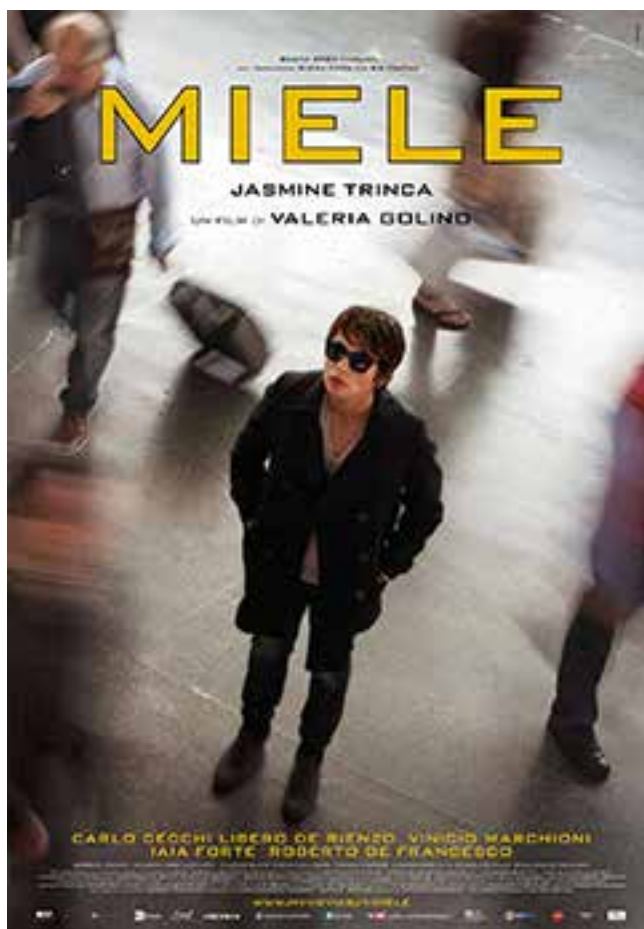
Films about family

There were many movies about family. The Ecumenical Jury made two awards on the theme of family. The first went to *Le passé* (The past) directed by Asghar Farhadi (France). "How do we take responsibility for our mistakes? In a thriller style, the director shows the daily life of a step-family, where everyone's secrets and the complex relationships gradually disentangle. A dense, deep and engaging film that illustrates this verse: 'The truth will make you free' (John 8:32)."

The second went to *Soshite chichi ni naru* (Like father, like son) directed by Hirokazu Koreeda (Japan). "At what point does a father actually become a father? Two couples from different social backgrounds discover that their sons have been exchanged in the maternity ward. The film deals in a simple and subtle way with a human dilemma: Are blood ties more important than the love which bonded them for seven years?"

I can also highly recommend *Nebraska* (still shown on previous page) directed by Alexander Payne (USA) a loving road movie, with a touch of humour. An old man, who thinks he won a big prize in a lottery, makes the trip from Montana to Nebraska with his son...Enjoy it! It can be seen by everybody.

The Jury could have given a commendation to this good movie but it was yet another on the question of family. So we chose to give an award for a movie in the section "Un certain regard" that tackles a current problem in society: *Miele* (Italy, directed by Valeria Golino) see poster in next



column.

In the opinion of the Ecumenical Jury, "The film offers a complex and unprejudiced view on the issue of euthanasia. The filmmaker shares with discretion and mastery the doubts and the torments of a young woman who helps terminally ill people to die, leaving to the audience the freedom and the responsibility to take a stand."

The members of the ecumenical jury were: Denyse Muller (France) president; Gianna Urizio (Italy); Tiziana Conti (Switzerland); Samuel Petit (France); Gianluca Arnone (Italy); and Marek Lis (Poland).

Report by Rev. Denyse Muller, president of the ecumenical jury at Cannes 2013 and currently vice-president of INTERFILM. http://www.gep.de/interfilm/englisch/index_interfilm.htm

ON THE SCREEN

KARLOVY VARY (CZECH REPUBLIC) 2013

The Ecumenical Jury at the 48th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (28 June to 6 July 2013) awarded its Prize to the film *Bluebird* directed by Lance Edmands (USA, 2013).

Motivation: When a female school bus driver fails to notice a sleeping boy in the back of her bus, this causes a tragedy that overshadows not only her life and family but also the lives of many others in her economically depressed small hometown. Lance Edmands' debut deals with topics like guilt, estrangement and isolation but first and foremost centres on the tragic lack of connection, closeness and the search for a place in this world. *Bluebird* (still below) is the most thoughtful and mature, the most atmospheric, superbly restrained, yet deeply emotional work we have ever seen by a first time feature-length film director.

Members of the Jury: Jan Regner (SJ), Prague (Czech Republic); Lothar Strüber, Freiburg-Tiengen (Germany); Marisa Villareale, Saarbrücken

(Germany); Helena Zvolská-Babická, Celákovice (Czech Republic).

In the context of the 48th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF), the European Parliament presented the 10 films of the LUX Prize 2013 Official Selection. According to a press communiqué, "These films show the richness of the European cultural landscape and the variety of genres and approaches. They portray stories and evoke emotions that might pertain to all of us."

One of the ten films was *Miele*, directed by Valeria Golino (Italy/France), which won a Special Mention from the Ecumenical Jury at the 2013 Cannes film festival. Of the 10 films in the Official Selection, there will be three finalists and one outright winner. The European Parliament will subtitle three films into the 24 official languages of the European Union and screen them in all the 28 countries during the LUX Film Days.

The aim is to make accessible these films and their diversity to all, and to encourage discussions on themes of shared interest together with other European citizens. The LUX Prize 2013 Winner will then be awarded by the European Parliament



in December 2013 in Strasbourg. The laureate film will be made available also for visually and hearing impaired.

For further information see: <http://www.luxprize.eu> and <http://www.luxprize.eu/official-selection>

YEREVAN (ARMENIA) 2013

At the 10th Golden Apricot International Film Festival held in Yerevan (7-14 July 2013) the Ecumenical Jury awarded its prize to *Keep Smiling* directed by Rusudan Chkonia, (Georgia/France, 2012).

This film is an artful and profound critique of the rising popularity of reality television programming and highlights the humiliation and loss of human dignity that often casts a dark shadow upon the participants in these programs. The audience journeys through a wide range of human emotions as we engage with these ten mothers as they compete for the top prize in this beauty contest for Georgian mothers. Shame and greed join envy and lust in illustrating that there are sometimes tragic consequences to pay for pursuing artificial human validation and for taking advantage of the disadvantaged for purposes of entertainment.

The jury has also gave a Commendation to *Eastalgia* directed by Daria Onyshchenko, (Germany/Ukraine/Serbia, 2012) for its excellent and dramatic depiction of the emotional devastation

left in the wake caused by economic migration of three torn, yet interconnected, families living in the modern Ukraine, Serbia, and Germany.

The members of the Ecumenical Jury were Douglas Fahleson (Ireland), Rev. Heinz-Martin Krauss (Germany), and Bishop Gevorg Saroyan (Armenia).

LOCARNO (SWITZERLAND) 2013

At the 66th Festival del film Locarno 7-17 August 2013, the Ecumenical Jury of SIGNIS and INTERFILM awarded its Prize to the film *Short Term 12* (still below) directed by Destin Cretton (USA, 2013).

The film tells a strong story about teenagers on the dark side of society. It addresses abuse and trauma in a direct style, outlining commitment and solidarity between the supervisors and the temporary inhabitants. Based on strong relationships the main character Grace finds the courage to deal with the troubled past and to look at a future beyond violence.

The jury awarded a Commendation to the film *Tableau noir* directed by Yves Yersin (Switzerland, 2013). Yves Yersin presents a moving documentary about the closing down of a school in the Swiss mountains. With strong and sensitive images he



shows how to teach children to trust life – a film of hope and joy.

Members of the Ecumenical Jury: Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati (Switzerland) – president; Lucia Cuocci (Italy); Piet Halma (Netherlands); Françoise Lods (France); Thomas Bohne (Germany); and Edgar Rubio (Mexico).

MONTREAL (CANADA) 2013

At the World Film Festival the Ecumenical Jury awarded its prize to: *Chce Sie Zyg* (Life Feels Good) directed by Maciej Pieprzyca (Poland).

A subtle cinematic language reveals the constrained world of Mateusz who is unable to communicate. The film (still below) opens his inner world, the viewer experiences his triumph when he discovers and asserts his will. The film explores his human consciousness, his relationships with others, including his romantic experiences. The director avoids exploiting Mateusz' suffering. Instead the film allows the viewer's emotional responses to develop, leading us to examine our own attitudes and relationships.

The Jury also awarded two Commendations to the following films: *The Ferry* directed by Shi Wei (China): This visually stunning cinematic parable about a father and son evokes larger themes of fidelity, modernity and community set in a rural Chinese village.

A Thousand Times Goodnight directed by Erik Poppe (Norway): The film explores the profound

tension between one's personal and public life and the ambiguity of observing and reporting the sorrow and suffering of others.

The Ecumenical Jury in 2013 consisted of René Tessier, president (Canada); Olivier Lefebure du Bus (France); Benny Punnassery (India); Jeffrey Mahan (USA); Gordon Matties (Canada); and Anita Uzulniece (Latvia).

MISKOLC (HUNGARY) 2013

The Ecumenical Jury attending the Jameson CineFest 10th Miskolc International Film Festival 12-22 September 2013 awarded its prize to the film *Ilo Ilo* directed by Anthony Cheng (Singapore, 2013).

“With subtle strokes and an empathic view at every person, *Ilo Ilo* is a sensitive description of a middle class family in Singapore, which has to struggle with difficult relationships emphasized by a financial crisis. It shows the way on which an immigrant maid from the Philippines helps the son to grow up and the parents to take off their masks, becoming more human and true.

Members of the Jury: András Dér (Hungary), György Frenyó (Hungary), Carlos Minondo (Spain), Claude Schwab (Switzerland).

VENICE (ITALY) 2013

The INTERFILM Jury at the International Film Festival Venice 2013 chose as winner of its 3rd



Award for Promoting Interreligious Dialogue *Philomena* directed by Stephen Frears (United Kingdom, 2013). The film stars the English actors Dame Judi Dench and Steve Coogan (still below).



Motivation: “Fifty years after the birth of her son, Philomena, a deeply Catholic Irish woman, finally decides to find him again. A convent of nuns, where Philomena was taken in as a teenage-mother, had given him away for adoption. Only with the help of an atheist journalist she succeeds in discovering the story of her lost son...

...The audience gets involved in an intense dialogue between a non-believer and a believer in which tolerance and respect are essential. The film may give us a model of how to deal in our secular societies with various religious and philosophical convictions. It also shows how forgiveness enables us to live in a reconciled and peaceful way.”

The Members of the Jury 2013 were: Freek L. Bakker (Netherlands), Gaëlle Courtens (Italy), and Werner Schneider-Quindeau (Germany) – Jury President. ■

Promoting film worldwide

INTERFILM is the international network for dialogue between church and film. It promotes appreciation of cinema’s artistic, spiritual and social significance and calls attention to the relevance of theology and religion for cinema.

Founded in 1955 by delegates of Protestant film associations in Europe, today INTERFILM also embraces Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim members, individuals as well as institutions.

INTERFILM cooperates with institutions and individuals working in the church and in film through personal exchanges, discussions (seminars and research projects) and publishing.

One of Interfilm’s main tasks is to be present at international film festivals with its own juries. For their awards the juries select films that stand out due to their artistic quality and which sensitize viewers to spiritual and social questions and human values.

Ecumenical juries have been in attendance in Locarno (since 1973), Cannes (1974), Montreal (1979), Berlin (1992), and several other festivals. An interreligious jury of INTERFILM and SIGNIS, including a Jewish and a Muslim member, has been present at the festival “Visions du Réel” in Nyon since 2005.

Most recently INTERFILM has established juries in Yerevan (2007), Warsaw (2010), and Miskolc (2011) and at the Mostra Internazionale d’Arte Cinematografica in Venice (since 2011).

Jury members and those institutions that delegate them are committed to a better understanding of contemporary film and to the questions, values and visions arising from it.

http://www.gep.de/interfilm/englisch/index_interfilm.htm