



GMMP monitors training and coding workshop, South Africa.

Photo: Albert Ngosa

FACT FILE

Programme	Media															
Sub programmes	Centres of Excellence for Gender in the Media															
No of Centres of Excellence	Country	Bots	DRC	Les	Mada	Mal	Maur	Moz	Nam	SA	Swa	Tan	Zam	Zim	Total	
	No of COEs	7	11	10	6	11	4	12	1	14	5	11	6	2	100	
No of events	Country	Ang	Bots	DRC	Les	Mada	Mal	Maur	Moz	Nam	SA	Swa	Tan	Zam	Zim	Total
	No	0	9	41	25	22	38	16	32	2	22	31	30	33	8	309
No of beneficiaries	MALE					FEMALE					TOTAL					
	690					917					1607					
How rated by partners in evaluations - average scores	Content	Design	Documen-tation	Facili-tation	Group work	Outputs	Outcomes	Learning	Networking	Admin						
	86	83	86	84	84	85	77	86	83	83						
Outputs	Reports			Action plans			Books			DVDs						
	37			9			0			0						
Outreach	Website hits	Contacts generated		Media mentions		Other events attended		No of MOUS with partners								
				21		2		85								
Budget	R3 600 000															



Sikhonzile Ndlovu

Synopsis

2015 marks twenty years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), which identified media as one of the critical areas of concern under the “Women and media diagnoses.” 2015 is also the deadline year for the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development. The BPFA remains very key and relevant to efforts to include gender and media in global discourse. Twenty years after Beijing, it is clear that gender and media activists need to step up their efforts and re-strategise to ensure more systematic and sustainable solutions to gender gaps that exist in the media.

The GL Media programme has continued to provide useful information on the positioning of women and men in the media and in editorial content in SADC through its ground-breaking research studies, that bring together key partners in the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC). GL also connects the dots up to international level through chairing the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG), a global coalition of over 500 media-related organisations committed to gender equality in and through the media.

A key concern for GL's media programme is the absence of a stand-alone goal, targets and indicators on gender and the media in the draft post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Within Southern Africa, the GL media project works with over 100 media houses and eight media training institutions that have elected to become Centres of Excellence (COE) for gender in the media.

The Media programme has continued to forge stronger relations with partners such as the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA), which co-chairs the Africa chapter of GAMAG, Rhodes University's Sol Platjie Institute for Media Leadership, the United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) as well as journalism and media training institutions in SADC through the Gender in Media Education (GIME) COE project. The programme has harnessed new media and also moved to establishing a multi-media Gender Links News Service (GLNS).

Objectives

- **Contributing to the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA).** With the SADC Gender Protocol coming to an end in 2015, GL has continued to align its media work with global instruments such as the BPFA which place emphasis on achieving gender equality in media content as well as in media institutions. The GL media COE project feeds directly into this objective.
- **Contributing to the SADC Gender Protocol on gender equality in and through the media by 2015 as well as crafting stronger media provisions in the post 2015 SGP.** The GL Media programme aims to support media institutions to mainstream gender in their day to day operations in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

The Protocol calls on all media and media related bodies to mainstream gender in their codes of conduct and ethics.

- **Contribute to debate and dialogue on gender, media and diversity through the Gender and Media Diversity Centre and the Gender Links News Service (GLNS).** The GMDC continues to engage with gender and media activists, educators, mainstream media as well as gender and media networks. The GLNS continues to create conversation around gender and diversity in SADC, giving visibility to the SGP campaign.



GL Board Member Emily Brown during a media monitoring consultative workshop in Johannesburg.

Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini

How the media programme works

With its slogan, *gender equality in and through the media*, the programme has grown from periodic media training workshops and research projects to a global force to be reckoned with. The work is rooted in research, including the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS), the Gender and Media Audience Research (GMAS), Glass Ceilings in Southern African Media and the Gender and Media Progress Study. The periodic *Mirror on the Media* series covered such topics as Gender and Advertising and Gender in Tabloids. In 2015 GL will update all these research studies under the 2015 Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS).

“The media Centres of Excellence project has made Botswana media houses and editors aware of the gap in gender mainstreaming not only in content but at institutional levels. Spencer Mogapi of the Sunday Standard/Telegraph newspapers said at one COE meeting: ‘I never thought of gender in the workplace or in newspapers but now I make sure that we have female staff and that gender issues are covered. It is important to give women a platform in the issues pertaining to the development of our country. We cannot afford to leave them behind.’” - *Beata Kasale: Owner, The Voice, Botswana*

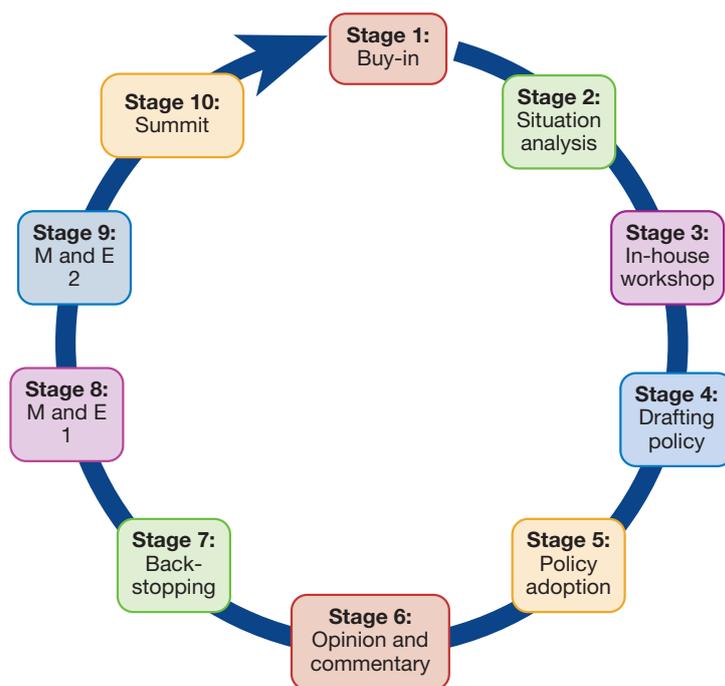
In 2008, GL initiated policy work in media houses as part of the Media Action Plan (MAP) on HIV and AIDS, which gave birth to gender policy work in media houses and ultimately the Centres of Excellence (COE) for gender in the media project. The COE concept has seen GL work with over 100 media houses in the SADC region to develop and implement gender policies. The results of the 2009 Glass Ceilings Study and the 2010 GMPS informed the media COE approach.



The COE project has contributed to strengthened monitoring and evaluation tools and systems. For example, the programme has developed a scorecard to measure progress in gender mainstreaming in participating media houses and journalism and media training institutions. The scorecard approach combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods that allow for engagement and dialogue with the media institutions. The M and E strategies in place allow for gathering and documenting evidence of change every step of the way.

The Media COE project is a ten-stage process that offers media houses a capacity building and gender

mainstreaming package. The stages are structured as follows:



A unique feature of the media COE process is the ongoing capacity-building and support for the media house and its personnel. A key component of this is support from partner organizations such as journalism and media training institutions as well as SADC Protocol Alliance thematic cluster leads.

Stage 7 thematic areas include:

- Constitutional and legal rights
- Governance
- Education and training
- Productive resources, employment and economic empowerment
- Gender based violence
- Health and HIV and AIDS
- Peace Building
- Media, information and communication
- Implementation

As part of the M and E, GL has developed a media COE self-monitoring tool that allows media houses to periodically monitor their content. This has led to greater ownership and accountability towards gender mainstreaming efforts. This periodic self-monitoring exercises are useful for benchmarking progress in between major external evaluations.

The media programme has also strengthened its work with media training institutions through introducing a COE project for Gender in Media Education (GIME). The GIME COE concept provides media institutions with a full gender mainstreaming package that they

can choose from. This process realises that institutions are unique and as such their needs differ. Therefore they can choose the relevant modules from GL's offering.

Key activities in 2014

- **Gender policy development workshops in the thirteen participating SADC countries.** GL has continued to support COEs in new countries such as Lesotho and Swaziland to develop their gender policies.
- **On the job support through stage seven of the COE process.** COEs that developed and adopted their policies in 2013 moved on to on-the-job training facilitated by Gender Links. This has contributed to the steady improvement in gender aware media content.
- **Media COE verification in 70 media COEs that have developed and are implementing gender policies.** The verification process forms stage nine of the COE project. 70 media houses that have developed policies had an opportunity to showcase their gender mainstreaming efforts.
- **Compiling a media COE learning paper.** The COE verification exercise and the SADC gender summits continued to provide vital insights on the challenges and strengths of the COE project. GL realises that any growing and learning organisation has to learn from its past. Based on these lessons the programme will see media COE facilitators engaging more with their beneficiaries as well as documenting evidence of change.
- **Engaging the Southern Africa Broadcasting Association (SABA) in mainstreaming gender in the operations of all 15 SADC broadcasters.** During the year the GL Media Programme made submissions at the SABA annual board meeting on the importance of gender mainstreaming in public broadcasting. This saw SABA electing, for the first time since its inception, a female General Secretary. SABA also achieved parity in its board selections with four women and men elected to its board in August 2014.
- **Training for SABA gender focal points.** As part of the on-going partnership with UNESCO, GL's media programme conducted a gender mainstreaming workshop with representatives of SABA member organisations. This workshop sought to provide in-depth understanding and knowledge of GL's media COE project.
- **Collection and documenting case studies at the SADC Gender Summits.** The Media programmes successfully hosted summits in three SADC countries where GL does not have offices. The summits in the DRC, Malawi and Tanzania saw a high number

of media entries coming from both COEs and non-COEs. For example the DRC generated close to 100 entries. Media partners also participated in the rest of the SADC Gender summits whereby media houses and individual journalists skilfully showcased their gender mainstreaming efforts.

- **Working with news teams comprising Journalism and Media Studies students during the 13 SADC country summits and regional summits.** Student journalists have become a key part of the media team during the annual summits. In 2014 GL continued its work with student news teams to compile daily regional summit news updates.
- **Chairing the first meeting of the International Steering Committee of the Global Alliance on Media and Gender.** In 2014, GAMAG members nominated Gender Links to chair its first ever international steering committee. This has afforded the media programme an opportunity to learn and share knowledge with gender and media activists and media organisations globally. GL chaired the first ever ISC meeting in Geneva Switzerland in November 2014 as well as the first online Executive Committee meetings. These meetings have contributed to designing and crafting GAMAG's post 2015 campaign strategy.
- **Compiling GAMAG media and post 2015 position paper.** Following GAMAG's formation in Bangkok in December 2013 and the first international steering committee meeting in Geneva in November 2014, GL has coordinated and facilitated the compilation of the GAMAG post 2015 position paper. GAMAG is concerned with the absence of a stand-alone goal with targets and indicators around gender equality in the media and ICTS.

Targets

The media COE project targets mainstream media in 13 SADC countries. In 2014, GL shifted its focus to try and bring in all SADC national broadcasters. Public broadcasters have a mandate to represent the interests of constituent groups of any society. National broadcasters mostly rely on government subsidy and reach a wider population compared to private and community media.

As the type of media closest to the people, community media plays a greater role of representing the voices of ordinary people in their communities of influence.

The COE project comprises 39 community radio stations, nine public broadcasters and private media. South Africa has the largest number of community media due to its strong GL local government work in the Limpopo province.

Beneficiaries

Country	Male	Female	Total
Botswana	4	7	11
DRC	52	96	148
Madagascar	28	72	100
Malawi	44	42	86
Mauritius	68	149	217
Mozambique	68	102	170
Namibia	8	16	24
South Africa	129	68	197
Swaziland	60	81	141
Tanzania	55	61	116
Zambia	51	95	146
Zimbabwe	49	36	85
Total	690	917	1607
% by sex	43%	57%	

In 2014, GL reached 1607 media partner beneficiaries - 57% women and 43% men.

Outputs

Targets for the year	Baseline	Indicators	Progress
Media COEs progress overall is 65%; for stage 7 is at 55%. 10 public broadcasters (cumulative) join the process.	Media houses are 54% through the ten stage process. 7 out of 15 public broadcasters have joined the process.	No. of media houses that complete the COE process including at least two thirds of public broadcasters in the region.	Overall progress is at 63% 47% of stage seven.
12 (cumulative) case studies	Seven case studies at the 2014 SADC Summit.	No. of case studies shared at the annual SADC Protocol@Work Summit on Gender in Media Education.	7 case studies. Next case studies at the August SADC summit
At least two media training institutions complete elections training and produce four election newsletters through the GLNS.	Ran a successful Gender and elections training programme with the Polytechnic of Namibia in 2009.	Collaborating with media training institutions to run multi-pronged gender and elections training workshops for students and the media.	- Four gender, elections and the media workshops. - Two newsletters produced.

Outcomes

Targets for the year	Baseline	Indicators	Progress
Proportion of women sources in the media COE's reaches 23%.	21% women sources overall, 26% have reached 30%.	Increase in women sources and gender aware coverage in the COEs. (Qualitative: Editorial and testimonial evidence of change).	21% news sources (2014) GMPS 2015 currently underway
GSC=73% (67% lowest, 81% highest) (Annual).	Gender Score Card (GSC) average of 71% (65% lowest, 79% highest) 2014.	Progress in implementing gender policies and action plans in media COE's as measured in the media house scorecard.	Media COE verification exercise is underway
At least seven media training institutions become COE's; establish baselines through a score card and establish baselines.	New.	No. of media training institutions that become COEs.	- Nine media training institutions have become COEs - Baselines in six institutions

Women's voices in the media: The programme has continued with its capacity building workshops with the aim of ensuring that media houses access more women voices and views in editorial content and programming. The 2014 spot monitoring exercise shows a slight decline in women sources from 22%

in 2013 to 21%. In light of the capacity building workshops, GL hopes to reach the target of 23% in the 2015 GMPS monitoring. The monitoring results will be available in time for the regional 2015 SADC Protocol@Work summit.

If news is about people, where are all the women!

For Semion Shumba, Power 101 Head of News in Malawi, reporting gender goes beyond covering Mother's Day events or the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign against Gender Violence. Shumba, who attended a Gender Links workshop in 2009, testifies that the training equipped him with unique skills on gender reporting. His rule number one when he is assigning the reporter to do a story on gender is "impact of the story."



Semion Shumba in the FM101 studio. Photo: Daud Kayisi

"I always tell my colleagues in the newsroom to tell me the impact of the gender story they would like to cover before interviewing the sources," Shumba says. He posits that a mere report of a Sixteen Days of Activism Campaign or a rape case is not enough. What is needed is critical and solution-oriented reporting.

From the time Shumba attended the GL training facilitated by Pushpa Jameson, he has always worked towards increasing the proportion of women voices on the radio. He is achieving this in two ways. "I have decided to train as many female journalists as possible, because this will mean the radio will have more female presenters, newscasters and reporters. I am also encouraging reporters to interview female experts and ordinary women, as opposed to featuring the voices of men only," says Shumba. "If news is about people, then women should also be part and parcel of it!"

Rachel Joshua, Alefa Lyson and Grace Nda are some of the female journalists that Shumba is proud to have groomed. Joshua is described by her colleagues at the station as an asset. She is an all-rounder in as far as radio broadcasting is concerned. Lyson heads a gender desk at the station and she is also a producer of the Mlatho (bridge) programme that targets needy young girls and motivates them to work hard in school and realise their dreams. Nda is the Head of political and legal affairs desk and she works under the supervision of Shumba. "I have personally gained a

lot from working with Simeon Shumba as I now have the confidence and courage to work and deliver just like any other person in the newsroom. Out of 7 men and 5 women in our newsroom, Simeon entrusted me with the position giving a woman's voice in the newsroom," says Nda.

Shumba makes integrating gender into institutional practices and editorial content a daily routine. "I challenge my fellow reporters in the newsroom to ensure that reporting gender goes beyond reporting GBV. There is a gender aspect to economics, politics, climate change and education. Journalists should therefore not narrow their coverage by thinking that gender reporting is just about GBV or a rape case," says the radio head.

In January 2013, Shumba joined journalists who took Magistrate Titus Banda to task for acquitting a rapist through his famous Sunday lunch hour phone-in programme. The magistrate acquitted the accused because among others he said the complainant "did not feel pain."

Shumba adds that "at an individual level my life has changed. I have encouraged my wife to stand in Malawi elections to contest for a parliamentary seat. I managed to convince her, she knew nothing about politics but I told her that there are NGOs and the media that are there to teach you. Now she can go to the constituency and campaign alone without me. However, at first it was difficult as she did not know what to say to the community that if elected what is she going to do but now she can articulate everything even the time there was a meeting for the orientation for the female candidates she did a presentation for her group. I am happy that things are slowly changing in our newsrooms. We need to continue to have more female voices. All our bureaus need to have at least two female journalists for us to attain the 50/50 target.

Gender responsive journalism and media practice.

The 2015 media verification exercise showed an average score of 71% for media COEs in the region. The media house scorecard measures both quantitative and qualitative indicators of progress across key indicators such as:

- Policy framework including the existence of sexual harassment policies.
- Workplace.

- Editorial content and programming.
- Gender management systems.

Media COE facilitators across the 13 COE countries will measure progress and obtain the updated score during the verification exercise ahead of the SADC gender summits. The Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service (SBIS) shows how the COE process is changing gender and media practise.

SBIS lights the way

The Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services (SBIS) plays a vital role in disseminating information to the nation, with radio being the main source of news for 95% of the population.

Smangele Dlamini, Gender focal person, feels strongly that all programme producers and broadcasters in the station need exposure and must be pushed to embrace gender mainstreaming. "What is presently needed at the station is a paradigm shift, where mentoring and coaching on gender becomes basic to enhancing production skills. The onus is now on the management to ensure that the station is not left behind as other media houses are miles ahead," she said. Dlamini is determined to work with gender mainstreaming partners and ensuring that SBIS becomes victorious in gender mainstreaming.

National Association of Development Programme Producers (NADPP) produce programmes on gender including:

- *Tentele Make* - Women's Empowerment programme;
- *Sebenta* - National Literacy Programmes;
- *Swaaga* - Abuse and women's rights programme;



Simangele Dlamini and Ncane Maziya at the Swaziland SADC Gender Protocol@ Work Summit awards. Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini

- *Tephalamente* - Parliamentary Affairs
- *Current Affairs* - Features issues happening in communities;
- *Lutsango Lwakangwane* - Women's regiments;
- *Tebaphalalali* - Disaster and community mitigation;
- *Kwentekani eTinkhundleni* - Community Development

Broadcasters come to the party

A key outcome this reporting period is the commitment made by the powerful Southern African Broadcasters Association (SABA) at its annual meeting in Swaziland in August 2014, following a meeting facilitated by Gender Links, with the support of UNESCO. In a press statement recognising the significance of 2015, SABA committed to:

- Gender balance on the SABA Board, starting in 2014 with the election of four women and four men to the Board, in accordance with the gender parity target of the SADC Gender Protocol. This historic breakthrough follows a long history of a one hundred percent male Board. SABA in 2014 also appointed, for the first time in the organisation's 22 year history, the first woman Secretary General, Ellen Nanuses.

- Reviving and strengthening the gender committee to be represented at all SABA Annual General meetings.
- Play an active role in the UNESCO-led Global Alliance on media and Gender (GAMAG), where SABA is the nominee for vice chair of the international steering committee.
- Support the Centres of Excellence for Gender in the media coordinated by Gender Links. Currently seven of the fifteen public broadcasters in SADC have elected to join this process that involves adopting and implementing a gender policy, and capacity building for media practitioners, as well as monitoring improvement and sharing.
- Good practices. SABA encourages all its members to become COEs.

- Agree on Gender Sensitive Indicators for all broadcasters in the 15 member states of SADC.
- Support gender in media training.
- Sponsor annual awards on Gender and the Media, recognizing gender aware reporting, programming, and work place practise.

Escalating the global campaign



Campaigning for women's voice: Colleen Lowe Morna and Geena Davis.

Photo: Gender Links

Since assuming the role of Chair of GAMAG, GL has spearheaded a global campaign for gender and media targets and indicators to be added to the SDGs. GL CEO Colleen Lowe Morna joined a high level panel that included UNWOMEN Executive Secretary Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and movie star Geena Davis at the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in March 2015 to call for strong action. Lowe-Morna said: "One of the most promising developments over the last two years is the Global Alliance for Media and Gender (GAMAG) - over 500 organisations around the world - that have come together under the auspices of UNESCO to say that enough is enough. These include major broadcasting associations, media training institutions, journalist unions, women's media federations, research and advocacy institutions. GAMAG is calling for the SDGs include a goal on media and ICTs and their gender dimensions. We are also demanding a stand-alone target on gender and the media under goal five - gender equality. And we are demanding that the indicators on freedom of expression in Goal 16 include gender indicators."

Key challenges

Media houses reliance on adverts for revenue forces them to accept even stereotypical advertising

Whilst media houses are keen to embrace gender mainstreaming, it is not easy for them to introduce over-arching changes within the timeframes of the COE project. This is particularly clear in the nature of adverts that media houses carry. Most media houses rely on advertising for revenue and as such they cannot reject adverts that are deemed to perpetuate stereotypes.

Gender responsive budgeting in media houses

There are very few media houses that are putting resources towards gender mainstreaming efforts. This is particularly so in the not-so-well-resourced countries such as Lesotho and Zambia. There is little in-kind support coming towards project implementation. Most media houses still rely on Gender Links to fund all gender related activities.

Movement of media personnel

There have been several instances whereby the COE project has had to be put on hold due to changes in personnel in different media houses across the region. This often means that Gender Links has to seek buy-in from new people, especially management. This often hinders progress especially if the new manager is not so keen on gender issues. In Botswana, for example, the facilitator has had to work with a new task force after members of the old task force who drafted a gender policy for seven media houses moved. Zimbabwe has also suffered due to reshuffling of personnel in the country's largest print media company, *Zimpapers*.

Hello Pushpa,

I have started pursuing the gender equality story as agreed last time you were facilitating gender training at Trans World Radio (TWR). Please bear with us; we have a lean staff such that sometimes it is hard to find ample time to do some assignments away from office on time due to continuity commitments. Please note that as a media house we are committed to promoting increased coverage of gender and climate change issues. We have managed to come up with a gender desk and have successfully developed a monitoring tool to help us assess whether or not our programmes are well-balanced in relation to gender equality.

Regards,
Mada
TWR, Lilongwe Malawi

Risk analysis

Risks	Rate - High/Medium/Low	How these will be mitigated
Media houses do not have adequate funds for gender mainstreaming	High	GL is utilising in-kind support to achieve greater efficiency and realise value for money in its areas of operation.
Failure by media houses to screen sexist and stereotypical advertising	Medium	Developing gender policies that put in place a framework for gender aware content including advertising
Staff movement across media houses affects continuity in gender mainstreaming efforts	High	Working with media houses at an institutional level and emphasising on policy development and implementation

Next steps

- Continue with campaign for the strengthening of media and ICT targets in the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the auspices of the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG).
- Campaign to urge governments to take concrete action to include gender, media and ICTs in their national gender policies and strategies.
- Contribute to strengthening the Southern Africa chapter of the Global Alliance on Media and Gender.
- Conduct the second Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS). The 2015 GMPS brings together the Gender and Media Progress Study, Glass Ceilings in Southern African media, Gender and Advertising and Gender and tabloids. GL hopes to launch the 2015 GMPS at the 2015 SADC Gender Protocol Summit in Botswana.



GL Board Member, Emily Brown, and CEO, Colleen Lowe Morna, with the Director General of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation and Chair of SABA, Albertus Aochamub; Secretary General Ellen Nanuses and GAMAG representative Umbi Karuaihe. Photo: NBC

Gender and Media Progress Study

Gender Links is embarking on a third regional study on Gender and Media. The 2015 Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) will gauge the extent of progress in achieving gender equality in and through the media since the 2008 signing of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development. The protocol has a target for gender equality in and through the media by 2015. The study will therefore explore the status of gender in media content, including advertising, gender in media houses and gender in journalism and media education and training.

The 2015 GMPS is a sequel to earlier studies such as *Who talks on Radio Talk shows?*, *Gender in Advertising in Southern Africa*, *Gender in Tabloids*, *GMPS (2010)* *Glass Ceilings in Southern African Media (2009)* study and the *Gender in Media Education (GIME) 2010* audit. This new study has introduced two new areas of work, coverage of LGBTI issues and disability.

This study is significant in that it takes place at a time when civil society in SADC is taking stock of progress made since 2008 as well as working on strengthening the document post 2015. Globally, development partners are crafting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This research will serve as the 2015 media barometer and potentially a basis for taking forward the global campaign to include a stand-alone goal, with targets and indicators on gender, media and ICTs in the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Gender parity in Namibian politics boosts gender in media training

By Emily Brown

Deputy Chair, Gender Links; Head: Department of Communication, Polytechnic of Namibia



In 2014 the media of Southern Africa focused extensively on election coverage because five SADC countries held National and Presidential elections. South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia's media emphasised messages from political

parties, yet not much of the coverage seemed to interrogate the performance of the signatories to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the Millennium Development Goals, instruments which have deadlines in 2015.

The South West African People's Party (SWAPO), which has been Namibia's Ruling Party since Independence in 1990, announced in April 2014 during a SWAPO Party Central Committee Meeting, that the Party would opt for a 50/50 gender representation on the Party list. While the announcement brought about a fair amount of discontent amongst some of the members of the Party, former President Hifikepunye Pohamba hailed this amendment to the Party's Constitution as a long sought-after objective aimed at achieving gender balance in all structures of the Party.

In his first State of the Nation Address on 21 April 2015, Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, started out by saying that "Gender equality is an enabler which allows all people to reach their full potential to contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political participation. It is pertinent that women have greater access to high level decision-making roles". With women now representing 48% of the National Assembly, shouldn't we in academe strive to mainstream gender in media education more proactively?

Just prior to the Elections (held on Friday 28 November 2014) journalism students in the Department of Communication at the Polytechnic of Namibia followed in the footsteps of predecessors who in 2004 and 2009 took up gender aware issue-based reporting ahead of the elections. One month prior to the elections, the students generated story ideas through conducting focus group research amongst community members. Trainers provided students with the following criteria for mainstreaming gender in content:

- Those who spoke (sources) had to be women and men from the various communities, not only officials/political leaders (mainly men, in positions of power), as is often the case in the mainstream media.
- Officials or leaders of government were sourced mainly to verify or deny the claims made by ordinary sources.
- The issues highlighted during the focus group research were those affecting the majority of the people.
- Newsworthiness shifted from events to issues (lived experiences) of the people.

When gender does not receive much attention in journalism curricula, can we expect our journalists to understand the significance of mainstreaming gender? Do we as media trainers do justice to questions of balance and fairness when gender is not addressed? If one considers that mostly male voices are heard in reportage - even though in a country like Namibia women make up 51% of the population - then we certainly have to address the issue of fairness.

In the *Glass Ceilings* study (*Glass Ceilings: Women and Men in Southern Africa Media*, 2009) - which focused on 126 media houses in SADC - it was found that we have approximately 46% women and 54% men in our media houses. What this statistic tells us is that women journalists also tend to access mostly male sources. So, it is not a given that because the journalist is female, she is gender-aware. It is only with relevant training that such awareness is brought about. And, when government has set the tone for facilitating such awareness, do we still have a reason not to provide gender-based Journalism education?



Polytechnic of Namibia third year journalism student Marina Matundu gets to the real issues in Okahandja.
Photo: Gender Links