

The South is a powerhouse of knowledge!

By Trevor Davies
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As the work on gender and the media in region grows, there is need to be more systematic in the generation and sharing of knowledge, not only in the region but across the globe. Southern Africa is fast becoming a recognised global leader in this area of work. The idea of the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC) is to create a physical and virtual resource centre based in Southern Africa, with linkages in Africa and across the globe.

The centre envisages media that are diverse, representative, responsive, and professional, and a citizenry, women and men, who are empowered to engage critically with their media. It will facilitate the collection, connection and dissemination of information and resources relating to gender, media and diversity. The centre will also collaborate on research, education and training.

Specific objectives include to:

- Promote more analytical, responsive and contextual journalism.
- Develop and share a body of knowledge on gender and media diversity.
- Publicise the work of media scholars, students and practitioners
- Provide resources that makes the links between media theory and practice.
- Create a space for participatory discussion and debate on gender and media diversity.
- Develop north-south and institutional partnerships with strategic organisations.
- Become a centre of excellence on new approaches and fresh thinking.

With its base at the Gender Links office, the GMDC will have three components:

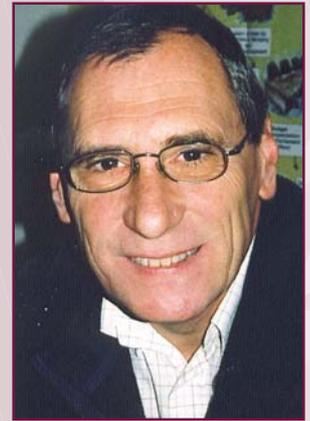
- **The electronic infrastructure:** An on-line resource centre-; a website (and one stop shop with links, cross links and highlights of what's new); tools and resources; photolibrary; an email newsletter; cyber dialogues; online networks and communities of practice; online training; searchable databases of information resources, training and trainers (SAMTRAN) and research; an electronic bulletin board; and an electronic help desk.
- **Physical infrastructure:** A library and resource centre at the GL/GEMSA offices with several "links" to resource centres of members of the consortium; lectures, dialogues and seminars; a media diversity journal twice a year and systematic exchanges of publications. One of the tasks of the advisory group will be to guide the Media Diversity Journal, now in its third issue. The second issue documented the 54 case studies presented at the Gender and Media summit. The third issue, under the guidance of the advisory group, will be on tabloids.
- **Training and capacity building:** IT training linked to marketing of GMDC; Information on existing courses, including on-line training offered by members of the consortium; Training materials and tools collected from training institutions and organizations which will be available in physical and electronic forms; Innovative learning methods that will include the use of interactive technologies such as web-casting; Student exchanges and internship possibilities.

At the time of writing the advisory group comprised representatives of GL, the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network; Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA); Sangonet; the Media Monitoring Project (MMP); SAFAIDS; Rhodes University; University of Stellenbosch, Highway Africa; the Polytechnic of Namibia; NSJ; and Institute for the advancement of Journalism (IAJ). International partners include the International Media Women's Federation (IMWF) and the Network of Women in Media in India.

Photo: Trevor Davies



GMDC seminar on gender and advertising



"I am glad to hear about new modes of communication in this global village we are living in. Please don't hesitate to include my name in the GMDC contacts data base. As you know information is power, so I need that power like nobody's business. I really want to thank the entire management of Gender Links for the good work they are doing. Keep it up."

Alfred Mbewe

Target users are: trainers and training institutions; media practitioners; researchers; students; gender and media activists; regional and international organisations. GL hopes through the GMDC to be able to assist interns and researchers more meaningfully. This will help to develop the next generation of gender and media activists.