

# REPORT ON THE SEYCHELLES MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT November 2008



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### **Executive summary:**

This report details the activities of the Seychelles Media Literacy project. This course, a joint collaboration between Gender Links and Gem Plus was run from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2008. The project was made possible with funding from DANIDA.

This is the first time that a course of such a nature has been held in Seychelles. While Gender Links has done various projects in Seychelles, there has not been any that sought to empower citizens the way the media literacy course has done. Most of Gender Links work in Seychelles has focused on HIV and AIDS and Gender and Media policy.

Seychelles became involved in the Media Literacy project in 2006, when Seychelles participated in a regional planning meeting organized by Genderlinks and GEMSA in Johannesburg where the toolkit 'Watching the Watchdogs' was developed. After the Gem Summit in August 2006, a member of Gem Plus took part in a Training of Trainers for media literacy training which was held for two days. In March 2008, a representative of GEM Plus was again invited to participate in another training of trainers' session.

After this training preparations got underway in Seychelles. It was decided by the Gem Plus executive committee that a week long course would keep the participants keen and interested. In September, Michel Rosalie who had attended the TOT Media Literacy Course gave training to the identified facilitators who all had Media and Gender backgrounds.

The course attracted 18 participants from Seychelles. Most of these were drawn from civil society and media houses. Course facilitators were mostly media practitioners from Seychelles and some of them had participated in the GL training of trainers in 2006. The participants felt that this course was very empowering.

The course ran for one week from Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of October to Friday the 17<sup>th</sup>. Please see report summary attached at **Annex B**. The course was run using a local adaptation of the Gender Links Training manual 'Watching the Watchdogs' which allows for maximum participation by participants. The toolkit also has core exercises which facilitators found to be very useful. The group work sessions were also some of the most enjoyed sessions. See evaluation form attached at Annex C.

However due to time and budgetary constraints participants were not able to go on field visits. Since the course was covered in five days there was no time to go out and do surveys as the course conveners would have loved. The IT module also took up the most of the time compared to other modules.

The course which was run a month before the 16 Days of Activism campaign also introduced participants to this international campaign against gender based violence. Some of the participants were aware of the 16 days campaign, while to some this was a completely new thing.

### Objectives of the course

- Roll out the Gender and media literacy course in Seychelles
- Empower citizens to critically engage with the media
- To raise awareness on how to hold the media accountable
- Strengthen partnerships between Gender Links and GEMSA country chapters.
- Cultivate relationships between Gender Links, GEMSA and training institutions in Seychelles

### Targets

The initial target of this course was to have at least 20 members of the general public gain skills to critically monitor the media. This included anyone interested in being media literate or those who worked regularly with communications.

However, only 18 people were trained. Two applicants who had been accepted into the course did not turn up. This may have been because the course was conducted during the week and some people could not get leave from work.

The 18 participants were drawn from civil society, non governmental organizations and media practitioners.

### Process and activities:

The course was advertised through local GEMSA networks such as Gem Plus and the umbrella body for NGOs in Seychelles. Applications were invited from interested people. The response was encouraging as more than 20 people expressed interest. However only 20 were selected and 18 completed the course. This is despite the fact that most of the participants had full time jobs. Some had challenges keeping time but they still managed to fulfill the course's general requirements.

Before the course commenced, training was held for the facilitators to brief them on the course and on the expected outputs and outcomes. The facilitators were drawn mostly from media organizations in Seychelles and they were all knowledgeable on gender and media issues.



*Facilitators' training*

Training for the facilitators was conducted by Michel Rosalie who had attended one of the TOT Media Literacy Courses. The group met twice.

The introductory sessions of the course were held on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> of October so as to give the participants the theoretical framework for the course. The course was fun though the issue being addressed was a serious one. The facilitators took a participatory approach in engaging with the issues.

Sessions made use of power point presentations, discussions, group work and role plays. Activities included exercises, case studies and analysis. One very practical and interesting exercise was one where participants were given the daily papers and asked to choose an article, read it and analyse highlighting what they would have loved to see as a consumer. The general impression was that most of the articles lacked vital information that was needed by consumers.



*Group work*

What made the sessions easy to follow was the facilitators' use of clear language and use of local examples from the media.

The case studies given in the Gender Links manual were used only as a guide or replaced with local examples. Overall the class discussions were very empowering as participants showed an enthusiasm to learn about the various gender and media issues.

The session on "What do you and I want?" revealed that there is no awareness of the Gender Links Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS) which was conducted in 2003. Most participants did not seem to be aware of the various studies Gender Links has done around gender and media issues.

The IT session, which was allocated half a day, was also another empowering session. There were five female participants who had never used a computer before. On reflection at the end it was obvious that more time was needed to discuss the module in detail.

Overall the course was well received and the general feeling was that a week was too short and the issues discussed would need to be revisited after some time so as to keep the momentum.

## Outputs

Most of the outputs listed below were done during the IT session. Some of them however never got to be printed out due to budgetary constraints.

- Brochures
- Fliers
- 16 days posters
- Basic media monitoring findings

## Outcomes:

The course was an eye opener for all participants, even though all of them watch the news everyday they had not realized that one could actually analyse news, they all agreed that now they will be critically analysing what the media feeds to its audience. The group has decided under the auspices of Gem Plus to form a Media Action Group. Through the introduction of the Media Literacy Course, the first of its kind, Gem Plus hopes to see a strengthened capacity of the public in general in Media Literacy in Seychelles. As seen in the participants' comments below, course has changed the way that they view themselves as citizens. Instead of passively taking in what the media gives to them, they are now more aware that as consumers they can tell the media what they would want to see more or less of.

## Comments from some of the participants

-“I felt privileged that I got the chance to attend the course on media literacy. It has CHANGED MY LIFE FOR GOOD!!! The course has allowed me to look at the media in a more critical approach by giving me the extra pair of “eyes” to see and understand how the whole world operates. I discovered that the media has its own agenda, and unless you tune in with such agenda, you are sidelined. This makes it worse for us as NGO which has a very different agenda from that of the government. This course therefore has equipped me with the necessary tools for me to befriend the media, get to understand them, get an important position on their agenda, SO THAT I CAN USE THEM TO PUSH THE CAUSE OF MY ASSOCIATION FORWARD. The task is huge, but with the right weapons that the course has provided me with, I am more than confident that I will be able to use the media effectively in order to touch the lives of the people at the grass root level. I suggest that more training course of that nature should be done more often.” *Steve Pointe, Director Programmes, ASFF*

-Media education is an on going process which can develop and evolve. Before the course I used to just sit and consumed whatever the media was feeding me, but now I've realized that sometimes pictures being shown tell a different story than the story itself, and I make my own conclusions. I am proud: I am media literate.” *Geraine Antat, Librarian.*

-The Media literacy training was very useful in the sense that it covered different topics and also being both critical and analytical. It was innovative as it gave all the participants in depth knowledge and understanding of the different theories and guidelines in media work. The participants were also able to voice their views on various issues, so the course was very interactive and interesting.” *Terence Brutus, Senior Researcher Gender Secretariat.*

### ***View from one of the facilitators!***

“Even with a background in journalism, before the Media literacy course I used to consume media naively, believed almost everything being reported. But now I make it a point to be analytical, I see whether the media is reporting in a balanced fair way, objectively, I see biases, and stereotypes, now when I tune in to the news I not only wear my spectacles, but my gender lenses as well! For me the media literacy course was doubled fold, I facilitated thus passing information and also I was educating myself.” ***Marie Annette Ernesta, Facilitator Media***



### **Conclusions and recommendations:**

The one week course was felt by many as too short; participants felt that there were modules that needed more time than the other. For example the making your own media module: most of the participants came from the NGO sector, Parents with Hope, Alliance for Solidarity For Family, Nurses Association of the Republic of Seychelles, ACCESS- promoting responsible citizens, Campaign for Awareness Resilience and Education, CARITAS from the Roman Catholic Church, Africa Friendship Association and Liaison Unit for Non Government Organisations. It was felt that they needed to make their own media to disseminate information and their activities because media rarely pay attention to NGO's.

The most important event is the creation of the Media Action Group which will act as watchdog on the local media however the Terms of Reference for the group which Gem Plus will chair and will consist of individuals as well as NGO's mainly Parents with Hope, ASFF, NARS, ACCESS, CARE, CARITAS, AFA and Lungos.

The course is very worthwhile and it is recommended that it should be conducted continuously so that a lot of people can benefit from it. But still there are doubts: it is felt even though people are becoming media literate there's still uncertainty on how far media literate people can go and work as the state still has a strong hold and control on the only National broadcasting media and the national daily paper.

The tool kit was welcomed but facilitators thought that giving the whole module to participants was not necessary; they would seldom read the whole thing. It was felt that giving out photocopies of relevant topics would have been better. Also it was decided that Seychelles must develop more case studies, the ones given, it was felt were not enough. Facilitators will have to sit down and organize more local case studies.

It was also felt that field visits to media houses would have added more strength to the course.

Module	Topic	Date	Facilitator	No. of participants	Outputs/Outcomes
One	What is Media Literacy	13 October	Sharon Thelemaque	18	Participants have a clear understanding of what is meant by media literacy.  Participants clear on the objectives of the course
Two	Where are women and men in the news	13 October	Jacques Kouï	18	Short class monitoring exercise showing the representation of women and men in the news
Three	What the Media says about women and men	14 October	Jacques Kouï	18	Understanding the concept of stereotyping What I meant by Gender aware, Gender blind, subtle and blatant stereotypes.  Participants able to identify gender stereotypes in media
Four	Visual Literacy	14 October	Jacques Matombe	18	-Ability to read meaning in messages Different definitions of beauty discussed.
Five	Counting if voices count	15 October	Michel Rosalie	18	- Media monitoring skills: - quantitative (i.e. counting) - qualitative (i.e. use of language) - Monitoring an: event, specific theme, or specific genre

<b>Module</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>
Six	What do you and I want	15 October	Michel Rosalie and Ms	18	Research findings from participants' audience surveys.
Seven	Making your voice count	16 October	Marie Annette Ernesta	18	A letter written to the Editor
Eight	Holding the Media Accountable	17 October	Marie Annette Ernesta, Jacques Kouï and Jean Claude	18	Located regulatory authorities in Seychelles
Nine	Making your own media	16 October	Jean Claude Mr. Blessing	18	Produced an HIV and AIDS poster Participants introduced to IT.
Ten	Making the media work for you	16 October	Marie Annette Ernesta	18	Different strategies of working with the media developed.  Participants understand operations of media better.