

I. POLICY AND RESEARCH

Research on gender in the media in the SADC region is patchy and, at present, mostly emanates from South Africa. Systematic research on gender in the media in South Africa has been a critical tool in putting pressure on media regulatory authorities, media managers and gate-keepers, and even on advertisers, to start taking gender seriously. GL recognised at the outset that similar research is required in other Southern African countries, and at a region-wide level, to raise consciousness about the issue, as well as effectively monitor progress in the future.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Gender and Media Handbook: With support from the EU CWCI Fund GL convened a workshop of media and gender activists in February 2001 that led to the book: *Whose News, Whose Views: A Gender and Media Handbook for Southern Africa Media*. GL and its GEM partners launched the handbook on World Press Freedom Day in May 2001 at a gathering of editors to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration on media freedom in Africa.

“Our first meeting with Gender Links at World Press Freedom Day and commemoration of MISA’s tenth anniversary in 2001 was volatile. Whilst listening attentively to the GL presentation I was shocked to see our controversial lead, “Have you had sex with this lady?” on a screen. My question was whether it would have been news if the headline had been “Have you had sex with this man?”

This was the beginning of a firm partnership with Gender Links. The training materials from this organisation have played a major role in our editorial content especially with regard to gender issues.

As a human-interest newspaper, we did a lot of coverage on women since they are the most disadvantaged. However, thanks to Gender Links we are more sensitive to the way we portray women and we believe that Gender Links is one of the best things to happen to media over the past few years. They practice the buzz, deeds, not words which is what we all need these days. Their workshops come up with usable training tools that are a must for every newsroom.”

Beata Kasale
Publisher
The Voice newspaper, Botswana

“The Gender and Media Handbook that you distributed at the SAM - TRAN Annual General Meeting in Johannesburg has been a tremendous handbook for most of our journalists and in particular our female writer who saw it as part of an effort to educate their counterparts in the newsroom. Wish you could come up with such publications on a regular basis. It was an excellent effort.”

Farayi Munyuki,
Manager: Editorial Services,
Namibia Press Agency

Outreach: With support from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), the handbook has been launched in South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Mauritius, Lesotho, and Botswana. The handbook has also been used to conduct on-site training for several media houses on request. GL has since been approached by the NSJ Trust to translate the handbook into Portuguese and by MISA to reprint 1000 copies of the handbook and distribute this in its media advocacy kit to mainstream media around the region. The handbook has also been distributed via SAM-TRAN, and in virtually all GL’s training workshops.

Broadcast legislation: In early 2001, GL joined with Women’s Net and two independent contractors to successfully bid for a project commissioned by the Department of Communications in South Africa on engendering broadcast legislation. This department is using this research to review its policies and legislation.

MISA Gender Policy and Action Plan: At the request of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) GL facilitated a workshop to devise a gender policy and action plan for the region’s main advocacy and lobbying network on issues of media freedom. This led to the drafting of a gender policy and action plan by MISA.

Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS): As a follow through GL, in partnership with MISA, and twenty institutional partners in twelve countries conducted the first ever regional baseline study on gender in the editorial content of the media. This groundbreaking study involved the monitoring of over 25 000 news items in September 2002. It served to build capacity in monitoring the media from a gender perspective, and is now being used as an advocacy tool. The regional overview report was launched at the CSW in New York and in Johannesburg in events linked to 8 March - International Women's Day. National chapters of MISA launched country reports at events linked to World Press Freedom Day on 3 May.



Pauliina Shilongo, PON with the Namibia GMBS

In the remainder of 2003 GL and MISA will conduct follow up workshops at country level that will each yield national action plans on gender and the media. These workshops will also help to strengthen the Southern African Gender and Media Network (see later discussion) that will be held together through GL's Electronic Gender and Media Network (E-GEM). A regional Gender and Media Summit planned for mid 2004 will serve as an important accountability forum for the action plans. GL and MISA intend to repeat the baseline study in five year's time, as it is a critical tool for measuring progress towards achieving gender equality in and through the media.

GL and MISA participated in consultations for the third Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) that will take place in 2005 (ten years after the Fourth World Conference on Women) and will anchor the monitoring for this in Southern Africa. The third GMMP is borrowing several ideas from the GMBS, including producing regional and country-specific reports and pamphlets, qualitative as well as quantitative monitoring.

The UN Expert Meeting: In November 2002, GL participated, at the request of the UN Secretary General, in an expert group meeting on gender and the media to help prepare for the CSW that focused in 2003 on gender and the media as well as gender violence. GL and MISA launched the GMBS internationally at this forum and presented a case study on the Sixteen Days of Peace as an example of how the media can contribute to ending gender violence.



If you don't count it, it doesn't count

By Pat Made*



It's no secret that self-reflection and self-critique is not the media's strong suit. The media zooms the largest lens on every institution in society to ensure participatory governance and accountability to the public. But the media seldom checks itself.

Last September, researchers in twelve Southern African countries set out to find "who determines what is news" as well as "who makes the news". At a mere glance and through daily media consumption, it was obvious that women and men are not equal in news content. But approaching media managers with assumptions can be risky, since often their retort is: "prove it".

Doing so became one of the most comprehensive content analyses on gender in the news media ever done in the world. Some 25,110 news items in the public and private, print and broadcast media were monitored, counted and analysed in September 2002.

Researchers, representing some 20 organizations throughout Southern Africa, were talking, breathing and sleeping news as they conducted the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS). The Media Monitoring Project (MMP) of South Africa skilfully trained and guided all concerned. At the end of a one-week training in Johannesburg last July, the researchers returned to their countries armed with coding sheets, databases, and more refined skills to analyse media content for where women and men are in the news, and not just the media's coverage of women.

The study shows that equality between women and men in editorial content, and in the newsrooms throughout Southern Africa is still a dream. The starkest finding is that women, who constitute 52 percent of the population, only account for 17 percent of the known news sources. This statistic clearly shows that in the public and private media, freedom of expression is only for men.

Men are also the majority of the print and electronic presenters and journalists. So, what the public reads, sees and listens to daily in the news is not only told through the voices and perspectives of men, it is written and reported by them too.

Given these and other significant findings from the GMBS data, the national chapters of MISA, media women's organizations, unions of journalists, training institutions, media watch groups and various other civic society groups are now well armed with the 'proof' needed to work with the media to mainstream gender into its editorial policies and news content. An array of activities will take place in the 12 countries to build media literacy on gender in the media and to work with media managers to put media principles into action, or quite simply, to begin to "walk what they talk".

(* Pat Made, a GL board member, is an independent media trainer who served as team leader for the Zimbabwe GMBS and was one of three editors of the GMBS reports).



GMBS training workshop, August 2002

E-GEM: GL is in the process of establishing a gender and media electronic network that will bring together all those interested in this area of work in Southern Africa, and/ or have been involved in GL workshops, consultations, symposia etc. The network will have an electronic bulletin board, alert service, as well as moderated discussions. GL will produce a fortnightly electronic newsletter on its work for distribution to all our partners.

Into the future: GL and IT

By Lindiwe Nkutha*



Since the beginning of time, women and men have sought ways to communicate with one another. The advent of information and communication technologies (ICT) has afforded human kind the opportunity to expand communication beyond the sharing of thoughts and feelings, and has opened up chances for us to see into each other's worlds and circumstances without us being physically present.

The time lag between the conception of a thought and the sharing of that thought across rooms, towns and countries has been reduced to how quickly that thought can be typed and e-mailed. The Internet has placed at our fingertips infinite amounts of information, through linked up "libraries" the world over.

During the year under review GL helped to establish Gender and Media (GEM) Networks in six of the countries in the SADC region that we have conducted training. It is our belief that the sustainability of these networks as a coherent whole of the region's journalists and communicators committed to gender sensitive reporting will - in very practical ways - be aided by ICT's. This belief is reinforced by the overwhelming enthusiasm with which the on - line training on covering gender violence conducted during the

Sixteen Days of Peace was received. Further reinforcing this belief is the feedback we constantly receive from the GEM networks themselves on what they want to see on our website. It is this feedback that we took into account when we were reshaping our own website to meet the needs of our users.

Gender Links as an organisation at the cutting edge of communication seeks to position ourselves, and those whom we work with, to take full advantage of ICT's.

We are fully aware of problems, such as the lack of connectivity and low computer literacy rates in the region. But this is precisely why in 2002 we sought to integrate e-mail and Internet literacy into all our training. How much we can get out of ICTS depends on how best we understand this tool. We at GL are committed to training that enables and encourages fresh, new ideas that are gender sensitive and have a place in the information society.

(*Lindiwe Nkutha, GL IT Manager.)

(Visit us at: www.genderlinks.org.za)

The Southern African Gender and Media Network

The Southern African Gender and Media (GEM) Network has its roots in a recommendation made by the first regional gender violence training workshop that GL conducted in Lesotho. Since then, with support from OSISA, GL has assisted in setting up GEM networks in Mauritius, Seychelles, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia. The importance of these Networks and the valuable work they are carrying out is illustrated in the following letter from the Chair of the Zambian network, ZAMWATCH:



Times of Zambia
P.O Box 70069
Ndola
5 June 2003
c_chisala@yahoo.com

Hi Colleen

I have just written to update you on some of the things that have been happening here. When I returned to Zambia from the GL HIV/AIDS Training of Trainer workshop in Botswana and planning with MISA for the launch of the baseline study, I immediately had audience with the Editor-In Chief/Managing Director and the Production Editor and explained to them what the GMBS is all about and what we can do as a newspaper to correct some of the gender gaps the survey unearthed. I also gave them a copy each of the regional and national reports, including the summary.

The outcome was amazing. Both the Editor-In Chief and the Production Manager urged me to hold discussions with staff at Ndola, which is the head office and help them understand the issues contained in the GMBS. I was greatly inspired by this response. But the response from my workmates has even been more encouraging. Now, reporters and sub-editors are individually inviting me to discuss some stories, especially those that are gender-related. They are also individually inviting me to explain some information in the GMBS, especially the analysis (graphs and charts).

We are now holding lively discussions on the gender dimensions of selected stories once or twice a week. But the most exciting is the fact that the editors have resolved to give gender-related stories, especially gender-based violence, more prominence than ever before. What I enclose in this envelope are the immediate results of this new attitude by our editors and reporters. Although the stories lack analysis due to lack of training, at least they are being given the seriousness they deserve.

I am working with other journalists and NGO's to lobby for the passing of a law that will not allow bail for sexual offences. We are happy that cabinet ministers are now backing our crusade.

Yours sincerely
Charles Chisala
ZAMWATCH

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- ✓ **National Action Plans:** With support from OSISA, GL and MISA will jointly facilitate National Action Planning workshops based on the GMBS from June – August 2003.
- ✓ **The Gender and Media Summit,** on an agreed date in 2004, will serve as an accountability forum for these national action plans.
- ✓ **Gender policies:** The work undertaken with media houses and media training institutions, and especially the assistance rendered to MISA in developing a gender strategy, underscores the importance of “cementing” interventions with gender policies designed and adopted by the institutions themselves. GL will seek to run at least one pilot project each year with a media house, and another with a media training institution, for designing and adopting a gender policy. In 2003/2004, GL will continue its gender mainstreaming projects with ZAMCOM and the PON (see training) and will begin gender- mainstreaming projects with the Times of Zambia and Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. These projects are supported by FES. GL will also maintain a small capacity to respond to requests for assistance by media houses.
- ✓ **The Southern African Gender and Media Network:** GL will concentrate a major part of its efforts in 2003/2004 in building the GEM Network. This will comprise the country chapters of GEM, where these have been established, coalitions of groups working on gender and the media in bigger countries like Zimbabwe and South Africa, and affiliated members.
- ✓ **E-GEM:** Hivos has provided GL with funding to 2004 for the management and operation of E-GEM, a key tool for servicing and growing the Southern African Gender and Media Network.



**GMBS researchers
Keabonye
Ntsabane, Crosbey
Mwanza and
Edward Chitsulo**