

# ‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

## **Module 5: How to gather evidence to support advocacy**

This module identifies different ways that activists can undertake research on the media to gather facts with which they can engage the media when conducting advocacy. Approaches to gathering evidence include media monitoring, audience research and conducting a gender audit of the media.

## Module 5: How to gather evidence to support advocacy

The media operates by gathering and reporting facts. Gender and media activists therefore **must also work with facts when engaging with the media**. There are different ways that activists can do research on the media to gather these facts, several of which are discussed in this module.

### 1. Media monitoring

Monitoring the media is an effective tool for gender and media advocacy. It is a systematic surveillance of media performance for the purpose of its description and critical evaluation. Mostly it generates knowledge about the media by focusing on content. The findings of monitoring can be documented in short reports and/or fact sheets. These can be used to raise awareness among journalists, editors and media managers, as well as advertisers, for the development of gender and media advocacy campaigns and for identifying areas where policy, codes and guidelines need to be developed.

The objectives of monitoring can differ. Analysis may be interpretative or quantitative; it may be a special 'case study'; it may focus on the language or narrative of news stories; the duration of analysis may be short or long; it can include one medium and single country or it may be comparative.<sup>1</sup> Trends and changes, as well as media employment patterns also can be monitored.

Monitoring how often women are quoted as primary sources is an example of quantitative monitoring. Qualitative monitoring would analyze gender biases, stereotypes, the change of value judgment, perceptions and attitudes.

#### Tips on how to present media monitoring findings

- Present findings to the change agents within the media (media management and media policymakers).
- Write articles to the media supported by the findings
- Distribute the recommendations widely and adopt a strategic lobby campaign for the relevant media houses to implement them.
- If the media interviews you about your gender and media issues of concern, extend the discussion to some on the spot media monitoring (*use the **see-saw** **fast** **the** **at** **illustrate** **the** **as** **sources** **use** **the** **fast** **the***)

<sup>1</sup> S. Milivojevic, Media Monitoring Manual, Media Diversity Institute & Samizdat B92, 2003

Source: Getting Smart – Strategic Communications for Gender Activists in Southern Africa, Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, editors, published by Gender Links and Women’s Media Watch, 2002

## Content analysis

This is a type of research that is used to understand and accurately describe the actual content of different messages and images in the media. This form of analysis is concerned with how often certain messages occur in the media. For example, how many times women or men feature in political news stories, or how many times women of different ages appear in adverts?

Content analyses can be done on: advertisements, TV/print/radio news, films, videos, magazines, soap operas, music lyrics, music videos, TV series, etc.

How to do a content analysis?<sup>2</sup>

- Select the sample to be examined (e.g. Newspaper or TV ads)
- Decide on content and features to be examined
- Decide on units (details of content, i.e. age, sex, etc.) to be examined
- Decide on time frame (i.e. period of time for analysis)
- Develop recording sheets (local media trainers and researchers can assist you with developing sheets and tools that are easy to use)
- Record your observations
- Analyze the data

The following are examined when doing a content analysis on some form of media:

- Roles and actions
- Physical features
- Psychological features (e.g. happy facial expression)<sup>3</sup>

## Quantitative Monitoring Tool

Here is one example of a tool that can be used for quantitative media monitoring. The GMMP tool (WACC London), also is available to gender and media activists on <http://www.whomakesthenews.org>

Use the day’s newspapers, or a video or tape recording of a recent news cast. Count the number of women and the number of men you see, and note what women and men are doing. Fill in the information in the table below and discuss.

<sup>2</sup> Whose Perspective? A guide to gender-sensitive analysis of the media, Women’s Media Watch Jamaica, 1998

<sup>3</sup> Whose Perspective? A guide to gender-sensitive analysis of the media, Women’s Media Watch Jamaica, 1998

Publication	%Images of women	Roles depicted	% Images of Men	Roles depicted

The same exercise can be done to determine women as sources. This is more detailed requiring for the print media, that you read each story and identify where possible the sex of the source (the person quoted directly or indirectly) in the story. You can also monitor the media to determine the sex of the sources on issues such as gender violence, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, etc.

**Box Ten: What to look for when monitoring media images**

Images that appear in the media also can be monitored for gender, as well as other characteristics, that help activists to establish patterns on how women and men are portrayed in the media. When monitoring images, look for:

- Age
- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Socio-economic group
- Location/Setting; rural, urban, inner-city
- Physical appearances
- Activity
- Occupation
- Situation/Place/Context
- Family Role/Family Status
- Personality Traits

Source: Whose Perspective? A Guide to Gender-Sensitive Analysis of the Media, Women’s Media Watch, Jamaica, 1998

**Qualitative media monitoring**

**Qualitative monitoring** helps to analyze the gender biases and prejudices that appear in the media through value judgments, perceptions and attitudes that are communicated through the language, placement of stories, sources chosen, focus of the story, etc.

Qualitative monitoring also helps to reveal how the media portrays the power relations between women and men, i.e., the position of women and men in the division of resources and responsibilities, benefits and rights, power and privilege. The use of gender relations as an analytical category shifts the focus from viewing women in isolation from men.<sup>4</sup> A detailed set of questions to guide a more qualitative analysis of the media is provided below.

<sup>4</sup> Whose Perspective? A guide to gender-sensitive analysis of the media, Women’s Media Watch Jamaica, 1998

**Activity! Key questions for spotting gender relations in the media's content**

1. Are women seen in positions of power or are they seen in low status activities?
2. Are women and men seen actively asserting themselves in activities associated with power?
3. Who is seen more frequently providing information? Giving speeches?  
What is the media's role in perpetuating the low status given to women's activities?
4. Are the roles of women and men active or passive?
5. Are their activities traditional or non-traditional?
- 6) What is the sex of the spokesperson or voice of authority?<sup>5</sup>

Use newspaper articles or watch television news broadcasts and answer the questions above to see how gender power relations are represented in the media.

**Qualitative Monitoring – Key Questions**

The following set of questions around the gender and media issues of representation, portrayal, roles, images, news and treatment of violence, are guides to critiquing the media qualitatively. Remember, quantitative and qualitative monitoring combined can provide a rich resource of material to support gender and media advocacy work and to build effective campaigns.

**Beauty Ideals**

- How important is the woman's physical appearance? Is it relevant to the situation, to the activity? To the total media message?
- Who do we not see or hear about in the media? (the disabled, the aged, rural, and persons whom society does not consider to be beautiful?)
- Are women portrayed in the media like the women in your community, workplace and environment? Are they like women you know?
- Do you see any link between how the media shows women and how you see yourself, and how society treats you?

**The Commodity/The Decoration**

- Is the woman in the media product used to get the attention of the audience?
- Even though the woman is fully clothed, is she still a decoration?
- How often do we see a man resting on cars, mattresses, furniture or draped over tires?

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<sup>5</sup> Whose Perspective? A guide to gender-sensitive analysis of the media, Women's Media Watch Jamaica, 1998

### **Sexuality/The Sex Symbol**

- Do the media show women as sex objects for pleasure, consumption?
- How are men portrayed in relation to women?
- Is it implied that to be sexy and to attract attention, a woman or man has to be scantily clad?
- Does the woman in the media product have a sensual look? Is this relevant to the situation?

### **Gender Roles, Power and Relationships**

- What activities are women and men shown doing in the media?
- What activities are suggested as the ones men or women should do? Is the activity traditional or non-traditional?
- Does it build the women's self-esteem?
- Is the situation domestic? Public life? Community life?
- What is the relationship between the people in the image or story? Who controls whom? Who helps whom?
- Are women/men portrayed as active? Passive? Weak? Strong? Dominant? In control?
- Who is the main character or informant in the ad, news, feature, soaps, and sitcom?
- Whose views hold sway?

### **Treatment of Violence**

- Who are the perpetrators of violence? Women? Men? Heroes? Good guys? Bad guys?
- Are the perpetrators of violence punished or rewarded?
- Can you identify a link between how violence is reported and the gender of the reporter?
- How do the media show people resolving conflicts?
- How are rapes and assaults reported in the media? Are these reports sensationalized or trivialized? Sensitive or unbiased? Are the victims ridiculed or blamed?
- How are violent crimes against women treated in entertainment (films videos)? Is the violence excessive?

Source: adapted from *Whose Perspective? A guide to gender-sensitive analysis of the media*, published by Women's Media Watch Jamaica, 1998

A combined approach of quantitative and qualitative monitoring sheds light on whether the media give fair and equal space and time to women's and men's voices; if women and men are consulted across the racial and class spectrum; if the reports carry

adequate context and balance; and if the reporting is analytical<sup>6</sup> (and more issue-based as opposed to reporting only on an event).

## 2. Audience Research - What does the audience think?

Audience research adds credibility to any form of media research as it adds the public's interpretation of media messages and provides insight on how women and men engage with the news. This is important because often one of the main reasons media professionals give when presented with examples of sensational articles that portray women as sex objects or which focus on women as victims of crime, for example, is the retort that 'this is what the public wants'.

Therefore, gender and media activists should seek out the views and perspectives of others who are not activists to demonstrate to the media that these images and types of stories may not be what the public wants.

### Audience Survey

In many developing regions, media institutions have little capacity or resources to conduct audience surveys. Therefore, editors and journalists often produce editorial content based on the journalistic notions of what is news, which can be subjectively influenced. Again, using local expertise in media training institutions, universities, a questionnaire can be developed and audiences selected to gather information and views across age, sex, education, location, etc.

### Box Eleven: My views on the news! The Southern African Gender and Media Audience Study

In 2004 and 2005, 12 countries in Southern Africa participated in a Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS), which was the sequel to the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) in 2002 and published in 2003.

Conducted by Gender Links (GL), a gender and media NGO, in partnership with universities and media advocacy organizations in the region, the audience researched focused on how women and men interact with the news, while the GMBS looked at gender in editorial content.

The specific research questions were:

*What aspects of the news do you interact with?  
 Which of these aspects of the news do you use to discuss the news?  
 What impact do these aspects have on these news consumers?*

<sup>6</sup> Getting SMART, strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, editors, published by Gender Links and Women's Media Watch South Africa, 2002

What aspects of the research will be used for gender and media advocacy with the media based on the assumption that the audience's voice is a strong motivator for media change?

The findings of the research will be used for gender and media advocacy with the media based on the assumption that the audience's voice is a strong motivator for media change.

For more information about the audience research and how it was done, see [www.genderlinks.org.za](http://www.genderlinks.org.za).

**Focus Groups:** These are carefully planned discussions to get people's views and perceptions on a defined area of interest. For example, if you want to focus a campaign around the media's coverage of gender violence, a focus group can be put together to explore their perceptions and views on how women and men are represented in news stories on gender violence.

The group can be comprised of 6 -10 people selected from the intended audience and sharing a common characteristic, such as age, sex, educational background, religion or something directly related to the topic (a total of about 200 well-selected people will be effective); moderators and note-takers.<sup>7</sup>

Focused group discussions are used for:

- Probing into people's feelings, opinions, and perceptions of a topic or issue
- Indicating the range of a community's beliefs, ideas and opinions
- Gaining baseline information
- Verifying and obtaining more in-depth details about information collected for an advocacy program
- Designing question guides for individual interviews and questions for structured interview schedules
- Solving specific problems
- Evaluating programs<sup>8</sup>
- Testing campaign messages

Focus groups are often rich, produce information quickly, gather non-verbal reactions to specific items, allow for the participation of those who cannot read and write and they are flexible. However, results cannot be extended to a larger community and results might be biased due to group pressure or due to what is considered socially acceptable. Therefore the key to good focus groups is a good moderator and carefully selected participants.

<sup>7</sup> Making a Difference, Strategic Communications to End Violence Against Women, United Nations Development Fund for Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, 2003

<sup>8</sup> Making a Difference, Strategic Communications to End Violence Against Women, United Nations Development Fund for Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, 2003



### 3. Gender Audit of the Media

Audits, methodical examinations and reviews using key questions and guidelines, can yield a wealth of information about the internal workings of a media institution and perhaps shed light on why gender biases, prejudices and stereotypes appear in editorial and advertising content. This form of research can best be translated into strategies for more one-on-one engagement with individual media houses that activists may want to target for change. Information obtained from an audit should not be translated into an open campaign to shame a media institution.

For example, a gender audit of media policies may show that a newsroom has instituted gender-sensitive language guidelines for editors and reporters to follow (opportunity), but there is no overall gender editorial policy in place (gap). The language guidelines therefore can be used as the entry point in a gender and media strategy for a gender editorial policy to be developed and implemented.

This type of research depends on a group taking the time to establish a trusted relationship with a media institution, whereby the media managers request or work with the gender and media advocacy group to gather information to change how they do their work.

A sample checklist for conducting a gender and media audit of a media institution is available in module 8 (How to transform the media through policy)



# ‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

## **Module 6: How to Develop an Advocacy Campaign**

This module outlines strategies that can be used for developing gender and media advocacy campaigns (planning, setting goals and objectives). It includes a guide that can be used to plan a gender and media advocacy campaign.

## Module 6: How to Develop an Advocacy Campaign

### What you want to do

If you want to make an impact with any gender and media advocacy strategy or campaign, planning is a crucial first step. When initiating an advocacy activity, it is important to make strategic choices about where to direct your energies and to look for strategic entry points.<sup>1</sup>

Planning can help activists to:

- Use resources (often limited) efficiently
- Minimize the element of surprise
- Build commitment and a cohesive vision among those involved in advocacy to speak with a strong and united voice
- Help to focus energies.

### Key questions for advocacy planning

- What aspects of gender and the media will be tackled and why?
- How do you ensure that the aspects identified are also the priorities of your primary audience?
- Who are you targeting?
- What change do you want to see?
- Are you best placed to work on this, and if so who else is working in this area?
- Are you duplicating efforts or adding value?
- How can you add value?<sup>2</sup>

Advocacy planning is defined as the development of the following<sup>3</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> An Advocacy Guide for Feminists, Young Women and Leadership, Awid, No. 1, December 2003

<sup>2</sup> Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, Getting Smart, strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, published by Gender Links and Women's Media Watch, 2002

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation by Lisa VeneKlasen and Valerie Miller quoted in the Handbook on Advocacy Strategy and Technique Development, edited by Flor Caagusan, Institute for Popular Democracy, Manila Philippines

**An overall change strategy** – a long-term plan that embodies your vision, and reflects where you are, where you want to go, and how you get there.

**A campaign** – a medium-term plan with activities aimed at influencing the policy environment and public opinion. The activities are intended to achieve some of your advocacy strategy objectives.

**Tactics, actions or activities** – short-term activities within a larger change strategy, designated for a specific moment or opportunity. These could include research and media work to shape the campaign and capture the attention of people in power in relation to your issue.

**Impact assessment** – continuous monitoring through the advocacy campaign in order to adjust, modify or change the plans according to the situation or information that comes along the way.

## 2. Know what you want to achieve

An advocacy campaign should begin with well-defined and measurable goals and objectives.

- A **goal** is defined as a forward-looking and ambitious statement of what is to be achieved over the long-term, e.g. reducing the objectification of women as sex objects in the media.
- An **objective** is an incremental and realistic step towards achieving the goal, e.g. developing gender portrayal guidelines for the media.

The objective must specify the changes to be brought about and should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).<sup>4</sup>

Several questions that can help to create SMART objectives include:

- Do qualitative or quantitative data exist to show that reaching the objective will improve the situation?
- Is the objective achievable, even with opposition?
- Will the objectives gain the support of many people? Do people care about the goal/objective deeply enough to take action?
- Will you be able to raise money or other resources to support your work on the goal/objective?
- Can you clearly identify the main audiences? What are their names or positions?
- Is the goal/objective easy to understand?

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<sup>4</sup> Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

- Do you have the necessary alliances with key individuals or organizations to reach your objective? How will the objective help to build alliances with other NGOs, leaders and audiences/stakeholders?
- Will working on the objective give people opportunities to learn about and become involved with the decision-making process?<sup>5</sup>

### Gender and Media Advocacy in Practice! Planning and Setting Goals

To illustrate how the information on planning and setting goals can be put into practice, let us take the following example.

#### *What's the issue?*

You are a group concerned about the issue of gender violence, and believe that the media does not cover this issue often, and when it does cover stories on gender violence, they are usually sensational, portray women as victims or as having provoked the violence perpetrated against them ( in stories of sexual violence, some media may allude to the woman's appearance, how she was dressed, or of her doing something which is considered 'not appropriate' in terms of gender stereotypes like drinking alone in a bar, for example). Or, your local airwaves are filled with songs which contain lyrics which perpetuate violence against women and girls blasting daily on the radio.

In deciding how to approach the media on this issue, as a group you decide to build a campaign on gender violence in the media.

#### *What is the angle of the campaign?*

Gender violence in the media can be tackled from several angles. A few that could be considered in a gender and media campaign on this issue include among others:

- The playing on radio of popular music (either foreign or locally-produced songs) that contains lyrics and language that denigrates women and condones and perpetuate violence against them
- Gender violence is not considered a newsworthy topic for the media and is seldom reported on as an issue which is central to the protection of women's human rights
- Women only make news when they have been raped, beaten or abused by a partner

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from SARA/ED: An Introduction to Advocacy Training Guide cited in Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

In designing your campaign at the planning stage, you choose one angle to focus on in order to be able to develop clear objectives, and to ensure that you engage with the media in a dialogue and process to bring change.

So, for our example, the **focus** of the campaign is: **to improve the quantity and quality of coverage on gender violence in the media.**

*What is the aim of the campaign?*

Given our focus, the **goal** is to shift the media's coverage of gender violence from that of a sensational news event to an issue of human rights and justice.

*What is the objective of the campaign?*

**Aim** **Objective** To improve the quantity and quality of coverage on gender violence in the media

**Key objectives:** There could be three objectives to reach the overall objective:

- To train journalists on how to report on gender violence
- To develop guidelines for the media on how to report on gender violence
- To illustrate to editors and journalists the gaps and gender biases in media reports on gender-based violence

In short good planning entails:

- Identifying the media house(s) or companies that you wish to lobby.
- Deciding on what method will be used (i.e. telephone calls, letters/faxes/e-mails or face-to-face meetings)
- Preparing your position
- Mobilizing a network of supportive organizations, groups and individuals. Establishing a relationship with media regulatory bodies<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Whose perspective? A guide to gender-sensitive analysis of the media, Women's Media Watch Jamaica, 1998

## Advocacy Planning Tool

The following guide can be used to plan a gender and media advocacy campaign. Remember, planning is the first and an important step in campaign building.

<b>Key Issues for Planning</b>	
What is the problem and what are its causes and solution(s)?	Use the gender and media monitoring, content analysis, situation analysis and/or research tools to identify the problem and get concrete data and specific media examples
What are your goals and objectives?	A goal is a long-term ambition which will be realized through a combination of advocacy and practical activities. An objective is a more immediate ambition and should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART)
What are the changes you are trying to bring about through your advocacy campaign ( e.g. Awareness, knowledge, attitude or behavioral changes which can influence how journalists do their work, for example, believing that women are experts on issues and should be accessed as sources , the introduction of missing gender editorial policies, etc)	Another way of thinking about this is: What will be different as a result of the advocacy?
What indicators will you use to track progress towards results?	Think about the different sorts of progress you want to keep track of throughout the life of the strategy, e.g. of the process, of the impact and outcomes of your strategy, and of the change in context (which might influence whether you achieve your objective). Identify what systems you will use to collect and analyze your indicators.
Who are your key stakeholders?	What do they know? How are they influenced? How do they make decisions? What information do they need?
Who are your primary stakeholders? How have they been involved in designing the goals, objectives, results and indicators of your strategy? Who are your secondary stakeholders and significant others?	<b>Key stakeholders</b> include those who have the power to effect change, but who may need to be persuaded to act; <b>secondary stakeholders</b> include groups whose support can be rallied, <b>primary stakeholders</b> are those who will benefit from the changes being made, and <b>significant others</b> include target groups

	<p>within the media industry who might oppose the strategy. Taking the time to think through how you will work with and influence each stakeholder increases the chances for success.</p>
<p>What research do you need to carry out to test assumptions about knowledge, attitudes, etc.</p>	<p>How will you reach a representative sample of your target audience, and what techniques will you use to find out their views about the issues? How do they access information on the topic now?</p>
<p>What are the key messages that you need to communicate to each group of stakeholders to bring about the desired change (e.g. Increase their knowledge, change media practices, etc)?</p>	<p>Use focus groups with media practitioners and other kinds of media research to find out what is happening and why and target your messages accordingly.</p>
<p>What communications products (e.g. Popular versions of research findings, fact sheets), channels (face-to-face communications, seminars, the media) and activities (media literacy with targeted consumers) are most appropriate for your key stakeholders?</p>	<p>You will probably need to influence many people to do different things at the same time. Be explicit about whom you're targeting to do what; find out about each group and target them with appropriate messages, and products conveyed through appropriate channels. Think also about who is communicating, involve those who have credibility/influence with key stakeholders.</p>
<p>What will be the timing/work plan for your advocacy strategy/campaign? What are the key dates/occasions for release of messages and materials?</p>	<p>It's useful to do a timeline when planning your strategy so that deadlines are met and tasks distributed in a fair and effective manner. National, regional or international commemorations may serve as useful occasions to release and distribute materials.</p>
<p>What process documentation systems will you use or create to capture the process and results? How will you package and disseminate this information and knowledge to anticipated audiences?</p>	<p>Think about what systems already exist for capturing and sharing this information, e.g. stakeholders meetings, media alert systems, etc. Can they be used to convey information about process and results? Who needs to know the information you have and what information do you have that is useful? This should be linked to the indicators.</p>
<p>How much will you need to budget for your advocacy strategy and what skills and expertise are necessary?</p>	<p>It is important to be realistic and to choose method consistent with the resource that you have.</p>
<p>How will you assess and disseminate the impact of your strategy and the lessons learned from your experiences?</p>	<p>Think about how other organizations can benefit from your experiences.</p>



<p>How will you ensure sustainability of your advocacy strategy?</p>	<p>If you have successfully brought about changes you need to think about how to ensure that these continue once the original enthusiasm/conviction has died down. Who needs to sustain the intervention, and what communications approaches will be most effective? Media Watch Canada continues to lobby to ensure sex-role portrayal and other gender guidelines are enforced by the appropriate regulatory authority.</p>
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Source: adapted from Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

# ‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

## **Module 7: How to Create the Right Message for the Right Audience**

A message needs to be a carefully thought element of each piece of communication. In media relations, the message is what you tell in your interview or press release. This module outlines components of an advocacy message. It provides ‘how tos’ in writing press releases, producing a backgrounder for the media, preparing a media event, organizing a press conference, and giving a good interview.

## Module 7: How to Create the Right Message for the Right Audience

Message development is a direct, simple way of communicating the core objective of the campaign to the respective audiences. In gender and media advocacy, **one message does not fit all audiences**. Determining who the message is for and what you want the audience to do after receiving it are two important considerations for developing advocacy campaign messages.

Good messages are:

- Targeted for a specific group
- Focused on a specific problem
- Action-oriented
- Simple, to the point and attention grabbers
- Easy to understand – use local languages and common terms
- Attractive and interesting
- Prominently visible
- Repetitive
- Reinforced through the use of a combination of media (multimedia approach)<sup>1</sup>

Messages in gender and media advocacy can best be framed using the key media principles of **accuracy, fairness, balance and diversity, and fair representation**.

For example, the issue of the lack of women's access to expression in and through the media can be addressed in a gender and media campaign, for example, on 'missing views, missing voices'. The low percentage of women speaking on issues in the media can be related to the media principle of **balance and diversity**. If there are only men's voices, and those only of men in positions of power and formal authority as the sources of news, then the news is being reported on and told in a manner that does not reflect a diversity of views and a balance of opinions.

**Diversity and fair representation** also provide the framework for developing messages and campaigns on changing the gender stereotypes and portrayal of women in the media only as sex objects, objects of beauty, in domestic roles, or as only victims, among others. Gender stereotypes do not project women in all of their diverse roles in society.

Messages and slogans must also be related to appropriate media and channels through which they will be disseminated. The medium and the message are intimately connected. The following questions should be considered when choosing the most appropriate mediums and channels:

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<sup>1</sup> Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

- What is the purpose of what you are trying to do?
- Who are you trying to reach with your messages and how many people in each target group do you need to reach in order to meet your objectives?
- What is the source of information your target groups use most often and trust the most?
- What are the different messages you need to convey to cover all the important knowledge gaps and obstacles that were revealed during the target group research?<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Message in Advocacy

Messages are packages of information exchanged in the communications process. Clear, concise and understandable message is of crucial importance for effective communications. Crafting a powerful and clear message is of particular importance when campaigning for social change. In such cases message development has elements of a science. Here are the main rules on crafting effective and powerful messages:

- The message should be target-directed. In order to be heard, you have to talk to the target. Don't talk about your own problems. Try to put your issues in the context frame of your listeners' main concerns.
- The message should be relevant for the target audience – it should answer the question your audience asks: What is in it for me?
- The language used should be understandable to the target audience
- The media used should be the ones used by the target audience. Find out where your audience gets the news and go there with your message.
- The messenger should be trusted by the target audience. Think of celebrity spokespersons, academics, individuals or institutions appreciated by those you want to influence. For example, one could argue that men are more likely to influence behavior of other men, rather than feminist groups' spokespersons.
- Message must be based on research of target's public's perception, not on somebody's opinion about it. In order to be able to talk to the target, you should know the target.
- Our message should build on target's beliefs, not try to overturn them. Try to be inclusive and empathic.
- Message is not a slogan. Slogan is a powerful part of it, but message consists of other elements: policy proposal, validation, suggested action, the language used, context, timing, level from which the message is sent... The visuals such as logo, colors, design, etc –all together develop one message.
- You should stay on message (be focused) and repeat. The message should be heard more than once in order to create awareness.

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<sup>2</sup> Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

Ideally, an advocacy message should have **four components**:

- **Problem Statement:** What is the current state of affairs. The problem you want the society to pay attention to. The things that are wrong or could be improved. For example, the statistics from the GMMP 2005.
- **Relevance:** Why is it relevant for the target audience (in lobbying) and the wider society, family or nation (in media advocacy targeting public opinion). You have to prove that this problem needs to be on the agenda, that it is relatively important, compared with numerous other burning issues competing for the society's attention.
- **Policy proposal:** While the first two elements are enough for awareness raising campaigns, a message in an advocacy campaign should offer a solution. Training, new legislation, further development of ethical or professional codex, reporting guidelines, lists of women experts to be contacted as media sources in the future, etc.
- **Proposed action:** What those responsible should do; what civil society, families, citizens, volunteers, activists can do to press those responsible to act. Sign a petition! Come to the rally! Write to the editorial boards! Boycott the radio station! Join us in drafting reporting guidelines! Use women as news sources. Join our journalist training! Request review of professional codex, etc.

A message needs to be a carefully thought element of each piece of communication. In media relations, message is what you tell in your interview or press release. Before each media appearance you should decide what is its purpose and what is the message you want to convey. You should decide on three points you want to make and repeat by using different examples. Think of validation, policy proposal and action plan.

## 2. How to Write a Press Release

Here are the basic rules you should follow when preparing and sending out a press release:

- Write it only when you have the news that you want to offer fast to a big number of media
- Write it in the same format and structure as a news article. Often media will publish it as it is, without further editing.
- Write in third person. Example: a release issued by the MIS would say: MIS today announced a project to improve gender coverage in media.
- Have a catchy headline. Do not be legalistic – try to be intriguing.
- Use the pyramid form: the title and the first paragraph should tell the main news. Other important information is in the second, and a quote in the third paragraph. End with a blurb about the organization issuing the release.
- In the first paragraph, answer the five W questions: Who, What, When, Where, and Why/How?
- Add a quote by your organization's director, chief researcher, donor, or a respectable third party which validates the project
- Use double spacing and do not write more than two pages
- Enclose fact sheets and backgrounders for background, additional information
- Your release should have dateline, strong headline, and your contacts (name, phone, email) for those who would like to get further information or an interview
- Use simple, understandable language, not academic or bureaucratic jargon. Write in short sentences, similar to these we have here.
- After you send out the release, make a round of calls to the reporters. Ask if they got it, if they understand it, and if they need additional information. Do not ask if they will publish it.



###

**Notes for the editor:**

- For more information, please call or email Ruba Hatami on the above phones and email address
- Integral report and findings are available on the webpage [www.findmoreaboutus.com](http://www.findmoreaboutus.com)
- Our office can help you with arranging an interview with leading Jordanian experts in this field. Please contact Ruba Hatami.
- Free of rights photo material available to download from [www.findmoreaboutus.com](http://www.findmoreaboutus.com)



## 2. How to Produce a Backgrounder

Backgrounder is one of the most important media tools. In the time when competition for media space and attention is getting fierce, and when journalists have no time for research, furnishing them with carefully selected, organized and presented facts, figures, quotes and additional sources on a topic is becoming of crucial importance. Here are tips for writing effective fact sheets and backgrounders:

- A Fact Sheet/Backgrounder provides facts, quotes, figures, summaries of reports and speeches that give journalist background information about certain story/issue/theme.
- It helps the reporter to understand the issue, to see where the story is, and possibly, to write an article. Even if coverage is not an immediate result, backgrounders keep the journalists in the loop about the issue. They also decrease possibility for misinterpretation.
- A backgrounder increases the odds the story will come out with the angle you desire.
- You should have on-hand backgrounders about all main issues that your organization deals with, and prepare the new ones for special events and actions.
- Backgrounders should be updated regularly with new information, facts, and developments.
- Backgrounders could be issued independently, or could be attached as an expanded press release.
- Backgrounders are also referred to as Fact Sheets or Info Sheets. Fact Sheets, and frequently asked questions- . Policy Highlights, Quote List, Speech Highlights, Biography Sheet are different formats of backgrounders.

### Tips for writing backgrounders

- Although they can be written in a form of an article, backgrounders are more likely to attract a reporter's attention if they are brief, readable, and easy to grasp. Q&A format, bullets, and chronological approach are highly recommended. Best two or three, maximum five to six pages.
- Where possible, mention sources of the facts/statistics you used– to provide for credibility.
- Mention additional sources on the issue: literature, websites, film footage or photo material available, etc.
- Mention your name, telephone, fax and email for those who need additional information
- Distribute backgrounders in printed form and online.
- Produce them on a letterhead stationary, with contact information.

### 3. How to Prepare a Media Event

- Media events are a useful tool, and are an important part of a successful communication strategy.
- Media events, beyond news conferences or briefings, include regional visits, street fairs, open houses, the opening of a new facility or school, or any other event staged to attract media attention and promote a message.
- They may be focused around the beginning of the school year, the publication of an important document, submission or approval of a bill, or the release of a study.
- They generate news coverage and enable the organizers to set and control the agenda. To plan a successful event, view your event from a journalist's point of view. Decide on a news angle – the aspect that will make the event newsworthy and not just an exercise in self-promotion.

#### **Planning a media event:**

- If your event is extensive (an all day, all week, or all month event), it is most effective to establish a planning or coordinating committee involving key decision makers. The committee should be established well in advance of the event, and should develop a strategy to design, implement and monitor the event. The committee is responsible for ensuring that all the financial resources and personnel necessary to stage the event are available;
- Know what you want the event to communicate; know your message and prepare a news release communicating your message;
- Prepare a news advisory in advance of the event explaining the event to the media, and describing what they can and cannot cover;
- Select an easily accessible site which will enable all those interested to attend;
- Time the event to maximize media coverage (late morning hours are often the best for both television and newspapers), and make sure your event does not conflict with another media event;
- Make sure your event is visual and attractive for television; be creative and consider staging your story. A government official might take an exam to communicate the new matura; a government official might undergo a health examination to communicate the benefits of health reform; a government official might hold a discussion for the media with parents or children to discuss education reforms;
- Make it easy for journalists to cover your event; be accessible to them, provide them with a news release, assist them in obtaining interviews and in selecting a location from which to broadcast. Send your news release to journalists who cannot attend the event; they may just print the release.
- Always remember that good planning is your best insurance of a successful event, and that a well – planned event requires a good deal of work well in advance.

**If your event involves the public, and the participation of non governmental officials:**

- Select your participants or speakers carefully. Know what they will say; obtain their remarks in advance. When they can support your message with the media, help arrange media interviews for them.
- Encourage public attendance. Promote your event to the public most involved in the issue, and encourage their involvement. The Ministry of Education might involve teachers, schools, parents or students in an event; the Ministry of Health might involve doctors, nurses, patients or clinic personnel.
- Consider corporate sponsorship of the event to help defray expenses, perhaps allowing the corporate sponsor to produce souvenirs, such as T-shirts, caps, or key chains which promote the event and the corporation;
- Consider the establishment of contests – among journalists, school children or schools as a method to attract public involvement in the event; government officials or journalists could serve as judges; journalist involvement in the event as a participant almost always ensures media coverage;
- Consider hiring a well - known personality or media personality to participate in your event as emcee, moderator, or panelist. This can make your event more attractive for media coverage.

#### 4. How to Organize a Press Conference

- A press conference (news conference, media conference) is called when an organization has something newsworthy to tell to the media, and when more in-depth approach and discussion is needed then it possible to provide by sending out a press release.
- Press conference gives reporters a possibility to ask questions, get explanations, quotes, and photo opportunity.
- An invitation to the conference should be sent to reporters and desk editors a week ahead of it. Closer to the date – a day or two before it – a phone call can be made to remind the reporters on the event.
- You should organize press conference between 9 – 11 morning. Later than that is not good - reporters will not have time to file a story for the next day newspaper issue.
- Ideally, the conference will have several persons participating: the press officer who knows the reporters will open and facilitate it. One or two prominent persons should be present, who will give a 10-min statement each on the issue (project, release, donation, opening, or similar), after which the facilitator will give floor to the reporters to ask questions. All in all, ideally it will be finished in 45 min. After that individual interviews can be given.
- press kit is usually distributed at a conference, containing a press release, backgrounders, report, research results, fact sheets, list of experts, etc. Sometimes even filmed material or photo material is distributed. After the conference you should send the press kit by a messenger to those media outlets that have not had a representative at the conference.
- eporters like to say that press conference should scream for a headline – meaning there should be breaking news released on them. If a conference is called and there is no such news, journalists will not forget it - there is a chance that next time, even if you have breaking news, nobody will show up at the event. Exactly because of the proliferation of press conferences, media outlets often send beginners to cover them.
- If possible, media events should be organized instead of press conference. Yet, if one decides to organize a press conference, there area number of technical details to be taken care of. Here they are:

##### Press Conference Check List

- Location
- Accessible by public transportation
- Available parking space
- Exact address, phone and fax number
- Registration desk at the entrance, with a person greeting the reporters
- Translation booth if foreign reporters expected
- Site
- Are there enough electricity plugs for TV crews?
- Are the fuses strong enough?
- How many people can attend?

- Tables and chairs – number and position
- Platform for camera and photographers behind the reporters
- Check the light, heating
- Is there a photocopy machine available?
- A desk with press kits
- Table for the participants – seating arrangements
- Glasses with water on the participants' table
- Where do the participants enter from and where do they leave?
- Is there a separate room for individual interviews?
- Where is the toilet?
- Audio-Visuals
- Dropdown with the organization-action logo above the participants
- Projectors – transparencies, video, LCD
- Computers, laptops, monitors - platform – Windows or other?
- Microphones for participants, and portable microphone for floor questions
- Loudspeakers
- Recording – audio, video, photographer?

## 5. How to Give a Good Interview

- An interview presents one of the best media opportunities. It is your five minute chance to tell to the world what you want to say.
- As an interviewee, you can influence, design, and even lead the interview.
- The basic rule: Never go to an interview before knowing why you go there and what you want to achieve. Decide what is your message. Your objective is to send a strong message using a few simple words. If you use too many complicated terms viewers' and listeners' attention will drop and your message will not reach them. The message should consist of three points that you want to make: A, B, C – that will keep it focused.
- A good way of crafting the message is to think of the headline you would like to appear in the newspapers the day after your interview.

### Questions to ask before the interview:

- If possible, get the questions in advance, if not, find out about the topic of the interview. Talk with the reporter who will interview you. Find out what he/she knows about the topic. If possible, brief the reporter.
- Find out about the context : are you interviewed alone or in a group? Who else is on the show? Information about other participants can be crucial for you to prepare properly.
- Find out about the show in which you will participate. What is the format– a Q&A, profile, reportage, news program or something else?
- What is the profile of the viewers/listeners. If You can adopt and fine-tune your message to their language and interests.
- At what time is the show broadcasted?
- Research on previous reporting on the subject. Do the show/reporter have a particular stance on it?
- Is the reporter friendly or difficult?
- Find out how long the interview will be.
- Will the interview be recorded and edited or it will go live on air?
- If it goes on air, will the viewers/listeners ask questions?

### Get prepared:

- Decide on the three points.
- Get ready for the subject; find examples, facts, stories and anecdotes for each point.
- Exercise in front of the mirror.
- Be prepared for surprises. Think what could be controversial and difficult questions? Answers?
- Prepare briefing for the reporter – send backgrounders and fact sheets on the topic ahead of the interview.

### During the interview:

- Lead the interview. Direct discussion towards your three points.

- Be short and concise. TV and radio do not like long sentences and in-depth analysis.
- Use sound bites. Short, pithy statements on your three points, easy to understand and remember.
- Use straight and simple language: not owing to the fact that but because . ot the fact that he had not succeeded but his failure . Do not use professional jargon, but simple terms.
- void fillers . They are the words and sounds that we make while thinking about what to say ne t. They can be well , like , or hmmm , ahhhhh and similar. In order to avoid fillers you need to know that you are using them. Tape yourself or have someone listening while you practice.
- Do not be afraid of silence. Long silence in the program is reporter's responsibility, not yours. Think before you answer.
- Repeat occasionally your three points: A, B, C, so the message gets across. But do it so that it sounds logical and good –changing angles, examples and even language. Relate all the questions to the three points.
- irst give conclusions then back up with facts. Learn to talk in this upside-down fashion. Go straight to the point first, explanations leave for later.
- ridging: In case of a question that you don't want to answer, try to bridge it, transition it to your three points. ample: I like airu , but let me tell you, Majida El Roumi is even better. Be careful though when you use bridging, it can be counterproductive.
- Bridging Phrases. Bridging is used not only to avoid undesired, but also to stay focused. Useful bridges: es, and in addition to that. I would like to add that. The most important point to remember is , Let me clarify , This reminds me of , Let me emphasise that , etc.
- Stay positive. If you are asked a bad question, answer the best you can, but do not antagonize with the reporter. Keep a friendly relationship with reporter.
- Use facts. Use facts and figures to substantiate your message. Be careful though – TV and radio do not like too many numbers, viewers cannot remember them. Instead of nine-hundred-fifty-eight thousand say almost million .
- Taking out of context. However difficult it is, you should try to avoid statements that can be taken out of context and used against you. For example, do not repeat false statements about you. ot it is not true that our activities are damaging environment , but I can assure you that it is not true .
- Truth. lways tell the truth. Do not be afraid to admit if you don't know answer to a question. Promise to be back with it once you find it, and do so.

#### **After the interview:**

- Add the name of reporter to your media list
- Analyse - what went wrong, what was good. Lessons learned.
- If during the interview you promised additional information to the reporter, act immediately
- Ask for tape with interview and save it
- If the interview was published in print media, collect the press clipping and store it in press clipping archive. If it was very good, use it as a part of your press kit, for further publicity.

**Interview for print media:**

- All the above rules apply to in interview for print media, except:
- Before the interview, find out if a photographer will accompany the reporter?
- If yes, then think of shooting locations – maybe with bookshelves, artwork or plants in the background
- Print media usually go into more detail in exploring an issue. Therefore, you can use more facts and figures then on radio/TV.
- Beware that taking out of context and changing the meaning of the sentences is much easier in print media then on radio/TV. If the piece will be printed as an interview, you can request authorization for authenticity of the dialogue. Authorization means checking out if your words are properly presented in written text, it in not an opportunity to change your statements.
- Print interviews are sometimes done by email/fax. In this case you get a list of questions from the reporter and at an agreed time send back answers by email/fax. Reporters in general do not like this format, because it is not spontaneous. That is why is usually practiced only with celebrities and high level politicians who do not have time to meet with journalists in live.



## 6. How to Behave in Front of Camera and Microphone

### Eyes and Body Language:

- Look into the reporter's eyes. Do not look down or on the side. Do not look into the camera – ignore it.
- Do not sit stiff with your hands glued to the table in front of you. That does not look natural on the camera. Sit comfortably in the chair, and relax.
- Be natural as much as possible, as if you were alone with the reporter. Use your body language as you normally do: move your eyebrows and hands, control the volume and pace of your speech. For example: when you want to emphasize something, you can slow the pace and in the same time raise the voice volume. You can also pause, with the same result. You can nod head to approve or disapprove something, raise eyebrows in surprise, etc.
- While speaking, breath deeply, slowly and rhythmically, with the diaphragm. That will lower the tension and slow down hearth beating if you are nervous.

### Appearance/Dress:

- Serious and conservative attire is demonstrating seriousness.
- Wear solid mid-range colors, avoid white or totally black. Avoid shiny fabrics.
- Men should not wear dark suit on dark shirt or a shirt darker then tie.
- If you wear glasses, they might reflect light, so you might decide to take them of.

### Confidence:

- On T you must never let them see you sweat . Sweating means lying on television. In order not to sweat, avoid nicotine and caffeine before the interview, they increase heart rate. Makeup can help as well.
- Try to control nervous rhythmical movement of your legs, playing with pan, scratching your face or hair, or tapping on the table with fingers The perception that such behavior gives is much worse a damage that the technical problems with the microphone. By moving without control, looking away from the reporter's eyes, you are actually saying that you are insecure and nervous. That is not helping you looking trustworthy: it actually looks like you might be easily hiding something.
- Have some water by your hand, in case your throat gets dry.

# ‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

## **Module 8: How to Transform the Media through Policy**

The blueprint for ensuring checks and balances within the media are systems of self-regulation and codes, which take shape in the form of workplace and editorial polices. Policy is important for the media’s accountability, trust and credibility to its audience. This module focuses on how gender and media advocacy can ensure that gender is included in media and communication policy development. It provides a checklist of key questions that can be used to conduct a gender audit of a media institution.

## Module 8: How to Transform the Media through Policy

Advocacy and lobbying strategies focused on persuading the media to develop gender work place and editorial policies, and/or guidelines, have been key in starting consistent and sustained dialogues with the media community, regulatory bodies (where they exist), the government and the public on many of the gender and media issues highlighted in the GMMP 2005 (see module 4).

The blueprint for ensuring checks and balances within the media are systems of self-regulation and codes, which take shape in the form of workplace and editorial polices. Policy is important for the media for the following reasons:

### Media accountability

The media's responsibility should not stop with its own stated role of being a watchdog in the public's interest. Media also must be accountable to their audiences and stakeholders and as an institution, should practice good governance, transparency and promote human rights within the workplace and in and through the news content.

### Trust and credibility

If the public begins to identify gender, cultural, racial, religious or other forms of biases in the source of its news and information, then the media will lose audiences confidence and trust, and this can lead to declining audiences and shrinking markets. Credibility among all sectors of society is what many media build their sales and marketing pitches on.

Likewise, if the media do not see potential segments of society as the sites for potential new markets, or have the insight to stay on top of changes in the public's needs, they will not remain viable businesses.

### Box Thirteen: Gender can affect the bottom line

In Australia, media analyst Misha Schubert, notes that the business case for a fair portrayal of women in the media is increasingly replacing the justice plea: as the principal household shoppers in 90 percent of homes, women form the primary target group for the majority of advertisers. Research has been successfully used to challenge sexist advertising and programming.

Source: Report of the Gender in Media Symposium, Commission on Gender Equality, Johannesburg, September 26, 1997, quoted in *Whose News? Whose Views?* edited by Colleen Lowe Morna, Gender Links, 2001

## Ensuring Diversity and Equal Opportunity in the workplace and output

The media's workplace and leadership should be reflective of the society in which it operates. The media's output should also reflect this diversity. If not, the media needs mechanisms to help bring about a fundamental change.

In an article on *What the United Nations Should Do, Marginalization of Women in the Media* Sonia Gill, the Assistant Executive Director of the Broadcasting Commission in Jamaica, argues for more media advocacy and lobbying to ensure gender is inclusive to media and communication policy development. This will require however different skills from those that traditionally have been found in activists groups, Gill says.<sup>1</sup> These new skills include:

- The ability to understand and analyze policy-making structures and to assist with the formulation of policies that encompass gender concerns.
- New research that moves beyond the existing pattern of gendered media studies, which are largely limited to descriptive assessments of the portrayal of women, to studies that relate issues identified to national media policy in a way that provides for recommendations for feasible policy amendment.
- The ability to open a dialogue with professional media associations and national regulatory bodies on setting and monitoring compliance with standards which speak to gender awareness of media entities.<sup>2</sup>

### Activity- What policies are in place?

Gender and media activists should do an audit of the internal and external media and communications policies, codes and guidelines that exist in their countries. Knowing what exists and what is missing can help to identify strategic areas for lobbying and advocacy initiatives. Some key questions include:

1. What does the Constitution guarantee in terms of freedom of expression and free speech?
2. Are there industry codes, guidelines and policies that guide professional standards on portrayal, language, coverage of violence, sexism in advertising, etc?
3. Do media houses have workplace and editorial policies and codes? Are these inclusive of gender? Are they published?
4. Are there regulatory bodies in place to ensure enforcement of policies, guidelines and codes?
5. Do licensing policies include gender and diversity criteria?

<sup>1</sup> Sonia Gill, *What the United Nations Should Do, Marginalization of Women in the Media*, UN Chronicle Online Edition, Issue 4, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Sonia Gill, *What the United Nations Should Do, Marginalization of Women in the Media*, UN Chronicle Online Edition, Issue 4, 2003

## Troubleshooting

Like all institutions confronted with the need to change, either from the inside or externally, there will be resistance and counter-arguments from the media. Calling for a change in media policies to change the portrayals of women and men, women's limited access to expression, women's limited access to leadership and management positions within the media, among other issues, requires that gender and media activists know the issues, have their facts and figures correct, and have plenty of examples from the media to illustrate their arguments and points. This is why research, understanding the media, and engaging with the media to have allies within with whom strategies can be discussed and refined are important to any successful gender and media advocacy.

Women's Media Watch Jamaica, which has years of experience in lobbying the media on gender issues, provides several challenges in its 1998 training manual, *Whose Perspective? Guide to Gender-Sensitive Analysis of the Media*, activists are most likely to meet when lobbying the media for policy, guidelines and changes in the way they do their work.

### Challenge 1 – The media sees not issue, the challenge is not fair

- Advertisers spend billions of dollars a year to persuade consumers to buy products and services in the belief that ads influence consumers. Often advertisers link their products to a certain lifestyle and image.

### Challenge 2 – Uses media messages to tell the story that we see

- Think about the not so obvious effects: many messages aren't immediately evident, but after frequent viewing, we absorb their underlying meaning
- Think of an example of a media image and its possible interpretations
- Why are the same images used over and over? What is the cumulative effect of repeated messages? Do they create stereotypes?

### Challenge 3 – The media sustains what is in it

- The media reinforces as well as reflects stereotypes
- The media are NOT representative – older women, fat women and people with disabilities are virtually absent from the mainstream media (yet all exist in the very society the media says it reflects).
- The news is very selective. Think about what is covered, how it is covered, the time allotted to news items, the order in which they are presented
- Who are the decision makers in the media?

### Challenge 4 – It's not the same as women?

- Yes, it is dehumanizing for any human being to be turned into an object. BUT men aren't objectified as often as women, or in the same way as women
- The objectification of men is not as threatening, because men are a powerful group in our society

**Challenge 5** – *Is the media sensitive to issues of race? Should advertising standards be the same for all groups?*

- The media is sometimes sensitive to issues of race. Is the same level of sensitivity shown towards sexism?
- If the media continues to demean women, half the population, what will stop it from treating other groups within society in the same way?
- Exploitation, by the media, of women’s insecurities about their physical appearance, is what sells beauty products
- The media will only change if its financial interests are threatened; if viewers stop watching a program, refuse to buy a product or service
- Growing consumer awareness has on occasions led to ads being pulled out or changed. One company moved from showing women draped over tires, to highlighting the quality of the tire. Media Watch in Mauritius also has had sexist advertising removed by mobilizing public opinion and taking complaints to the advertising regulatory body in the country.

**Challenge 6** – *Does the media use advertising to promote products that are harmful to society? Should advertising be regulated to protect public health?*

- Censorship is not being advocated by gender and media activists. An alternative approach is to balance responsibility and sensitivity with marketability.
- Many racial stereotypes in the media have become unacceptable.
- Media managers often have considerable power over a publication’s editorial content, and therefore, decide what is published.

**Challenge 7** – *Do the media promote the same standards of beauty for all women? Should the media be held responsible for promoting unrealistic beauty standards?*

- Women are socialized by the same media into thinking that this is the correct and acceptable thing to do
- The media often glamorizes these images, making them seem more attractive.

**Box 15: Country and Regional Experiences in Engendering Communication and Media Policy**

**CANADA** has one of the most comprehensive systems of gender and media policy, which has evolved out of a partnership between government, the media and non-governmental organizations. The balance between government legislation and industry self-regulation makes this system work. (See Case Study on Canada)

**Canada's** government, through the Office on the Status of Women, initiated in 1986 a consultation with 26,000 women and found that women wanted the media to portray more realistic and positive images of women. In 1988, the government established the National Working Party on the Portrayal of Women in the Media and two working parties operated until 1993. These parties produced guidelines on sexist language, how to report on violence against women and on sexual exploitation in advertising. Changes in government however, have led to concerns among activists that many of the gains made are being reversed.

**SOUTHERN AFRICA**, where gender and media activism has taken off in the years following the publication of the 2003 Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS), saw in 2005 the launch of the Media Action Plan (MAP) on HIV/AIDS and Gender. MAP brings together a partnership between the media industry, civil society and the international community (UNAIDS, the PANOS Institute, for example) to improve the quality of media reporting on HIV/AIDS and gender. One of MAP's key objectives is to ensure that 80 of media institutions in the region have workplace-based and editorial policies and programs on HIV/AIDS and gender by the end of 2008. The engagement with media houses to develop these policies will begin in 2006.

Source: adapted from WACC internal reports from regional conferences on Gender and Communication Policy experiences and MAP documents for Southern Africa.

## **Gender and Media Policy Checklist\***

The following checklists provide a set of key questions that can be used to conduct a gender audit of a media institution. Depending on the focus of the campaign – editorial content, changes in the work place to increase the employment and retention of women media professionals, the removal of sexist advertising, etc. – a set of questions are provided to help guide you through a situation analysis, which provides facts and figures for lobbying the media.

### GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK

#### **International commitments**

Are you aware of existing national, regional, international commitments to gender e.g. Constitution, Equality Act, CEDAW, and how they relate to their work?

#### **National legislation**

What national legislation and or regulatory authority govern you? To what extent is gender mainstreamed in this legislation?

#### **Gender policy**

- Do you have a gender policy?
- Does the policy cover ethical considerations, internal human resource issues and the editorial product?
- Is it a stand- alone policy; integrated in all existing policy documents; or both?
- Is the policy informed by consultation?
- Does the policy allow public access and involvement?
- How is the policy implemented? What are the outputs?
- Are resources allocated for the implementation of the policy?
- Is there a high level commitment to the policy?
- How and where is this commitment articulated?

### EDITORIAL CONTENT

#### **Gender beat checklist**

- Is gender awareness and sensitivity built into all reporting requirements?
- In addition to this, is gender recognized as a specialized beat?
- Is the gender beat accorded the same status as other beats, such as the courts, political, financial etc?
- Is the gender beat understood to include both women's and men's concerns?
- Are there both women and men specializing in the gender beat?
- Are they afforded the same opportunities as other beats for expanding their horizons and deepening their skills on this beat?

#### **Representation**

- Does coverage give fair and equal space time to women and men's voices?



- Are reporters and editors trained to probe the gender issues that may underlie stories?
- Are women consulted across the racial and class spectrum?
- To the extent some women are difficult to reach, is sufficient effort and enough resources set aside for accessing these marginal groups?

### **Context**

- Are a variety of sources, representing a broad spectrum of views, consulted?
- Is there a specialist civil society organization on the issue? Has this source been consulted?
- Is there adequate context and balance?
- Is the story analytical? Does it go beyond the event and raise the underlying issues?

### **Portrayal**

- Does your coverage reflect a holistic and realistic view of women and do they appear in the full spectrum of activities in which they engage?
- To the extent that women are missing from certain categories because of their status in society, does the coverage raise critical questions as to why this is so?
- Are male and female subjects treated equally?
- Does your story apportion blame on the subject?
- Does your story exonerate the perpetrator?
- Are all subjects treated with dignity?
- Does the story challenge or reinforce stereotypes?
- Does it examine the underlying issues?
- Are these approached from a human rights perspective?
- Are the experiences and concerns of women trivialized in any way?
- Is your story fair, accurate and balanced?

### **Language**

- Is sexist language defined and forbidden?
- Is language used inclusive of men and women?
- To the extent that gender-neutral terms are used, is relevant gender disaggregated information provided?
- Are adjectives used objective and relevant, and do they convey any biases or stereotypes?
- Is physical description relevant to the story? Does it apply equally to men and women.

### **Visuals**

- Are women and men equally represented?
- Over time, does the range of images portray women in all their diversity with regard to age, sexual orientation, class, disability, race, occupation, and urban/rural?
- Is there a gender bias in how the event is portrayed? Can changing the report reverse or change that bias?

- Do the media have a responsibility to ask why an area shows gender bias or begin to correct it through affirmative reporting and images? For example, if men's soccer is regularly featured, is there a responsibility to report on why this is predominantly a male game; and of the fact that women's soccer is an up and coming new sport? Would this help to balance gender images on the sports pages?
- Do pictures reflect women happy with exploitation - for example happy to be scrubbing the floors?
- Do images emphasize/ exaggerate physical aspects (especially sexual)?
- Would using a different image convey a better sense of the gender dynamics? For example, would a photo of women farmers in a remote rural area be more appropriate than a photo of the male minister of agriculture in a story on farming?
- For professional women, does the image show a professional role, as opposed to emphasizing the physicality of women?
- Is the image one of which the person would approve?
- Are women portrayed as survivors or victims?
- Are women portrayed as active or passive?
- Does the image degrade the dignity of women?
- If you substitute man for women does it make sense?
- To the extent that women are announcers on television, to what extent are they represented in all their diversity- gender, race, and physical attributes?

### **Programming**

- Do you have special spaces/ slots for women?
- Should these be for gender rather than for women?
- Is the difference understood?
- Who are you addressing in these spaces?
- Where are they placed?
- For audio- visual media, do they take account of the dual roles and time constraints of women?
- Are they available during prime time when the largest number of men and women are likely to be watching and or listening?

### **SALES AND MARKETING**

#### **Advertising**

- Is there a discussion in your organization about the need for consistency in standards applied to advertising and editorial?
- What happens when there is a conflict between the two with regard to gender?
- Has there been any research to determine what really attracts consumers?

#### **Readership/Listener and viewer surveys**

- Does gender feature in readership/ listener/ viewer ship surveys?
- Do you conduct focus group surveys to solicit the views of audiences to products? Are men and women equally represented? Are the results disaggregated by gender? Are they acted upon?

## INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

### **Affirmative Action Policy**

- Do you have an affirmative action policy?
- Does law prescribe the affirmative action policy or is it your own?
- Does it spell out precise quotas or targets for male and female representation?
- Are these broken down by rank?
- Are there timeframes for achieving this?
- Is there a plan and resources allocated for achieving this (for example, additional empowerment strategies for women, if required?)?
- Do you keep regular staff records, disaggregated by gender?
- Does management regularly monitor and evaluate these?

### **Recruitment**

- Do you advertise using a variety of communication channels, including direct interaction, that ensure men and women are equally reached?
- Do you actively encourage women to apply?
- Is there anything in the way your advertisements are phrased that could discourage women from applying?
- Do you have initiatives to encourage young women to take up careers in the media?

### **Selection**

- Are your selection panels gender balanced?
- Do you ensure a minimum quota for women in the short-listing process?
- Do the same standards apply to women and men in the interview process? For example, would you ask a man whether he was married and had children or intended to have any in the future?
- How are family considerations raised and addressed in the interview process?

### **Work environment**

- Do you have any initiatives in place that promote a gender friendly work environment?
- If someone told a sexist joke at your workplace how would others respond? Would there be any sanction?
- Do you have a sexual harassment policy?
- Do you offer flexi-hours?
- Have you taken advantage of IT to allow work from home under certain conditions?
- Do you ensure the safety of all your employees, for example with regard to their transportation to and from work, especially from certain locations and at certain hours?

### **Family friendly practices**

- Do you have a maternity policy in place? What are its provisions?

- Are there stereotypes in your newsroom concerning the ability of women to perform their journalistic tasks, for example presenting programs on television while they are pregnant? What have you done to correct these?
- Do you ensure that the careers of women journalists are not adversely affected by maternity breaks?
- Do you offer paternity leave?
- Do you have a policy on breast-feeding?
- Do you have childcare facilities?

#### **On the job experience**

- Is there a gender balance on all your beats?
- Are women encouraged to go into non-traditional areas of reporting?
- Are women encouraged and supported to take up technical sides of the job, for example as camerawomen in television or photojournalists in the print media?
- To the extent that there are physical constraints, for example, the weight of a camera, how have you used advances in technology to overcome this constraint to women's entry into this sphere of work?
- To the extent that women may be more exposed to danger than men because of their sex (for example to the danger of rape or sexual harassment) while on the job, what measures have you taken to ensure their security? Have you consciously avoided the easy way out- to simply exclude them from that beat?

#### **Capacity building**

- Do all your employees have access to staff development programs, and are these offered at suitable hours?
- Do you target women for training?
- Do you have mentorship programs in place?
- Are these specifically targeted at women?
- Does the organization offer assertiveness training and are men and women equally encouraged to undergo this training?

#### **Promotion**

- Do you have a clearly defined and transparent promotion policy?
- Do you have a minimum quota for women at all levels of the organization?
- Do you have any measures in place to assist women to achieve these positions on merit?
- Do you have a roster of potential women candidates for top posts?
- When you head hunt, do you specify gender as one of the criteria to be considered in sourcing suitable candidates?

### **GENDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

#### **Champions**

- Is there a champion for the gender policy in your organization?
- Is this person at management level?

### **Governance level**

- To what extent does the board/management regard gender mainstreaming as a priority?

### **Administrative level**

- To what extent does the management of the organization take gender mainstreaming seriously?
- To what extent does all staff take gender mainstreaming as their responsibility?
- Are gender considerations built into the overall performance management system?
- To what extent is performance in this area measured and rewarded?
- To what extent do turnover and lack of continuity and "institutional memory" hinder gender mainstreaming in the organization?
- Are gender resource materials available and accessible?

### **Structures**

#### **Formal**

- What specific structures have been created for gender mainstreaming?
- Do these include human resources, the editorial and advertising departments?
- Is there a committee that includes all three?
- Is there a gender structure/unit/focal point (GFP)?
- At what level is the gender focal point employed?
- What access to/ influence on decision makers, does the gender focal point have?
- What other responsibilities does the gender focal point have?
- Has the GFP received gender training?
- Does the GFP have clear terms of reference?
- Is gender part of the GFP job description or is it an add-on?

#### **Informal**

- What informal structures have been created to encourage understanding and buy in? (For example a gender forum, brown bag lunches)?
- Do they include men and women?
- Are women encouraged to form support networks and structures?
- Are these structures accorded respect and status and given time to meet?
- Do these structures network with civil society?

#### **Analytical Capacity**

- Has the whole organization undergone gender training?
- What form did this take?
- Has there been further gender training linked to various areas of responsibility within the organization?
- Did the training have the support of management?
- How has gender training been perceived in the organization?
- What has been the tangible impact of gender training?

#### **Monitoring, evaluation and resource allocation**

- Do you have an internal system to undertake content analysis?
- Is gender one of the criteria?

- What gender indicators have been developed?
- Are statistics disaggregated by gender?
- Does content analysis examine: a) events and issues through the voices of both men and women b) stories highlighting the impact of events on men and women? c) Thematic analysis to ensure that issues covered reflect gender challenges?
- Do you engage with research findings by civil society, private sector and other bodies on the way in which gender is covered by the media, and on sexist attitudes in society?
- Are there internal mechanisms for monitoring the overall gender policy including conditions of service and how they impact on men and women?
- How is the budget divided up within each program?
- What is the effect of this with regard to advancing gender equality?
- How do women benefit from the budget compared to men?
- Would the budget need to shift to address gender objectives more effectively?
- Is there an annual review of the implementation of the gender policy?

\*Source: Whose news? Whose views? Southern Africa: Gender and Media Handbook, Colleen Lowe Morna, editor, published by Gender Links, 2001

# ‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

## **Module 9: How to get the Issue on the edia’s Agenda**

This module focuses on different approaches adopted by gender and media activists to get issues on the media’s agenda. It also provides tips and insights on how to engage and build a relationship with the media, and how to gain visibility in the media by taking advantage of several significant dates already on the world’s calendars.

## Module 9 How to get the issue on the media's Agenda

The media can be the target, ally and tool in gender and media advocacy. Gender and media activism worldwide has attracted media professionals who are strategic allies.

Various approaches to woo the media have been adopted by gender and media activists. These include:

- **Special incentives** for journalists such as exclusive interviews, invitations to training, field visits or international conferences on gender issues.
- **Developing press kits** and other packets of information to facilitate the journalists' coverage of gender issues.
- **Training programs** for journalists on the relevant issues. Newsroom senior managers – editors-in-chiefs, sub-editors, frontline editors (news, features, sports, etc) however, seldom attend training programs and a different approach is needed.
- **Creation of gender-sensitive media awards** – both Asia and Southern Africa has experience with such awards. And although the award was not specifically for gender reporting, the winning of the Pulitzer Prize in the 1990s by a paper in Dallas Texas for its series on violence against women worldwide was a clear illustration that the missing gender stories, reported accurately, fairly and sensitively, are the essence of good journalism.

Greater media interaction breaks down many of the myths of the media as an 'untouchable' institution and provides gender and media activists with the knowledge they need to engage in gender and media literacy with consumers of media.



## Case Study

### **Cambodia: Gender Equity Media Awards**

The Women's Media Centre WMC in Cambodia was born from a movement to increase women's participation in the democratic process during the U -sponsored elections in 1993. The WMC delivers innovative, national awareness and informative programs on a diverse range of issues affecting contemporary Cambodia, with a special focus on the roles and rights of Cambodian women.

Since its inception in 1995, the WMC has produced high quality, innovative radio, television and video productions designed to educate and inform Cambodians on a wide range of issues impacting on women's rights and human rights including HI AIDS, trafficking, elections, domestic violence, decentralization and poverty.

WMC is also dedicated to promoting gender-sensitive reporting in the Cambodian media sector and to encourage journalists to mainstream gender in their reporting and coverage of women. In 2003, Ms. Sarayeth TIVE, Co-Director of WMC and Networking Manager, coordinated Cambodia's first Gender equity Media award, and in 200 , the Gender equity Writer's award.

Media monitoring was developed and a discussion forum was created to encourage journalists to portray women more positively. The forums provided the group with the opportunity to present their findings to the media and to discuss various obstacles media professionals faced.

The media monitoring findings were announced once a year at a press conference, and letters of appreciation were sent to the Editors-in-Chiefs of media which refrained from publishing stories that portrayed women as sex objects.

WMC's advocacy approach is to work with the media to try and find practical solutions to change the representation and portrayal of women in the media.

The Gender equity Media awards and Gender equity Writer's award were created to encourage all Cambodian journalists to write gender sensitive articles and to congratulate print media, television and radio organizations for supporting this positive form of reporting.

WMC received funding to coordinate the awards from donors, and worked with the Ministry of Information, the NGO, Women for Change, and a number of media outlets to effectively coordinate and produce the awards ceremonies.

Since 1996 the portrayal of women in the media has progressed a lot, especially the representation of women on radio and television.

WMC continues to encourage media monitoring activities, media internships, student visits to WMC, solidarity events with journalists and editors-in-chief, article solicitation, gender equity media awards, workshops and forums for journalists.

### Activity – Discussion Points!

1. Make a list of the strategies the Women's Media Centre in Cambodia has used to engage the media.
2. What is the main philosophy of the approach used by the Centre?
3. What do the gender and media awards seek to do?

### Getting News Coverage – What you can do!

**Stage an event** like a press conference, the launch of a petition or a protest march to a targeted media. Always prepare written material and/or press kits for the planned event. Ensure that you always have an up-to-date roster (list) of the key media in your country, including the names of journalists, editors, telephone, fax and e-mail details. Contact the media two to three days prior to the event and reconfirm attendance early on the day of the event.

**Pegs:** Use events like World Press Freedom Day, May 3, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence (November 25-December 10), International Women's Day (March 8) or appropriate national holidays to peg gender and media advocacy issues on.

**et to no the media's deadlines:** Check with your local media houses to find out their deadlines for news, features, opinion pieces or for arranging talk shows and current affairs discussions. Work to these deadlines when scheduling media events or planning to use the media to get out information on gender and media issues.

**Write Opinion and Commentary Pieces:** Use media monitoring findings to develop timely opinion and commentary pieces that can be marketed to the media. The Gender and Media (GEM) Commentary Service is an excellent example of how gender and media activists have claimed a space in the mainstream media. Go to [www.genderlinks.org.za](http://www.genderlinks.org.za) to find out more about the service, which can be replicated in other regions. Also write **Letters to the Editor** to highlight gender issues of concern in the media.

**Be willing to be a source:** Become a reliable and authoritative expert on gender and media issues and do not shy away from media interviews. Prepare for the interview and talk facts, figures and impact. Do not waffle of the top of your head.

## Case Study

### How to say NO to the Boss campaign

Between 1997 and 1999, women trade union coalitions in Slovenia and Croatia, ran a campaign on sexual harassment in the work place. Although organized by women trade unionists, the 'How to say no to the boss' campaign was led by a project coalition in each country which include civil society, university students and a representative from the Chamber of Commerce(private sector) in Slovenia.

This campaign also included representatives from the media. In Slovenia, the male editor of the largest private television station was a member of the coalition and in Croatia, the female editor of a women's magazine, also joined.

Staging media events, preparing materials, making available to the media women leaders in the project for interviews and producing and disseminating popular campaign materials like posters and leaflets increased the public's awareness of sexual harassment as a serious violation of women's rights.

The coalitions successfully engaged the media to raise awareness of the issue of sexual harassment – six press conferences were held. The coalitions also mounted campaigns to get their issues covered in the media and in Slovenia, 95 articles were printed in the media, and the coalition was featured on seven television broadcasts and in several radio broadcasts. The campaign in Croatia resulted in more than 50 articles published in the print media, several broadcasts on national and local radio stations and four television broadcasts.

Key female figures within the coalitions were readily available to be interviewed by the media in events such as public forums and hearings which included women with first-hand experience of sexual harassment, legal experts, governments. The groups prepared and disseminated to the media, laws, expert articles and speeches on sexual harassment, research findings on sexual harassment in the workplace, among other materials.

All of these tactics kept the issue on the media's agenda over the two-year period, and the public in both countries began to understand the serious dimensions of sexual harassment at work. Underestimation, ridiculing and tolerance of the perpetrators at the beginning of the project were little by little transformed into the conviction that the problem is big, serious and difficult for the women who are sexually harassed.

Source: Sonja Lokar, Coordinator of the 'How to say NO to the boss' Project Coalition, Slovenia

### Activity-Discussion Points!

1. What strategies did the coalitions use to get their issue onto the media's agenda? What were the results of their efforts?
2. Why do you think the media became 'allies' to the coalitions in this campaign?
3. What was one positive change that occurred because of the coalitions' work with the media?

### Media Tips for Gender and Media Advocacy

- Remember, the media is always looking for **news** and a good story. News is what is new, but this includes more than just what is happening now. What is new also can be a new interpretation of an event or issue .
- Create a contact list of women who are willing to speak and who are accessible. This list can be sent to the media to help journalists and editors to build a network of women as sources whom they can contact on gender issues.
- Go and look for the journalists/editors to give them story ideas and information. Establish a relationship. **BADGER** them. Don't just go once, but twice, three times, as often as necessary to form a relationship with journalists and editors.
- Convene an experts panel of women to speak at a press conference on a key issue that has developed within your community, at the provincial level or even nationally. Such panels also can write statements to be given to the media.
- Create information packets for journalists on gender issues, including gender and media areas of concern. But always ensure that the information you give out is factually correct and up to date. Wrong information can hurt an NGO's credibility.
- Have members of your staff, who may be responsible for media relations, take short courses on how to write a press release, or a basic journalism skills course. There are short courses on the Internet, or NGOs can also contact media training institutes within their countries for short courses. Several NGOs also can team up and organize a venue and resource person to provide a short journalism skills course for several groups. Courses on news reporting and writing opinions and columns would be valuable.
- NGOs should be careful not to repeat the same messages on gender issues over and over again. Remember, what is new. How much progress has been made on an issue? If things are static and there is a backlash or no change, why is this happening?

- Do not give out figures without placing the numbers in a context – that is, what do the numbers mean? What story do the numbers tell? Always ensure that the figures are accurate. Always provide the source of the data given to the media. NGOs can be a source of sex-disaggregated data.
- Provide the media with case studies that help to bring the human angle to an issue and to illustrate the impact of the issue or event on women, men, girls, boys, etc.
- **PREPARE! PREPARE! PREPARE! ALWAYS BE PREPARED WHEN YOU TALK TO THE MEDIA**

## **Tips for Writing Opinions and Commentaries**

### **What editors look for?**

- The argument of point of view should be right up front in the piece
- The argument must be strong
- A strong news peg (i.e. a piece which is based on an event, issue or trend that is topical in the society, as well as forward looking; also can be a new perspective or new/fresh insight into an event or issue)

### **How to pitch your piece:**

- Call an opinion page editor, rather than sending unsolicited articles. Better tactic is to go and see the editor and be persistent
- Have a 2-3 page brief with you when you pitch which outlines the article
- Know the newspaper you want to publish your article in (know its values, editorial policy, its readers, etc); research the newspaper before you approach it.
- Be brave when pitching your opinion
- Know the area you are writing about; show that you know the issues well.
- For dailies: allow three weeks lead time to pitch your piece. For weeklies: allow six weeks lead time

### **Structure (writing the piece):**

- Start with a case study, anecdote or explain a scenario to lead the reader into the issue
- Put your point of view high in the piece
- Use statistics when appropriate
- Give the context (why the issue is important)
- Give the history/background to the issue (not in abundance, but enough to help explain the issue)
- Avoid jargon and when jargon is used, explain it

- Avoid acronyms
- Remember you are writing for general readers
- Write to length (i.e. find out from the editor how many words your piece should be and stick to the length given)
- Acknowledge and understand the editing process (do a self-edit on your piece for style, clarity). You may ask to see a pre-publication piece to see how the piece has been edited by the newspaper

**What to avoid:**

- Do not think that just because you write a piece, you are entitled to space. You must convince an editor why it is important to publish your piece. The piece must be compelling and informative
- Do not write a piece that is too specialized which can be understood only by a small audience
- Avoid inaccuracies in facts and data
- Avoid one-sided and unfair arguments. Be balanced
- Avoid a didactic/preachy/prescriptive tone in your piece

**KEY POINTERS: BREVITY, CLARITY, KEEP THE ARGUMENT CENTRAL**

**Editor's checklist for news worthiness<sup>1</sup>**

- Does the story offer new information?
- Does it say something original?
- Does it add to ongoing coverage?
- Should it be told now?
- What impact will the story have on the audience reading it?
- Will the story make a difference? Will it change the way the issue is seen?
- Does it indicate a movement of change?

**Tips for writing a Press Release**

- Be brief and to the point
- Ensure all facts, figures and information is correct
- Answer in the first paragraph the following: Who, What, When and Where
- Provide answers to Why and How in subsequent paragraphs
- Put the important points first and high up in the release
- Support data with quotes from spokespersons (ensure a balance of women and men, both experts and ordinary citizens)

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Making the Most of the Media, Tools for Human Rights Groups Worldwide, cited in Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

### **Box 16: Using the Internet in Gender and Media Campaigns**

The Internet is the biggest computer network in the world and can be used to put one's campaign on-line to inform wider audiences of your work at the national level. The Internet can be used to:

- Publish information cheaply and quickly, that will be accessible all over the world
- Find information fast from all over the world to help you research your campaign
- Share information and promote your organization and its work
- Find the people or projects that may be able to support or assist your organization
- Find options for funding and support from all over the world
- Co-ordinate international campaigns cheaply and inefficiently
- Exchange news, views and experiences with others in a world wide public forum

Source: Getting Smart strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, editors, published by Gender Links and Women's Media Watch, 2002

## Make news: Put the Spotlight on Gender and Media Issues Days for Gender and Media Activism

For the most part around the world, news revolves around events. Create an event on a specific day when the media is marking some milestone or hallmark, and you may find your issue on the news pages or broadcasts of the day.

One way to create a news event is to take advantage of several significant dates already on the world's calendars. These dates can be used to launch a gender and media campaign, engage with the media on a specific gender and media issue, or even be the culmination of either media monitoring, a letter writing or petition campaign, where the results are made public for the media to see.

By using some of the dates and ideas suggested in the following chart, your campaign or event can gain visibility and if planned well, can also make news. The ideas given are only suggestions. Be creative! Be bold!

### International dates for gender and media advocacy

International Day(s) or Event	What you can do
First two weeks of March each year- the UN Commission on the Status of Women meets in NY to review progress towards gender equality(Beijing+5 and +10 were held during these sessions)	Prior to when the CSW starts you can review how well your local media progressed using Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action. Plan a media dialogue, write opinion pieces, develop and launch a special report on how well the media has done and invite it to cover the launch, or even plan a two-weeks action campaign with activities focused on the media, etc.
March 8, International Women's Day	Create your own special publication for the day illustrating to the media how to do it differently; launch a campaign on some specific gender and media issue; hold a forum with editors on how to move women from the women's pages only, etc.
May 3, World Press Freedom Day	Launch a gender and media campaign on women's access to expression in and through the media; launch a report based on monitoring (a month) prior to the day on women's voices in the media ; congratulate the media on positive gender and media reporting and initiatives by holding awards ceremonies to highlight the best gender and media reporting, etc.
Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (November 25-Dec 10)	Monitor the media throughout the 16 days to assess the quantity and quality of coverage on gender violence (or even one



Module 9: How to get the issue on the media's agenda

	specific aspect of gender violence) and present the findings in a report. Organize events on the last day of the campaign or a few days shortly thereafter for the most media impact; organize workshops and talks on how the media perpetuates violence against women, etc.
December 1, World AIDS Day	Develop workshop sessions for the media on mainstreaming gender into HIV/AIDS reporting; join with HIV/AIDS activists groups to develop seminars or launch a campaign on the media's portrayal of women living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, etc.
December 10, Human Rights Day	Campaigns or dialogues, forums and preparation of media fact sheets and kits on issues such as women's rights to free expression in and through the media, the media's coverage of women's rights as human rights and gender justice issues (do these topics make news, or does the media ignore issues of women's rights? ; the launch of a campaign or organize radio talk shows or TV slots to discuss how the portrayal of women as sex objects in the media violates their right to integrity and dignity, etc.
National events	Use major events in your country to also develop gender and media advocacy initiatives. For example, if your country is holding general elections, do special reports and alerts (monitor the media daily for voices, portrayal, representation, coverage of women, etc and send out short reports to the media and other organizations via e-mail on what was found on the media's coverage of women in politics; seminars can be held with journalists and editors prior to the elections to highlight and illustrate to the media how to improve the quality and quantity of coverage on women in politics and governance.



# ‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

## **Module 10: How to Monitor and Evaluate Advocacy Work**

Monitoring and evaluating an advocacy campaign enables activists to collect feedback and plan for future advocacy. Monitoring establishes if the stated objectives of the campaign have been met and helps to identify and rectify early problems in the advocacy campaign. This module looks at the various approaches to monitoring and evaluating advocacy work.

## Module 10: How to Monitor and Evaluate Advocacy Work

Monitoring and evaluating advocacy work is fairly new terrain. Reasons for tracking the impact of gender and media advocacy may vary and the reason for evaluating the work will determine the techniques to be used. Some of the incentives for monitoring and evaluation include:

- To prepare credible funding reports
- To demonstrate to colleagues and partners that advocacy work is a cost-effective way of improving gender equality in and through the media
- To learn from experience<sup>1</sup>

There are different types of evaluations and what you will use should be chosen based on your original goals and objectives, and the resources available. The types of evaluations include<sup>2</sup>:

**Process Evaluation** –examines whether activities are reaching the intended audience, are occurring as planned and are adequately funded. This is the least expensive and most simple type of evaluation, and should be done continuously throughout the advocacy and lobbying to ensure that objectives are still on target, and it addresses questions such as:

- How many opinion leaders received information?
- How many pieces of educational or informational material were distributed to the public?
- How many presentations or meetings have been held with media opinion leaders?
- How many favorable articles have appeared in the media?
- How many members does the organization or its network have?

**Outcome Evaluation** – measures the immediate impact and results from this type of evaluation will indicate progress toward meeting the objective. Questions posed in this type of evaluation include:

- Has awareness of gender and media issues among opinion leaders in the media and/or in the general public increased?
- Did the target organization's policies change as a result of the activities?
- Was there a measured increase in the public's support of these policies?

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<sup>1</sup> Handbook on Advocacy Strategy and Technique Development, edited by Flor Caagusan, Institute for Popular democracy, Manila Philippines

<sup>2</sup> Handbook on Advocacy Strategy and Technique Development, edited by Flor Caagusan, Institute for Popular democracy, Manila Philippines

**Impact Evaluation** – examines the progress made towards long-range goals. This is the most expensive type of evaluation and is used to examine only the most ambitious advocacy efforts. This type of evaluation may take place three to five years after advocacy activities. Impact evaluation addresses questions such as:

- Was there a change in the percentage of women as sources and news subjects in the media?
- Was there an increase in the development and use of gender editorial policies, guidelines and codes by the media?

### **Developing Indicators**

Impact and outcomes, and management indicators are recommended for evaluating advocacy. Impacts and outcomes are about advocacy's contributions to building democratic goals which include participation and equity, building civil society and building sustainability. Impacts may either be direct consequences of advocacy on the policy itself or are results that fulfill other underlying advocacy objectives. Management focuses on processes and capacity.<sup>3</sup>

Indicators are explicit measures used to determine performance. The best indicators are simple, easy to collect and analyze, and show levels of progress towards achieving results. They should be designed to reflect change at different levels. A good way of viewing indicators is to see them as 'milestones' along the path you are traveling.<sup>4</sup>

Indicators also can be developed within the Awareness, Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior (AKAB) framework, and areas to be assessed would include<sup>5</sup>:

#### **Expanded public and private dialogue and debate (awareness)**

What increase has there been in:

- Coverage and discussion in the news media?
- Problem solving dialogue?
- Focus and discussion in entertainment media?
- Debate and dialogue in the political process?

#### **Increased accuracy of the information that people share in the dialogue/debate (Tracking progress towards increasing knowledge)**

- Are people becoming more informed about the issue?
- Are stereotypes being dispelled?
- Are people discussing different perspectives on the issue?

<sup>3</sup> Handbook on Advocacy Strategy and Technique Development, edited by Flor Caagusan, Institute for Popular democracy, Manila Philippines

<sup>4</sup> Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

<sup>5</sup> Making a Difference Strategic Communications to end Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, editors, UNIFEM 2003

### **Shifting attitudes**

- Are there signs of increased sensitivity on the issue?
- Are people more accepting of different perspectives on the issue?
- Is there reflection on existing social norms and cultural values (that currently might stand in the way of behavioral change)?

### **Change in behavior**

- Are people taking action as a result of being informed and influenced?
- What are their actions, and what outcomes are emerging?
- Are people getting involved in campaigns, becoming advocates themselves?
- How sustained has this behavioral change been to date, and what signs are there of the change being sustained in the future?



# ‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

**Module 11: Definitions and Pointers in  
Gender and Media Advocacy**

## Definitions and Pointers in Gender and Media Advocacy

### 1. Glossary of Terms (from Module 1- 4)

**Accuracy** – Information that the media communicates to the public should not be false, incorrect or misleading. The media must correct mistakes, misrepresentations of facts and apologize to the persons/organizations.

**Advocacy** - The process of influencing people to generate a policy change.

**Communications for advocacy** – means of sharing information ‘packaged’ in different ways and conveyed using media and messages customized for different audiences.

**Culturally diverse output** – The creation of an organization’s output that reflects the multi-cultural society in which it operates and which is reflective of its diverse stakeholders. But **diversity** for the media is about more than just the numbers alone. Diversifying newsrooms and issues of content, coverage and the media’s role in a pluralistic society are key issues.

**Freedom of expression** – The unrestricted and uncensored inclusion of views and opinions in organizations’ output enabling debate and dialogue.

**Gender** – Is the way in which society assigns characteristics and social roles to women and men. In all societies worldwide the roles, functions and characteristics attributed to men have been accorded greater value than those of women.

**Gender and media advocacy** - includes lobbying, campaigning, research, training, media monitoring, communication and alliance-building activities which seek to advance women’s rights and gender equality in and through the media.

**Gender stereotypes** – Socially constructed beliefs about women and men. They are constructed through sayings, songs, proverbs, the media, religion, custom, culture, education, drama, etc.

**Impartial and balanced output** – The production of fair, diverse, and unbiased media output which reflects and informs public opinion and dialogue supported by editorial policies, which are independent from ownership.

**Informing public opinion** – The delivery of high quality information, which provides the full range of views about an issue, and is reflective of the society in which it is disseminated, to inform rather than influence public debate.

**Integrity of information** – The provision of quality data, images and information, which is objective and accurate.

**Listserv** – A mailing list, similar in some ways to a conference, but where messages are sent to the list's address. A copy of the message is then sent to each member or subscriber to the list.

**Media literacy** – Consumers' understanding of the types of information and its availability, to enable an informed decision about the programming/article/music/image they listen to, view or read.

**Sex** – The biological differences between women and men.

Sources: The Media CSR Forum, KMPG, 2005; Whose News? Whose Views?, Gender Links, 2001; Gender in Media Training, A Southern African Toolkit, Gender Links and the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, 2002; Making A Difference Strategic Communications to End Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, UNIFEM, 2003; Getting Smart- strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, Gender Links and Women's Media Watch, 2002.

## 2. Key Points to Remember!

- News is a choice, an extraction process, saying that one event is more meaningful than another event.
- Understanding the media's various roles, its power and sphere of influence and the role it can play in bringing about change are essential for any type of advocacy that aims to change the media.
- The media do not just provide information, education and entertainment. By selecting the types of news stories, choice of words and language used, choice of people interviewed to give their views and perspectives, selection of images, etc., the media sends messages.
- Gender biases and prejudices in the media emerge through the 'choices' media managers, advertisers, and media professionals make each day. Decisions about who will be promoted; who will not; what will make news; what will not; who will be interviewed; who will not; etc are affected by media professionals' beliefs about where women and men 'should be' in a society.
- Good advocacy depends on taking the time to think through how you will work with and influence each of the audiences.
- Central to any approach taken for gender and media advocacy is the need for gender and media activists to engage the media, as oppose to taking an antagonist stance



### 3. Definitions, Pointers, Checklists and Tools

#### Glossary of terms from the home to' modules -10)

**Accountability** – Media are accountable to their viewers, readers and listeners, and to the media industry, not to produce misleading stories.

**Corporate governance** – Systems and processes for ensuring proper accountability, probity and openness in the conduct of an organization's business.

**Evaluation** – A time-bound exercise that aims to assess systematically and objectively the relevance, performance and success of ongoing and completed programs and projects. Evaluations can also address outcomes or other developments.

**Gender-aware policies** – Recognize that women, as well as men, have an important role to play in society; that the nature of women's involvement is determined by gender relations that make their involvement different and often unequal; and that consequently women have different needs, interests and priorities, which may sometimes conflict with those of men.

**Gender-blind policies** – Do not recognize gender inequalities. They mistakenly assume that men and male norms represent the norm for all human beings. As a result, they incorporate biases in favor of existing gender relations and therefore exclude women.

**Indicator** - A direct or indirect measure of change. Indicators must be realistic and easy to measure and often the indicators used by large organizations are different from those used by medium and small organizations.

**Inputs** – Resources required for achieving the stated results.

**Internet** – A network of computers and servers connected by telephone lines, undersea cables, microwave towers and satellite links. It is the infrastructure that allows data – in sound, picture, video or text form – to travel from one computer to another (or from one computer to many)

**Listserv** – A mailing list, similar in some ways to a conference, but where messages are sent to the list's address. A copy of the message is then sent to each member or subscriber to the list.

**Mainstreaming** – Bringing issues such as gender equality, for example, into the mainstream of society. Policy processes are reorganized in order to move the attention of gender equality to everyday policies.

**Monitoring** – An ongoing process to verify systematically that planned activities or processes take place as expected or that progress is being made in achieving planned outputs.

**Non-Sexist Language** – language that does not exclude one sex or give inequitable treatment on the basis of gender.

**Policy** – A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual.

**Press release** – Information about a newsworthy event or activity your organization wants to share with the mass media. Gets the press interested in your issues and allows your organization some degree of control in the way the material is presented.

**Press kit** – Packaged written material (including speeches, press clippings, press releases, etc) with facts about your issue and information about your organization.

**Press conference** – Arranged meeting with press members to give a speech and answer questions. Use most often for a major announcement or breaking news.

**Process documentation** – The capturing of information about the progress and process of achieving objectives in print, on film or through other means so that it can become a historical record and a resource for others to use.

**Results** – Changes that can be described and measured.

**Transparent ownership and practice** – Disclosure of an organization's ownership structure and the development of processes/systems which demonstrate editorial independence and integrity.

**Transparent and responsible editorial policy** – The conformity to clear editorial policies, standards or codes covering issues of accuracy, impartiality and politics.

Sources: The Media CSR Forum, KMPG, 2005; Whose News? Whose Views?, Gender Links, 2001; Gender in Media Training, A Southern African Toolkit, Gender Links and the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, 2002; Making A Difference Strategic Communications to End Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, UNIFEM, 2003; Getting Smart- strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, Gender Links and Women's Media Watch, 2002.

#### 4. Key points to remember!

- Become conversant with the language and priorities of the media.
- Target media policy makers, media professionals and external policymakers for the development of gender policies, codes and guidelines and regulatory frameworks.
- Cultivate allies, both women and men, within the media.
- Approach the media with more than opinions. Do your homework and research to present the media with facts and figures to illustrate the issues of concern.
- Develop strong media literacy programs to build the capacity of consumers of media – the general public – to put pressure on the media. When audiences speak, the media listen, fearing loss of potential markets and revenue.
- Media monitoring is an effective tool for regularly analyzing media content in order to present the media with data and specific examples of areas of concern. Content analysis, audience research and gender and media audits also are important research techniques.
- Learn how to use the media itself to put gender and media issues onto the news agenda. The writing of opinion and commentary pieces is one media genre that is open to writers outside of the media to get their views across to a wider audience. Gender and media activists should look for and create opportunities to claim this space within the media.