

...**The GENDER  
& MEDIA  
HANDBOOK**

Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment

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## ••● THE MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES

The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (Reg. No. 234) was founded in 2001 and was officially registered in August 2004. It is affiliated to Intercollege, the largest higher education institution in the Republic of Cyprus. The Institute promotes and contributes to projects of social, political, and economic themes which relate predominantly, but are not restricted, to women. In the case of Cyprus, where the Institute is based, a gendered perspective and feminist activism comes at a very crucial time to link, prepare, and promote the socio-economic and political ideals necessary for a smoother adjustment to European Union membership.

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- Identify the need to develop new legislation that corresponds to new conditions and protects women's rights effectively.
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- Support and promote educational programmes, including post-graduate work, in related areas in collaboration with research institutes and universities.
- Develop methods and take initiatives on peace-building and conflict transformation as these relate to gender issues.
- Support regional, European, and global initiatives and programmes concerning issues affecting women's lives, such as domestic violence, substance abuse, trafficking, war, and the labour market.
- Create and support networks with other non-governmental organisations in related areas.

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## *Preface*

*The Gender and Media Handbook* is an important and much welcomed addition to worldwide efforts to promote gender equality and diversity in and through the media. Written in a lively, engaging and accessible style, it is set to become a “must have” publication for media practitioners, teachers and activists who are committed to effecting change toward gender equality, diversity and empowerment in Cyprus and in other parts of the world.

It is a valuable resource and a practical manual containing critical background on the current challenges and opportunities around gender and media issues (representation, employment, ownership, and so on); contemporary activist and academic thinking on how gender issues are linked to questions around media power and social change; advice on how to address gender issues in media institutions in order to transform organisational structures, policies and professional associations; and, finally, it includes information on the important contributions toward gender equality currently being made by activists working in alternative media and in gender and media organisations.

I share the ambitious visions around striving to achieve gender equality held by the *Handbook's* authors and supporters. Changing how women, ethnic and sexual minorities, disabled people, and other underrepresented or misrepresented groups in society are portrayed in the media is an important goal. Any improvements in their representation inevitably will have positive, material affects upon their everyday lives.

In order to further advance the aims and objectives of gender equity it is important, as authors of the *Handbook* point out, not to forget that the media will also need to change how they portray men (particularly those men who are in dominant positions in the societies in which they live). Images of dominant and non-dominant groups work in a relational way -- together they encourage audiences to regard unequal gender relations as “normal” if not necessarily “desirable”. But what to do? Some will feel there is little they can do as an individual to address what may seem to be the intransigent sexism of their society. Others will shrug their shoulders and figure that's just the ways things are -- it's “human nature”. Challenging the view which sees sexism as inevitability and providing practical advice on how individuals and groups can intervene in concrete ways to challenge such sexism is what this *Handbook* is all about.

But of course, we must also always remember that improving media images will not solve all of the problems associated with the marginalisation and disempowerment of less powerful groups in society -- inequalities need to be addressed across a range of social and institutional sites (the education system, family, religion, government, and so on).

That said, how groups of people in society are portrayed in the media can have profound and far reaching effects on social perceptions about their physical and intellectual capabilities. This is where issues of gender and democracy become fundamentally intertwined. For what are our efforts to improve equality and diversity about if not to empower women and men

from all backgrounds to fully participate as equals in democratic society -- to widen the range of voices heard? This *Handbook*, then, is an important tool that can be used to forge positive ways forward in our collective journey towards realising that goal.

Cynthia Carter lectures in the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University. She is co-author of *Violence and the Media* (Open University Press, 2003), and co-editor of *News, Gender and Power* (Routledge, 1998), *Environmental Risks and the Media* (Routledge, 2000), and *Critical Readings: Media and Gender* (Open University Press, 2004). She is a founding co-editor of the journal *Feminist Media Studies*.

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## ••● INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The handbook you hold in your hand right now is the first of its kind. Its aim is to help journalists and media professionals in Cyprus and internationally to be sensitive to gender issues such as negative portrayals of women in the media, the lack of women in leadership positions in media organisations, etc., and to provide practical help for people who want to see things change. It is designed to be used, to be thumbed through, kept on the desk next to the computer, or to service formal training seminars. Modeled on similar handbooks produced in countries as diverse as Kenya, Singapore, Norway, and elsewhere, it arrives as a punctuation mark at the end of a long project carried out by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies in Nicosia, Cyprus. As such, it represents the work and contributions of a wide range of media professionals; it stands as a testament to their interest, their commitment, and to the principle they share that things have to change, and that it is women and men in the media who will make this change happen.

There are many obstacles to changing media cultures. We see everywhere persistent negative or stereotypical portrayals of women in the conventional media that are perpetuated and accentuated by new media (for example video games, the internet and music videos). There is, furthermore, a distinct lack of media depictions of minorities or the disabled, especially in this country. In Cyprus there is an overwhelming lack of women in decision-making positions, and a lack of gender-sensitivity among media decision-makers as well as those who write policy. There is a clear lack of role models and mentors for women journalists, and no support from donor agencies for alternative media produced by women.

### The Project

It is for all these reasons that we feel that the project this handbook is the culmination of is important for Cyprus. Our objectives were, through the media, to sensitise Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to gender related issues, especially cultural practices that hinder women's development. We aimed to create a dialogue amongst journalists and media owners on gender issues and how these relate to ethnic and other types of violence and conflict, especially in Cyprus. We contributed towards the creation of a place where women of all ethnic, class, age or educational backgrounds were encouraged to participate in public dialogue, decision-making processes, and politics. Furthermore, we helped journalists discuss how they could inform and educate women on their indispensable role and contribution to the political life of Cyprus.

The media pervade all levels of society; they are everywhere, and influence attitudes towards politics in particular and how they get talked about. Fair treatment and representation of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women in media coverage is crucial especially at this time when information and communication have assumed such an important role in influencing public opinion, forming attitudes and formulating policy. Both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women are under-represented in all stages/aspects of social, political and economic life. Change the media, and you can change society.

The project was implemented in five phases and included pioneering research on how the media in Cyprus report gender, as well as workshops with journalists, a meeting with media owners/editors, an international conference with scholars, media owners/editors and all other interested organisations/individuals and finally the publication of this handbook.

## Phase One

The project began on 1 October 2003. In the first phase, the recruiting process was interesting and challenging. We had to find researchers with similar qualifications, backgrounds in research and interests, in both parts of Cyprus, in order to ensure the best and most balanced outcome possible.

Finding the researchers was difficult in each part of the island for different social and political reasons. The main obstacle was that almost nobody had done any work which even remotely related to our theme. Further, we feel that many projects where people from the north and the south of Cyprus work together, involve the same people who perpetuate and reproduce the same ideas, often without seriously reflecting upon the content of the topic in question. We wanted to introduce new people to work of this kind, and were pleased that our researchers all became “pioneers” in the field at the same time that they introduced a fresh dynamic to bi-communal work.

In the end, the first phase of the project provided us with the opportunities to create strong networks and links with colleagues who are working in the fields of gender and media in both the south and the north. By working together on this project, we have learned a lot about each others’ working conditions and it has also helped to build confidence amongst the academic community.

## Phase Two

During the second phase, high ranking media professionals from the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities participated in a seminar where the project and the findings from the research conducted in the first part were presented and discussed. The seminar focused on informing the media industry about issues affecting gender and democracy. The importance of paying attention to the voices of especially women and the way that gender issues are reported and how that affects people in Cyprus were discussed. So too was the role of media professionals as gatekeepers and the need to highlight issues of gender and ethnic relations through their newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations.

## Phase Three

During the third phase of the project, a training workshop for Greek Cypriots that lasted two and a half days took place and addressed questions such as why journalists ignore gender issues, especially in politics; why women are more reluctant than men to come forward into



public life; what are the traditions that forbid them to speak before an assembly of men; what might be some of the social restrictions imposed on them; why has the women's agenda not been clarified to journalists and female political aspirants; are media houses ready to report gender parity? The training workshop was very successful as the evaluation showed, but two things did not go as planned. First, for various reasons that could not be helped, the workshop for the Turkish Cypriot professionals has not taken place as of yet. And second, fewer journalists turned up than originally anticipated; but enough arrived to create a positive group that can work on these issues in the future.

This of course was just the beginning and our aim is to further sustain the results of the various phases of the project by engaging in a constant dialogue and facilitating discussion with a group of journalists and other media professionals in order to contribute towards a more critical and sensitive media culture on the island. We want to keep asking ourselves difficult questions, such as what is it we want from the media, more "accurate" images? How can profit-making media organisations relate to these issues? What are the implications for freedom of expression and censorship? What is the role for government in regulating media and advertising? What about voluntary codes of ethics for media? We will continue to raise such questions as we work toward our goals, long after this project has elapsed.

#### Phase Four

The fourth phase of the project *Gender, Conflict and the Media: Working towards Egalitarianism and Peace* entitled *Gender, Diversity and the Media* was organised on Saturday, 19 June 2004, at Intercollege, in Nicosia. The speakers came from the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities as well as from universities in Europe.

The conference was attended by some 50 representatives of media organisations, scholars, politicians, activists and students in the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Overall we believe that the conference was a success, raising awareness of our topic both locally and internationally.

#### Phase Five

The fifth phase of the project was to gather together materials, do research, and write the handbook you have in front of you now. The present handbook represents the first publication in Cyprus addressing this issue. It is written in a simple and clear language and includes animations and pictures to make it more user-friendly and easy to read. It has exercises that can be used for training and group discussions. It has detailed appendices, and presents useful models of how gender equality in the media has been fought for around the world, by individuals, NGOs and women's associations. In short, it fills a gap, and makes it easier for media professionals in Cyprus and abroad to start changing things. Widely distributed to local and international media professionals, editors, journalists as well as scholars, activists and students, it provides information that nobody has researched or published before.

Its importance lies in the fact that it can be used not just as a resource, but as a manual for improving practices, facilitating the media's representation of both genders fairly and promoting the more direct involvement of women in decision-making, ethnic issues and women's issues. It is a practical and tangible way to promote awareness about gender issues through the media.

As is so often the case for those seeking to raise awareness of gender equality in the media, those who put this handbook together and contributed to it had to start from scratch. It is the first effort in Cyprus to draw together so much useful information on gender and the media, to help those who want to see barriers drop and gates open to women in the field, and to provide this help in a way that people will use. We hope that this first step makes for interesting reading and that it will remain an enduring contribution as well. And of course, we welcome any feedback or contributions that will help us improve it in future<sup>1</sup>.

*Myria Vassiliadou, Phd*

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<sup>1</sup> You can find more information on this project on our website <http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org>

## ••● INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is the final stage of a year long project entitled *Gender, Conflict and the Media: Working Towards Egalitarianism and Peace*, undertaken by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. It is the culmination of a year's worth of activities which aimed to promote public awareness and discussion of gender inequality and the ways that the media can support or challenge it; to foster change in the ways the media represent women and gender issues; and to work toward gender equality in the Cypriot media workplace. The goals of this handbook, the first of its kind in Cyprus, are to further contribute to these objectives, both locally and in societies around the world, by serving as a useful training guide and comprehensive resource for those engaged in promoting gender equality through gender and media training and education, in media production, in the media workplace, through women's media and through related associations, networks and organisations.

The handbook is divided into five parts. The first part deals with why gender is an issue and with the relationships of gender, gender issues and gender inequality to the workings of the media in general, as well as specifically in Cyprus. In the second part, conceptual tools are provided which allow a rethinking of gender, media power and social change in such a way so that gender inequality, and the roles of the media in supporting it, can be better and more systematically understood and challenged. This part also presents and discusses gender sensitive practices in media production, both in news and fiction, and the ways in which they can help to promote gender equality.

Part three focuses on the associations or networks of professional women in the media around the world, and the many ways in which they help and support women and work against gender inequality in the workplace. It also includes information on the efforts and initial steps taken to create such a women's network of media professionals in Cyprus in 2004. Part four provides an overview of various forms of women's media, and gender and media organisations throughout the world; and discusses their goals, activities, the obstacles they have overcome and their achievements in working for gender equality. The last section, Part five, contains eight appendices with information on how to use this handbook for training purposes as well as practical resources, tools and contacts, (which will be helpful for anyone working towards gender equality in and through the media), articles on gender and the media, and a comprehensive bibliography for further and in-depth reading on the issues discussed throughout this handbook.

The overall structure, content and approach of this handbook addresses certain issues and problems which repeatedly emerged during my experiences in gender and media education and training on Cyprus and elsewhere, which I feel have not been satisfactorily dealt with in other handbooks. First, during these experiences it became clear to me that a subtle, and often not so subtle, resistance to many ideas and practices was due to the tenacious persistence of many widespread myths, even among those positively predisposed to gender and media training and even among those with relatively sophisticated understandings of journalism, the media, and issues related to gender inequality.

These myths are:

- many of the social and cultural characteristics of women are "given" by their biological nature, thus women are "unnatural" when they transgress or do not accept them.
- gender inequality is not a widespread social, political and cultural problem anymore; it is only experienced by certain women who do not know how to stand up for themselves.
- feminists are women who are "unnatural" in some way or who promote ideas that go against the natural order of things.
- the media are monolithic, all-powerful institutions which transmit "messages" to passive audiences.
- the journalistic practices of news reporting simply involve "facts" and therefore cannot include any type of gender (or other) bias.
- social change through collective action on the part of ordinary citizens is impossible.

These myths were obstacles to a productive engagement with many aspects of gender and media training/education, and are also obstacles to the belief that working towards gender equality through collective action is necessary or possible at all.

In order to address these problematic ways of thinking, which academic research in the field of media studies and elsewhere has shown are common and persistent in public discourse in many parts of the world, the approach of the handbook involves first identifying them, and then providing basic conceptual tools and exercises for "rethinking" the assumptions on which they are based -- in particular, for "rethinking" gender, the media (their workings and relationship with audiences) and social change, and for promoting the idea that change is possible.

Second, another issue that emerged from my experiences in gender and media training/education, is that the opportunity and space for debate and discussion on issues of gender inequality (rare for most of the participants but highly appreciated by them) are extremely productive in many ways. Thus, the handbook has been designed to structure, support and promote discussions which allow exploration of the relevance of the materials on gender, media and gender equality for individual lives and local societies; the sharing of information and the exchange of ideas; the opportunity to develop and rehearse arguments against gender inequality; to provide and receive support; and to build confidence in discussing, and working towards, gender equality.

Third, it has always been obvious to me that participants and students come to gender and media training/education knowing very little about the collective and individual efforts and achievements of women and men throughout history who have worked to change thinking on gender and the conditions of women's lives. They also know very little about present efforts to do so, whether in relation to the media or not. And finally, they have little idea about how to get involved in, or to initiate, such efforts in the future in their own communities.

Throughout this handbook, information is provided on the struggles for gender equality throughout history and at present, from around the world, with special focus on those taking place in rela-

tion to the media. The goals, obstacles and achievements of individuals and collectivities are discussed and references provided for more information. Also, a wide range of practical resources are included in the Appendices, such as training advice, how-to information for setting up gender and media projects, online educational materials, and contacts for help and advice. All of these materials are important in assisting, motivating, and encouraging participation in activities that promote gender equality, as well as their initiation in the future.

I hope that the *Gender and Media Handbook: Promoting Equality, Diversity and Empowerment* will be useful and of inspiration, to those currently working towards gender equality and to those who will do so in the future, not only in Cyprus but around the world.

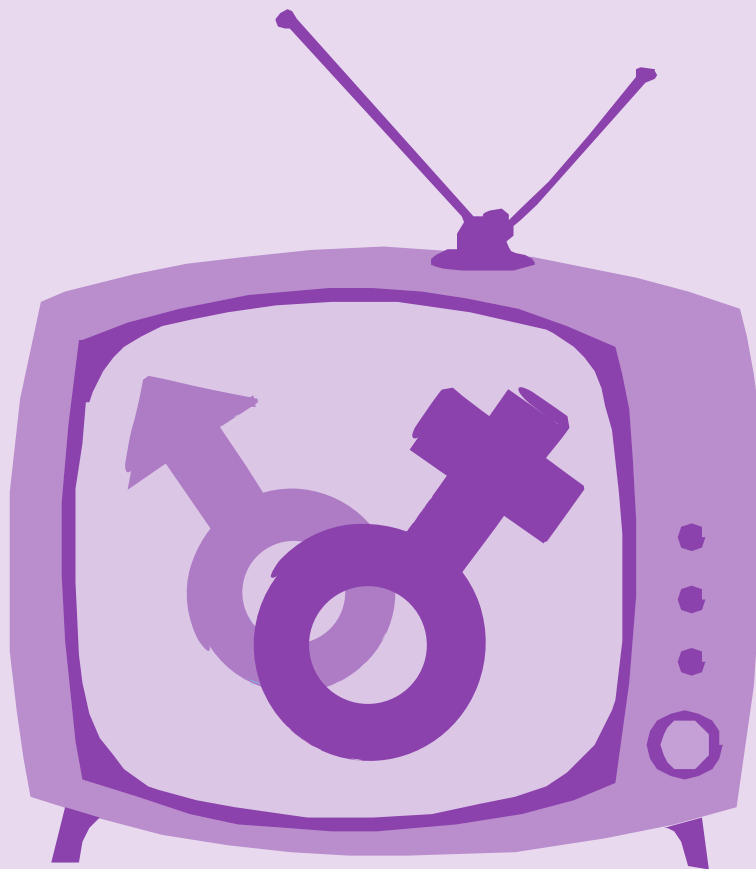
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*September 2004*

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GENDER AND MEDIA AROUND THE WORLD AND  
IN CYPRUS: OBSTACLES AND POTENTIALS FOR  
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND EMPOWERMENT



*“Know the media, change the media, be the media!”*

From the Media Carta Manifesto

<http://www.mediacarta.org>

## GENDER AND THE MEDIA: A WAKE-UP CALL

by Krini Kafiris

### ••● GENDER ISSUES ARE CRUCIAL NOT ONLY TO WOMEN'S LIVES, BUT ALSO TO DEMOCRACY AND THE FUTURE OF HUMANKIND

Gender refers to the different sets of social and cultural characteristics that are widely, but falsely, thought to be inherent to each sex as a result of natural or biological reproductive difference. Women are discriminated against on the basis of gender, in both the private and public spheres, as the assumed, "natural" characteristics of the female gender are commonly considered to be inferior to those of men.

Gender inequality between women and men means that women's lives around the world tend to be characterised by:

- less access to and control of resources (such as economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital, education, reproductive/other health services)
- heavier, multiple burdens (care of the household, children, spouse, the elderly, work outside the home, and more)
- higher rates of abuse, intimidation, sexual harrassment and violence
- less power to determine and express sexuality
- lower wages, often for the same amount and quality of work
- fewer opportunities for equal career development
- less participation in decision-making processes in the private and public spheres

### What is social, cultural and symbolic capital?

According to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984: 114), capital can be understood as a "set of actually usable resources and powers" which individuals use in their pursuit of their goals and objectives. Capital can be economic (material wealth and assets), social (resources accessed through social networks), cultural (knowledge, skills and competencies) and symbolic (elements which provide for an image and reputation of prestige). Gender inequality means that women tend to have less economic capital than men, as well as less of the type of social, cultural and symbolic capital that men have, which is especially valued by society.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Transl. R. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press.



Gender inequality means that women are subordinate to men and have less power, fewer resources, and fewer opportunities to determine their own lives, as well as the direction of the societies in which they live. The specific forms and intensity of gender inequality experienced by women depend on the particular nexus of gender with other factors such as race, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability, and geographical location.

Gender inequality is not simply a "female" or marginal issue, but a crucial problem for society as a whole - over fifty percent of the world's population is not fully contributing to many of the crucial activities and decision-making processes which are shaping the present and future of humankind. This means that gender inequality is impoverishing both women's lives and the potentials of humanity as a whole.

### Some Facts on Gender Inequality

Despite calls for gender and equality, women are significantly under-represented in governments, political parties and at the United Nations.

Two thirds of the world's 876 million illiterates are women, and the number of illiterates is not expected to decrease significantly in the next twenty years.

More women than men lack the basic literacy and computer skills needed to enter "new media" professions.

Self-employment and part-time and home-based work have expanded opportunities for women's participation in the labour force but are characterised by lack of security, lack of benefits and low income.

More women than before are in the labour force throughout their reproductive years, though obstacles to combining family responsibilities with employment persist.

Physical and sexual abuse affect millions of girls and women worldwide -- yet are known to be seriously under-reported.

Women and girls comprise half of the world's refugees and, as refugees, are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence while in flight, in refugee camps and/or during resettlement.

From [http://www.afrol.com/Categories/Women/wom001\\_un\\_statistics.htm](http://www.afrol.com/Categories/Women/wom001_un_statistics.htm)

For more statistics on women and gender inequality see

<http://unstat.un.org/unsd/demographics/products/indwm/indwm2.htm>



## Exercises

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- List other, or more specific, dimensions of gender inequality in your society, both in the private and the public spheres. Include examples from your everyday life.
  - Do all women in your society experience the same forms or intensities of gender inequality? What other factors affect how gender inequality is experienced among different women in your society?
- 

### ••• WHAT DO THE MEDIA HAVE TO DO WITH GENDER?

In most places throughout the world, the media have become crucial to the workings of the economic, political, social and cultural spheres; at the global, national and local levels, as well as for everyday life in the private sphere, where they are important sources of both information and entertainment.

The media provide spaces in which social, political and cultural issues are presented, debated and discussed. They play a significant role in determining which issues will be considered important and legitimate in a society and how they will be defined and discussed. The media do not simply disseminate particular messages to passive audiences. Instead, both through news and entertainment, they produce and disseminate many of the resources -- information, ideas, ways of thinking, assumptions, frameworks, beliefs, values, narratives -- which we actively and continuously use to understand and think about the world, others, our relationships and ourselves. Media resources shape our understandings, which guide our individual actions and activities, and also influence collective decision-making processes and policy formation in the public and political spheres. Thus, the media can play a role in bringing about social change.

**media = resources + spaces**

Although it is an issue that is often neglected, the media play a significant role in providing many of the resources which we use to think about gender and gender related issues: about what it means to be a woman or a man, about gender roles in the public and private spheres, sexuality, parenthood, and what we consider to be (or not to be), natural, normal, acceptable, desirable and possible in relation to these aspects of our lives.

The media are also sites, or spaces, where gender and gender issues can be discussed and debated, both in news and in fiction, and they can play a significant role in determining whether or not gender issues will widely be considered important and legitimate social, political and cultural issues in a particular society.

By providing both such resources and spaces, the media can play a role in shaping how we think and feel about gender and gender issues.

## ●●● THE MEDIA ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM BUT THEY CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

In many places around the world, the media provide an extremely limited range of resources which promote limited and biased conceptualisations of women: for example, women are portrayed almost exclusively as objects of male desire or as mothers, they are shown to be creatures of lesser intelligence with interests limited to the domestic sphere, they are valued largely for their ability to have children and for a specific type of idealised beauty which, for the overwhelming majority of women around the world is unattainable, and they are not represented as multi-faceted and more complex human beings as men are. Media spaces often do not include discussion and debate on a wide range of gender related issues (such as sexuality, violence to women, the problems of working mothers and many more) nor a wide range of voices, ideas and positions on them.



“In a recent edition of the [U.S.] magazine show 20/20, several ten year old boys were shown some photos of fashion models. The models were pencil thin. Yet the pose was such that a small bulge of the hip was forced, through the action of the body, into protuberance -- as is natural, unavoidable on any but the most skeletal or the most tautly developed bodies. We bend over, we sit down and the flesh coalesces in spots. These young boys, pointing to the hips, disgustingly pronounced the models to be “fat”. Watching the show, I was appalled at the boys’ reaction.

Yet I couldn't deny that I had also been surprised at my own current perceptions while re-viewing female bodies in movies from the 1970s; what once appeared slender now seemed loose and flabby. Weight was not the key element in these changed perceptions -- my standards had not come to favour *thinner* bodies -- but rather, I had come to expect a tighter, smoother, more "contained" body profile."

Bordo, S. (1998) "Reading the Slender Body" in *The Visual Culture Reader*. London: Routledge. p. 216.

"The media promote and reflect the current mainstream culture's standards for body shape or size and importance of beauty. The media reflect images of thinness and link this image to other symbols of prestige, happiness, love and success for women. Repeated exposure to the thin ideal via the various media can lead to the internalization of this ideal. It also renders these images achievable and real. Until women are confronted with their own mirror images they will continue to measure themselves against an inhuman ideal."

Dittrich, L. "About Face Facts on the Media" *About-Face*,  
<http://www.about-face.org/r/facts/media.shtml>

### Consider the findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project:

"Around the world, women comprise 43% of journalists but only 17% of interviewees. In the North American sample, which includes Canada, female journalists comprise only 38% of the total. That's 5% below the international average."

"The largest proportion of male interviewees, 29 percent, appear in stories on politics and government, while the largest proportion of female interviewees, 20 percent, appear in stories on disasters, accidents and crime."

The occupation of women and men in the news differ in two very striking ways: politicians and government spokespersons account for 19 percent of women and 51 percent of men; people whose occupation is unspecified account for 28 percent of women and 9 percent of men. Because women appear in news as victims more frequently than men, they are more frequently portrayed with no specific occupation.

<http://www.mediawatch.ca>

However, the media, both commercial and public or state broadcasting, can provide more diverse resources that can be used to challenge gender inequality or understandings of women as limited and subordinate entities. Such resources can include news items on a variety of women's individual and collective activities in the public sphere; the inclusion of female experts, discussions, and debates on various dimensions of gender inequality which include different points of view from different women; documentaries on gender issues, and female characters and narrative explorations of women's experiences in media fiction that are characterised by diversity, complexity, ambiguity.

Alternative media output produced by and for women in women's media can provide spaces in which a greater variety of women's voices and experiences, past and present, are made public and shared, where information and support can be provided on dealing with gender inequality and other issues relevant to different women's lives. The internet also provides spaces (bulletin boards, e-mail, websites, networks) where women can share experiences, seek information, know-how, advice and help; it provides access to online global and local information resources on gender, and the opportunity for direct communication between individuals, groups, organisations and institutions working to promote gender equality around the world.

"If I'd known I was going to live this nightmare, I would have let him rape me." Claudia Rodriguez spent over a year in prison for the homicide of her would-be rapist, awaiting trial and the possibility of 15 years in prison for her act of self-defence. Women's organisations and activists in Mexico mobilised support for her case, declaring her innocence and recognising the horrible legal precedent a guilty verdict would represent for all women and their possibility to defend themselves from assailants: "As long as Claudia is a prisoner, we are all prisoners." The women's e-mail activist network Modemmujer sent out Claudia's words and situation over the Internet to hundreds of women and women's organisations in Mexico, Latin America, and North America, with calls for letters to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Department of Justice. Mobilisation by women's organisations in Mexico City resulted in women flooding the hearing process and public protests. Letters were sent from all over Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Canada, and the United States. Claudia was freed, although the verdict review stated that she had used "excessive force" in her self-defence, and the judge could have sentenced her to an additional five years in jail.

Smith, E. (1997) "Mexican women's movement makes internet work for women", *Connected*, <http://www.connected.org/women/erika/htmlr>

Read more about Latin American women and the internet in  
Burch, S. (1997) "Latin American women take on the Internet", *Connected*,  
<http://www.connected.org/women/sally.html>

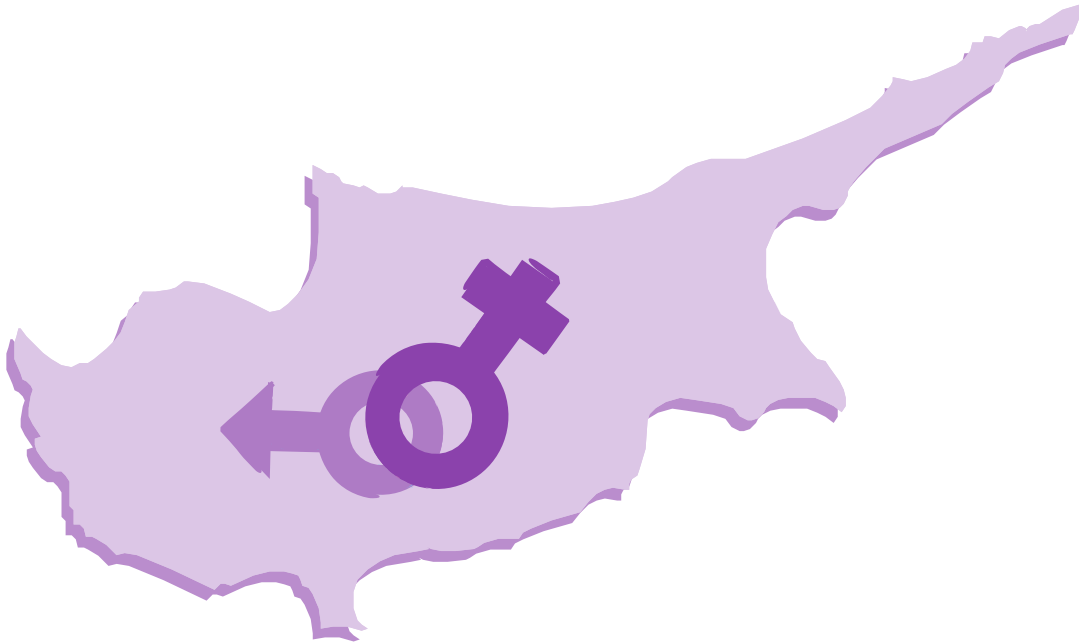
## Exercises

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- Imagine that you are an alien from another planet who has just turned on the television in your society. What kind of resources (information, ideas, ways of thinking, frameworks, assumptions, values, narratives) does television provide you with on women? Refer specifically to advertising, news and fiction programmes.
  - Can you name any television or radio programmes, films, newspaper columns, magazines or websites which have challenged, or which challenge, gender inequality in your society? How do they achieve this? What kind of resources on gender and gender issues do they provide?
  - Are there local women's organisations, internet networks and/or mailing lists for women or gender issues where you live? If you don't know, find out! Who is involved? What are their activities?
  - Think of an activity promoting gender equality that the internet could be used for where you live. What needs would be addressed by this which are not being addressed at present?
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## GENDER ISSUES IN CYPRUS

*By Spurgeon Thompson*



### ••• “YOU’VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY?”

The fact is that the majority of Cypriot women don’t see themselves as oppressed, discriminated against, or prevented from growing as people. According to an extensive, and groundbreaking study by Maria Hadjipavlou, *Women in the Cypriot Communities* (2004), most Cypriot women in the Greek Cypriot community and Turkish Cypriot community are married, got married for love, and believe their marriages are getting better with effort from both sides. At the same time, almost all of them know about and use contraception regularly, believe sex before marriage is fine, and value sex in and of itself.

Most Cypriot women don’t feel particularly excluded from the wider public and aren’t really active or interested in public organisations anyway, and are therefore unlikely to mobilise to secure their rights outside of the home. A significant percentage don’t care about politics -- and don’t think politics, the Cyprus problem, or traditional male spheres really make much of a difference to their lives. (Though a huge percentage of them would vote for a woman candidate for president in their respective communities, if one stood for election.) Perhaps what best defines the experience of being a woman in Cyprus today is a stated satisfaction with the status quo and a firm belief that opportunities for women are freely available to any who want them. In other words, most Cypriot women think things have gotten better for them, and that, over time, things will eventually improve even more. Women, as the 1990’s Virginia Slims cigarette advert has it, “have come a long way, baby” and they aren’t going back.

## ••● THE CRACKS IN THE GLASS: A SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES

While most women in Cyprus seem to be satisfied with their lives and their opportunities, it's probably because they don't see oppression the way, for example, the United Nations or most Western countries do. In other words, most women don't know what they don't have. Such widespread ignorance is what makes equality difficult to achieve. And the media, in particular, plays a pivotal role in reinforcing such attitudes towards the status quo in Cyprus, since it rarely directly and consistently addresses the key issues of gender equality that it should. In Cyprus, the list of gender related issues is a long one.

- Recent, publicised reports on domestic violence (physical and psychological) in Cyprus, for example, show that it only infrequently gets reported to the police (and when it is, police are not trained well enough to respond properly to it). Plus Social Services don't have the resources they need to sufficiently help abused women and children.
- Rape, sexual harassment, childhood sexual abuse, and violence towards women in all forms, is treated as "natural," something to be both ashamed about and to never discuss openly. All are entrenched taboos.
- Educational opportunities and career tracks are as limited in Cyprus as they were in the USA, for example, in the early 1970's. For example, more than 75 % of all teachers (particularly in primary and pre-primary schools) in the Greek Cypriot community are women according to informal estimates, as are 63.1% of secondary school teachers in the Turkish Cypriot Community.
- Stereotypes prescribing particular roles as homemakers, mothers, beauticians, teachers, nurses, secretaries, etc., saturate the media and public discourses. Newspapers, magazines, and television media in particular, rarely present other examples of what women can do with their lives.
- A huge number of female domestic workers from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and India are contracted in terms of near indentured servitude in the Republic of Cyprus. Obligated to work extremely demanding schedules, live on premises, and under threat of deportation, their lives are precarious and stress-filled.
- In the Greek Cypriot community, prostitution by foreign workers from Romania, Russia, Ukraine, and other Eastern European countries is widespread and unregulated. The extent of unregulated prostitution arguably affects not only gender attitudes, but also divorce rates and the demographics of such a small island population. Prostitution and trafficking also exist in the Turkish Cypriot community, where the majority of Eastern European women are registered as "consomatrices".

In plain terms, women in Cyprus are treated as second-class citizens -- if they are treated as citizens at all. Almost all important decisions in Cyprus are made by men. 97% of key positions of authority and decision-making in the public sector are held by men (presidents, mayors, elected representatives, appointed ministers, high-level bureaucrats). The private sector is run by men so exclusively that some estimates put the percentage of women in decision-making within private companies and businesses at 0.5%. That is, men make about 99.5% of all decisions about how much people are paid, who gets hired, what products get



stocked and advertised, what investments are made, and what happens to the money made off the labour of the large percentage of women who work in Cyprus (part-time and full-time). Women make lower than the European Union average than men for the same work, and are often exploited in insecure part-time positions because they are expected to spend most of their time raising children.

## ••● THE WAY WOMEN EXPERIENCE IT

Qualitative studies involving focus groups, discussions, recorded interviews, and meetings, always paint a different picture of life under the gender divide. When surveyed for statistics, women are sometimes more apt to answer positively. Talking on their own, or in guided discussions of gender issues, attitudes come out in sharper relief. Part of Hadjipavlou's 2004 study aimed at introducing dialogue exactly for this reason, to make interaction happen for the purpose of getting at what lies beneath the statistics. In focus groups, she got that. "The perspectives that unfold during the interactions reveal women's realities and expectations, and may lead to new knowledge and truth" (2004:133). Here is a sample of Cypriot women's attitudes towards their lives.

## ••● RESIGNATION

With most power in men's hands and most women obliged to find meaning in their lives through the family and home, one of the prevalent attitudes that persists is resignation. In short, women in Cyprus feel overworked, and too tired to mobilise for change. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That's an attitude that prevails because most women don't know what to change in society and how.

"We as women have a lot of power and talents but we do not really utilise them. This is so because we get tired and end up saying 'let the other do it.' There is, however, a contradiction here because we ourselves become demanding of others or from our environment. Many of us can contribute but we choose not to and keep waiting for the others to do it. This shows that our sense of social responsibility is not as developed as it should be."

*Greek Cypriot participant*

## ●●● CONFORMITY



Another prevalent attitude is the one which says: don't make trouble. Because Cyprus is such a small place, everybody knows what everybody else is doing, with family members and neighbours vigilantly reinforcing the status quo through exercised group pressure. The conditions under which young women date, for example, are like those of a fish bowl. A mother's first concern, for instance, is not sexual education for a dating child, or her daughter's happiness, but "what people will think."

"I wouldn't be very happy with my daughter going out with men when the people start talking about it. I might trust my daughter but I also don't like people talking about her, you know, if she goes out with different men, then no one will marry her... you have to play by society's rules."

*Turkish Cypriot participant*

## ●●● THE RUMOUR MILL

Disciplining conformity is something the family does, and this plays out in the generation gap between women. Mothers and daughters are sometimes miles apart in Cyprus, with expectations about behaviour (particularly marriage and raising children) being a constant source of tension. Young, educated women in particular, who study abroad and then return home often find a Cyprus that crushes confidence through family pressure.

"When I came back to Cyprus, after I finished my studies abroad, I decided not to marry, against my mum's wishes. I started work, got my economic independence and decided to stay single. This was something my mum could never understand. Whenever she gets together with her friends that's all she can talk about. I do have many other positive features. Can't they talk about them? Instead of looking at my life and seeing that I am happy the way I am, she becomes critical of the way I act and have chosen to live. She is disappointed because I stand outside the socially expected roles."

*Turkish Cypriot participant*

## ••● DEALING WITH DISRESPECT

Where women are visible in public, it is as part-time workers, for example, in customer service related jobs, such as tellers, cashiers, and lower level employees throughout the service sector. Training for service workers, especially part-time women, is unheard of (aside from those who interact with tourists, and then only in major establishments), so many feel unappreciated and disrespected, like badly treated servants, unable to offer conclusive advice on their products.

“When I go to a customer they don’t respect me because I am a woman. They dismiss me and ask for a male colleague. Will this change when we enter the European Union and, if so, how long would this take? When I go somewhere, I don’t want to be judged according to how I look or the way I dress, I want equal respect.”

*Turkish Cypriot participant*

## ••● THE NUMBERS: HOW CYPRUS COMPARES

Statistical indicators help give us a larger picture of gender inequality in Cyprus, while also allowing us to see how Cyprus stacks up when compared to other nations. In summary, Cyprus ranks low in all of the standard indicators used to assess gender equality around the world. Here are some examples.

## ••● RANKED LOW ON GENDER EQUALITY

Although there are differences between the two main communities, Cypriots enjoy a relatively high standard of living. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report of 2004 ranks the Republic of Cyprus as 30th on the Human Development Index (HDI)<sup>2</sup> as 0.883 among the 177 countries surveyed. Data collected from the Turkish Cypriot community suggests that they would have been ranked 53rd.<sup>3</sup>

This doesn’t mean that women get anywhere near an equal share, though. Since 1995 the UNDP has used two other indicators to offer a better understanding of the status of women. The gender-related development index (GDI), introduced in the Human Development Report 1995, measures achievements in the same dimensions using the same indicators as the HDI but covers inequalities between women and men. According to the Gender Development Index (GDI) the Republic of Cyprus is ranked 30th while the Turkish Cypriot community would be ranked 63rd out of the 177 countries surveyed.

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<sup>2</sup> The Human Development Index is calculated as a composite of adult literacy, life expectancy at birth, and per capita income, providing a snapshot of the standard of living people have around the world.

<sup>3</sup> HDI, GDI and GEM calculations for the Turkish Cypriot community are not official UNDP figures but of M. Yetkili, F. Lisaniler and S. Ufural, from their paper titled “Occupational Segregation: The Position of Women in the TRNC Labour Market”, Women 2000.

Another, and more useful index, is the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), showing the relative deprivation of women with regard to the distribution of economic and political opportunities which clearly indicates how Cyprus compares in terms of gender equality. The gender empowerment measure (GEM) reveals whether women take an active part in economic and political life. It focuses on gender inequality in key areas of economic and political participation and decision-making. It traces the number of women in parliament; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female professional and technical workers -- and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence. Better than the GDI, the GEM shows inequality in opportunities in specific areas.

According to the GEM, the Republic of Cyprus is ranked 49th while the Turkish Cypriot community would be placed 55th among the 78 countries on the list.

### ••• HIGH PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKFORCE, LOWER PAY



- According to the Labour Force Survey in the year 2003, 72.2% of the people in the Republic of Cyprus of working age are actively taking part in the labour force. Participation rates for males are estimated at 82.1% compared to 63.1% for females. Compare that to 1960, when women in Cyprus made up only 40.8% of people in the workforce, and 1984 when it was 42.8%.

- The unemployment rate for men in the Republic in the year 2003 was 3.8% while 4.6% for women. In the Turkish Cypriot community 56% of the working age population works. Of women between the ages of 15 to 64, 40.4% are active in the labour force while 70.2% of men between the ages of 15-64 are active.
- According to the United Nations Statistics Division report *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics*, labour force participation rates of women in Cyprus are relatively high. Only 35% of women work in Italy and 39% in Greece, while in 2000 it was 49% for the Republic of Cyprus and 40 % for Turkish Cypriots.
- Full-time versus part-time work is still a big question, and self-employment is limited. Among Turkish Cypriots, to take just one example, 83% of employed women are salary and wage earners. Only 13.7% of women, for example, in the Turkish Cypriot community are self-employed. These few women are mostly tailors, babysitters, cleaners, pharmacists, architects, doctors and lawyers. The number of entrepreneurs is only 1.7% of everybody who works, compared to 4.8% for men.
- Although there has been progress in terms of gender convergence in pay, there still remains the problem of gender segregation in employment. Cyprus was ranked dead last in terms of gender segregation in employment among the E.U. candidate countries in the year 2001, according to the *Report on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men in the European Union*.

## ●●● EDUCATION

- The Republic of Cyprus Statistical Service reports in the *2003 Statistical Indicators for Gender Comparison in Cyprus* that 12.8% of women and 15.9% of men are estimated to have university degrees.
- The 1996 population census is still the official study at hand on the literacy and education levels of women and men in the Turkish Cypriot community. The adult literacy rate according to the census records is at 96%. The State Planning Organisation of the Turkish Cypriot Administration reports that 7% of women and 10.8% of men are university graduates.
- The more recent study on education levels and regional discrepancies can be found in Dr. Lisaniler's "Occupational Segregation" (2000). The author notes that most of the illiterate people live in just one region. When analysed from the perspective of origin of birth it becomes clear that 15.8% of women born in Turkey are illiterate compared to only 1.2 % of women born in Cyprus.
- Hadjipavlou's work (2004) on women in different communities suggests that there are women from all the communities ceasing their education early because they can't afford to continue, or because they get married. Out of all the women surveyed 15.4% did not continue their education because they got married, for example.

## Exercises

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- Make a list of the careers women traditionally take up in Cyprus. Discuss the ways in which educational institutions reinforce these career tracks. Which careers are not on your list? Why do you think they aren't?
  - How can individual teachers reinforce traditional educational or career tracks for women in the classroom? Plan a feature story on a particular teacher who either reinforces them or provides alternatives. Make a list of the questions you would ask the teacher in the interview.
  - What is the link between education and the home? Are families more responsible than school for educational decisions made by young women in Cyprus? If so, how do they exert their influence?
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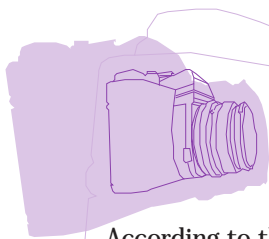
## ••● DECISION-MAKING

- The numbers of women in decision-making positions and political appointments in the Republic of Cyprus are bleak. Only 23 out of the 87 (26.4%) judges are women, 51 out of the 244 (20.9%) senior level civil servants, 74 out of the 398 (18.6%) members of the municipal councils and other local area governing bodies, just 2 out of the 23 chief editors of national newspapers, and 346 out of 794 journalists are women.
- In the current parliament, there are only six women deputies out of a total of 56, accounting for just 10.7 percent, compared to three women deputies, or about 5 percent, in the previous parliament. Only 4 out of 33 mayors are women.
- Women's share at all governmental levels averages at about 3 percent. Statistics indicate that the number of women stands at 10 percent for key managerial positions and 11 percent in civil service, despite a higher number of women being employed there.
- Analysts attribute the poor representation of women in positions of key decision-making partly to the lack of infrastructure to support working mothers, among other factors.
- In the Turkish Cypriot community, the highest percentage of women participating actively in trade unions is 21.4% for the age group 29-38.

## Exercises

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- Can you name two female politicians in your society?
  - Can you name two female judges in your society?
  - Can you name two female writers in your society? What have they written? What are their works about?
  - Can you name two female film directors in your society? What are their films about? If you can't, do some research. Find out the names of these women, consider them in the future as potential sources or interviewees, and even meet them.<sup>4</sup>
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### SNAPSHOT: Domestic Violence

According to the study *Violence in the Cypriot Family* by the Centre of Research and Development in 2000, 89.2% of Cypriots surveyed denied ever having experienced domestic violence. Only 9.4% claimed to have in the past. And a slim 1.4% admitted to being a victim of domestic violence at the time of the survey.

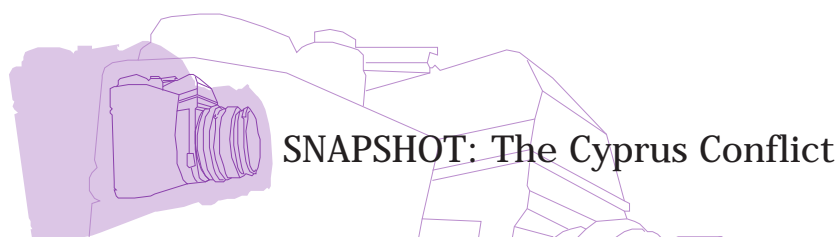
- Out of 94 people who claimed to have been victims of violence, only 82 proceeded to describe what kind of violence they had suffered, a fact that may denote various conditions. Either they were too distressed to answer the questions that followed (on the survey), or were not sure of what exactly to describe as being an act of violence.
- Out of those people who had managed to continue to the rest of the questions, 57.3% claimed to have been violated by their parents (mostly their father), 18.3% claimed to have been violated by their spouse and 14.6% by others such as uncles, brothers etc. There is a critical discussion about this piece of research in the section on research.
- According to 2003 police statistics, out of the 2548 victims recorded in the database, only 141 were girls, 118 boys, while the occurrence of violence is a lot higher in women, at 1925, and naturally lower for men with a number at 355.
- Of 667 victims of violence, 438 were female adults, 170 were children, and only 37 are male adults.

On the other hand, when referring to perpetrators, out of a total of 639 possible perpetrators, 427 were fathers / husbands, 79 were the mothers/wives, 46 were children, 17 brothers / sisters and 70 were other members of the family.

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<sup>4</sup> In Cyprus, Teresa Karakana, Katerina Stamatou and Despo Michaelidou are judges and Efi Papadopoulou is on the Supreme Court. Three female Cypriot writers are Neshe Yashin, Niki Marangou and Nora Nadjarian.

- How would you define domestic or honour related violence?
- How is violence against women and girls in the family reported in the media in your society? Are these reports based on statistics? Interviews? Do they include the viewpoints of the victims? Do the media give reasons for the existence of this type of violence?
- What perspectives are missing from reports on domestic violence in your society? What perspectives do you think should be included so that gender inequality is not reproduced, or so that it is challenged?



### SNAPSHOT: The Cyprus Conflict

Women who work for gender equality in Cyprus are forced to confront the political priorities of the two main communities. They are asked to choose: what comes first? The Cyprus problem or gender issues? In the male dominated public sphere, the Cyprus problem always takes centre stage. Of course it's a false choice: gender issues and the Cyprus problem are interwoven, and always have been. Women in both communities were affected significantly by the migrations, displacements, war, resulting rapes, abuse, ethnic and inter-communal conflicts that arose as a result of political divisions.

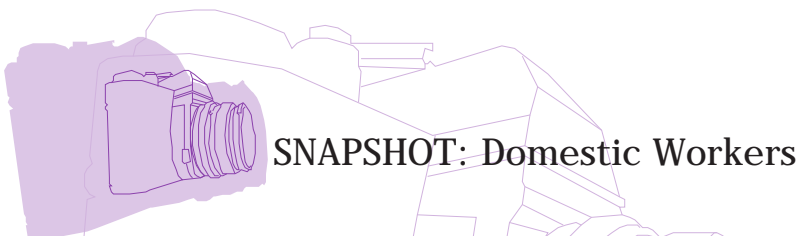
- As in all conflicts, male heroes are discussed with admiration at schools, analysed in documentaries shown on television, celebrated on national days. Women are relegated to supporting roles as background “heroines”, the hidden “warriors”, but remain often the worst affected victims of war: in Cyprus they were killed, captured and raped; they were abused and threatened; they were left refugees, stigmatised, made widows, etc. The list is a long one.
- Thousands of women in Cyprus have been displaced from their homes as a result of the events of 1974 and the 1960's. Some lost members of their family in war others were listed missing in action.
- In a 1983 analysis, Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that for the women of such subordinate groups, it is not a practical political possibility to concentrate on eliminating sexism when other issues such as ethnic conflict are presented to them to be of more importance, as part of the dominant nationalist patriarchal discourse.
- Rape, especially, at the hands of “the enemy” put women victims in the position of being doubly shamed. Traumatized by the rape, often pregnant with “the enemy,” large numbers of women in both communities were left permanently scarred and psychological wrecks.



Despite the extent of involvement of women in the events causing the Cyprus problem and its persistence, the percentages of women who think it obstructs the promotion and discussion of women's issues are mixed.<sup>8</sup>

## Exercises

- Ethnic conflict often forces women to choose between taking sides in a war or advancing their own interests. Men, who for the most part are doing the fighting and starting the wars, often see it as no choice at all, since, according to them, those who distract attention and resources away from the aims of nationalist war are traitors. Play the parts of man vs. woman in this discussion, and make a case for the merits of each side. What are the assumptions that the man in this sketch makes about the issue of gender equality and women's rights?
- How do the media represent women in ethnic conflict or war? How do the media represent women working for peace? Discuss the language, images and metaphors commonly used in such news reports. Do these reports reflect women's experiences from their own points of view? If so, what are these points of view? What points of view are excluded and why should they be included in your opinion? How would their inclusion promote women's empowerment and gender equality?



### SNAPSHOT: Domestic Workers

Today in the Republic of Cyprus, with a total population of 740,000 there are an estimated 40,000 foreign workers, approximately 11,000 of which labour as domestic workers. Almost all of them are women, and work on premises, 6 days a week, and for sometimes up to 12-15 hours. Sundays are their only day off.

“There is often a sense of deep suspicion, mistrust and fear expressed towards these women. A Cypriot employee I talked to commented “They [Sri Lankan women] lie, all the time, all lies!”

One women said that her employers would only give her vegetables, either raw or boiled, and bread to eat, never meat. She said that when she came to Cyprus she

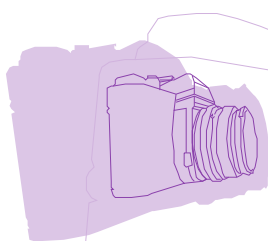
<sup>8</sup> According to Hadjipavlou's 2004 study, 36.2% of Greek Cypriot women, and 41.1% of Turkish Cypriot women thought the Cyprus problem did not block the way to achieving gender equality. About a quarter of those surveyed, however, saw it as “very much” delaying it. And 37.1 percent of Greek Cypriot and 34.2 percent thought it delayed discussion of gender issues “a little.”

weighed 45 kilos, and now she is only 38. She said that after food shopping her employer would count the amount of food items and number of things (raw foods as well as leftovers) each day in the refrigerator. Employers often forbid the cooking of their traditional foods in the house because of the “intolerable” smells. For her, even worse than withholding of food was the inhumane way they treated her day after day; “like a shoe,” she said to me. They worked her to death, all the while belittling her and dehumanizing her with constant invasions of privacy, no sleep or food. Her employer never paid her, after six months of work, until she ran away in what sounded like a Hollywood-style suspense story that ended in a screaming and pulling match on the Limassol highway.”

Sainsbury, S (2003), “Did you know they call us *mavroulla* [black girl]? Asian Women Experiencing Domestic Service in Cyprus,” paper presented at The Languages of Gender Conference, 16-17 May, Nicosia, Cyprus.

The way that Greek Cypriot middle-class women relate to “their” domestic servants is a particular issue, since the relatively new phenomenon has forced uncomfortable exchanges for women in Cyprus who have long been accustomed to more traditional roles as homemakers and mothers.

The Cypriot mother-in-law of an interviewee in one 2003 study employed a woman from the Philippines who also cleaned the latter’s house twice week (additional, unpaid labour). This interviewee’s advice to her mother-in-law was not to let “Nina think that she can do whatever she pleases. If she mixes with all these other maids, she is going to start wanting more and asking for things. She should know her place. She is lucky to have this job, most women in her country become prostitutes to survive.”



## SNAPSHOT: Sexual Harassment at Work

The Association for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace commissioned a study at the Centre of Research and Development in 2000 to examine its extent in the Republic of Cyprus. The sample consisted of a large number of working people, 66.6 percent of them being women and the rest men. Both personal interviews were conducted and confidential questionnaires were distributed.

- 84.4 percent of the people agreed that the phenomenon did indeed exist.

- Out of this number, 46.5 percent believed that sexual harassment was observed very regularly, 34.3 percent said it happened “sometimes” and 19.2 percent claimed that it was extremely rare.
- However, 15 percent of the respondents felt that there was no sexual harassment in the workplace in Cyprus. More than half of the respondents (51 percent) believed that people who were sexually harassed provoked it with their behaviour and appearance; 48 percent of women agreed with the above.
- Further, more men than women in the study complained of having been sexually harassed, that is, 59.3 percent of the men and 40.7 percent of the women. Moreover, 38 percent of the respondents considered the “provocative dress of women” as sexual harassment whereas only 16.5 percent felt the same in the case of men.
- More women (60 percent) felt that “provocative dress for women was sexual harassment” than men (40 percent). Again, Cypriot women appeared to be less “liberal” than men were.
- 55 percent of the women who were sexually harassed felt intense anger whereas only 5.2 percent of the men felt the same. Furthermore, 63.2 percent of the women felt greatly disturbed as opposed to 10.2 percent of the men. Finally, 26.7 percent of the women experienced “great fear” whereas no man claimed the same.

## Exercises

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- Does sexual harassment at the workplace involve fear? If so, fear of what? Make a list. Most of the time, sexual harassment in the workplace is difficult to report on because it is not sensational, nor does it involve especially powerful people. It is perhaps one of the most subtle and insidious forms of discrimination used against women. How do you think that journalists should cover this issue?
  - Write a short scenario involving sexual harassment and act it out with others. Stop at the point where sexual harassment begins. Discuss why it counts as sexual harassment and what the emotions of the victim are (such as fear, anger, humiliation etc.).
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## ●●● ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN CYPRUS: THE ORGANISATIONS

There are at least 19 associations, NGOs, organisations or long-term projects that advance the cause of gender equality currently operating in the Greek Cypriot Community. Here are 3 of the most active, including details about their activities.

## SHOWCASE ● ● ●

### International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW)

The first Cyprus Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW) was set up in 1989. By 1996 three more Clubs had been established, raising the total number of regional Clubs to four and membership to two hundred women. In 1996 BPW Cyprus was recognised and accepted as a National Federation by BPW International.

BPW Cyprus is a non profit organisation and represents women in government and professional bodies.

The main objective of the organisation is the encouragement of Cypriot women to undertake initiatives that will improve their position in the economic, social, and political life of the country.

BPW and all regional clubs, now five in number, are very active working within the context of the international themes:

- Partnerships for the Future 1996- 1999
- Empowering Women for the 21st century 1999-2002
- Enhancing Entrepreneurship in a World of Peace 2002- 2005

Address:

30, Pavlou Valdaseredi

6018 Larnaca, Cyprus

Tel: +357 24 81 80 00

Fax: +357 24 81 80 03

## SHOWCASE ● ● ●

### Women's Cooperative Bank

The Cyprus Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW), which is affiliated to the Cyprus CCI, alongside 169 other women founded the Women's Cooperative Bank "Initiative" Cyprus Ltd (WCB) in October 2000. The WCB is the first Co-Op Bank created by women in the world. It offers full-banking services equally to men and women, and at the same time has special programmes supporting women in business or otherwise. At the moment the bank is operating only in the town of Larnaca and in the very near future will open a second branch in the capital of Cyprus, Nicosia.

WCB differs from other so called "women's banks" because it does not rely on donations but on deposits and other income created by the selling of insurance, investments in government bonds etc.

It is a pioneering step in the world of banking that will not only empower women economically but will also create an example -- a model -- to be followed.

Address:

30, Pavlou Valdaseredi

6018 Larnaca, Cyprus

Tel: +357 24 81 80 00

Fax: +357 24 81 80 03

Email: [womens.coop.bank@cytanet.com.cy](mailto:womens.coop.bank@cytanet.com.cy)

## SHOWCASE ● ● ●

### Europa Donna Cyprus

Europa Donna Cyprus is a member of Europa Donna the European Breast Coalition which is an independent, non profit organisation.

The main aims of Europa Donna are

- To promote the dissemination and exchange of factual, up-to-date information on breast cancer throughout Europe
- To promote breast awareness
- To emphasise the need for appropriate screening and early detection
- To campaign for the provision of optimum treatment
- To ensure provision of quality supportive care throughout and after treatment
- To advocate appropriate training for health professionals
- To acknowledge good practice and promote its development
- To promote the advancement of breast cancer research

Address:

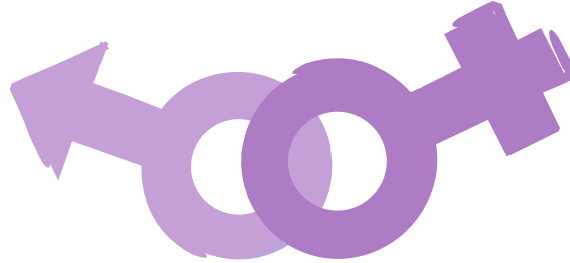
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*By Hanife Aliefendioglu and Yetin Arslan*

### ●●● INTRODUCTION: IMPORTANCE OF A STUDY OF GENDER ISSUES ON THE ISLAND

The media have been criticised by scholars in the field of women's studies and by the supporters of the feminist movement. Most media texts seem to accept traditional gender stereotypes and sexist stereotypes, and display stereotypical images by not reflecting the changes in men's and women's lives. The most common media images of women are those of housewife, wife, mother, housekeeper and consumer, while the identity of women is clearly not restricted to those roles. Therefore, the media create damaging stereotypes of some groups including women; they do not provide them with sufficient opportunities to represent themselves, and to speak out with their own voices in their own interests. Media texts reinforce stereotypes by repeating them on various occasions, rather than creating and distributing images that might challenge traditional views or that might show the changes that take place in the lives of men and women.

In today's world, the media are believed to have great power to influence society and the potential to challenge sexist and superficial views, but both in the press and in audio-visual media, sexist stereotypes are reproduced through the news, magazine programmes and commentaries. The patriarchal system that controls the production and dissemination of messages and images has an impact on the way women's reality is reflected in the media. Especially print and electronic media<sup>9</sup> are far from providing a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world.

Violent and derogatory media messages negatively affect women and their participation in society. The most optimistic interpretation of today's media might be to say that media images reinforce women's traditional roles rather than provide challenging, encouraging messages by reporting on the changes in women's lives. As a relatively new trend, women are seen as consumers, with ads and commercials targeting women of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds.

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<sup>9</sup> There are some magazine programmes on TV channels but the same topics are published in papers as well. Audiences usually watch Turkish TV channels. We believe that print media are the most representative in NC.

Women in the media are represented as dependent, with identities that serve to complement the identities of men. Women's identities are described in a language that reflects the male point of view. Most media representations ignore the identity differences between women that stem from differences in economic and socio-cultural backgrounds.

The media appear to have accepted traditional gender roles, and by repeating these roles, they seem to reinforce the traditional gender role models. They appear to disregard alternative narratives. Programmes aimed at women do not reflect any new media trends although media have more opportunities and improved technologies to get news and developments in women's lives at a universal level. However the media don't seem to be particularly concerned about reflecting the changes in women's lives, needs and roles. The traditional division of labour between men and women relegates the private sphere to women, while the public sphere is relegated to men.

The messages produced in the media to inform citizens are classified according to various criteria. When it comes to news reporting, there is a fundamental distinction between serious news and magazine news. This distinction also classifies men and women as readers or audiences. Political news, news on the economy, and external affairs are assumed to be of interest to men, while fashion, health and gossip sections are assumed to be for women. This distinction is made also in the organisation of news items and pages. The news that is assumed to be of interest to women tends to be placed on the back pages of newspapers (Timisi 1997:42). A similar distinction is made in the planning of TV and radio news. In short, the hierarchical order that organises the news items and pages, reflects the hierarchy that exists between men and women in social life.

## ••• METHOD, RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

Different indicators that display a lack of gender sensitivity can be found in the media in varying degrees and patterns. In newspapers, magazines, and TV shows, this insensitivity takes different appearances, depending on the discourse, headlines, ads and pictures.

In this study we try to examine the relationship between the discourse and the media as an indicator of social and cultural developments/climates in different social domains. Discourse is just one among many aspects of any social practice. Media language draws from existing discursive structures, meaning the users of language are likely to build meaning on the basis that is already established (Jorgensen and Philips 2002:7). In other words, we create representations of reality -- and physical objects -- through discourse (Jorgensen and Philips 2002:9). Discursive practices play important roles in the construction of social identities, including the identities of men and women, and their relationships.

In this framework, discourse includes not just language but also visual images. Therefore we are taking visual images as text to be read / investigated. Media discourse shapes and reshapes

the social world while it is being affected by social practices at the same time. Discourse contributes to the creation or reproduction of unequal power relations between men and women, as it does among social groups or classes. In other words, discursive practices serve the interests of some social groups, in this context, interests of men (Fairclough 1995: 61-63). The particular way in which women are represented is worth investigating, as well as women's identities and the relationships between men and women.

In this study we take the lack of women's news and the lack of representation of women in the context of world events and relationships in the media, in terms of discourse analysis. Since our pre-study has shown that there are not many local TV programmes<sup>10</sup>, and the most representative media in the Turkish Cypriot community are newspapers (that have high numbers of circulation and are representative), we have focused on the textual and visual representation of women in the media of the Turkish Cypriot community, mostly based on the print media. This might be seen as a limitation of this study as well.

Five daily newspapers are chosen for our investigation<sup>11</sup>. These are **Kıbrıs**, **YeniDüzen**<sup>12</sup>, **Afrika**, **Birlik** and **Halkın Sesi**. During the month of November we reviewed these newspapers on a daily basis. Moreover some periodicals like **Yeniçağ**, **Birleşik Kıbrıs** and some other daily newspapers namely **Birlik**, **Ortam** and **Cumhuriyet** are investigated randomly. We looked at news, pictures, ads, headings, and categorised some of the themes and types of representations. There is no accurate or reliable information on the number of female workers in the media of the Turkish Cypriot community. Although we were able to reach all the newspapers, radios and TV channels by mail or by e-mail, we received replies from only two radio channels and newspapers<sup>13</sup>.

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10 People in the Turkish Cypriot community receive and generally prefer to watch Turkish TV channels.

11 A Turkish businessman owns **Kıbrıs**. The company also has TV, radio and distribution company as well. **Afrika** is known as oppositional and leftist and is also the second most circulated medium after **Kıbrıs**. **YeniDüzen** and **Birlik** were included since they have connection with two important political parties CTP and UBP respectively. **Ortam** is accepted as a publication of TKP or BDH in the last general election. **Halkın Sesi** is one of the oldest newspapers in TRNC. **Cumhuriyet** has a women's page.

12 It is written this way in the newspaper.

13 From those replies, we understand that the director- news manager and production manager of Radio DAU is a man, while the manager of training, who also happens to be the assistant manager, is a woman. There is also a worker responsible for production, a news assistant who is male, and the six student trainees, four of whom are women and two are men. Officials at Radio Vatan have stated that they don't have statistical information about their listeners, but that they guess that they're among the radios with the highest number of listeners. They have no programmes aimed particularly at women. Of the 17 employees at the radio, six are males and 11 are females. The assistant director is a woman, and of the announcers, two are males and 10 are females. The radio employs two other workers, one administrator and a technician - and both are males. Of the 11 employees of the newspaper **Ortam** (circulation 1000), 6 are women. The editorial manager and one of the editors are males. At **Kıbrıs** which is the most popular newspaper (circulation 10,000), 7 out of 10 reporters and 1 out of 4 administrators are women.



## ••• FINDINGS AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT MEDIA

The language in the print media addresses men as if the public were a genderless group. Media language is like a men's dialogue that includes slang and arrogant words and phrases. This situation does not change for newspapers that define themselves as progressive, democratic and egalitarian. Media texts that refer negatively to women's social position, to women's bodies, and to women's roles in the family in columns, jokes and various programmes, are capable of criticising male hegemony in some of their articles. Even if at first glance this situation seems positive, it indicates that there are no media principles of a non-sexist approach and non-sexist language use.

Male language appears in two different ways. The first is the use of this language directly by writers, and the second is the indirect use of conversations or texts containing such language.

For instance:

- If you're going to bed with the Greeks, says Rauf Bey, be careful they don't screw you. He rang the alarm for being screwed, just in time.  
(4 Nov. 2003, Afrika)
- One of the CTP representatives has said on BRT TV that "gentlemen keep their promises"  
(2 Dec. 2003)

The language of some columnists is arrogant as well as sexist:

- ...because anything can be expected from the English. Any kind of treachery and quality of cheating women are found among them. The treachery and women-like cheating of the English should never be forgiven.  
(S. Basaran, 8 Nov. 2003, Birlik).
- They say "We don't want a lack of solution" but then they say a solution with two states is fundamental... it's like a person having two sexes, or like bisexuality. Like a man who is a Volkswagen, and who makes the machine work from behind, and who also has a turbo diesel engine in the front. In short, we haven't been able to decide...  
(S. Incirli, 17 Nov. 2003, Afrika)

Ironically, a newspaper that uses male language, and in so doing reproduces and reinforces sexist stereotypes, was, at least on once occasion, criticising that male language on its own pages. In a column a note entitled "Male Nation," mention is made of the fact that all 25 of the candidates in the National Union Party are male, with the question:

- Can there be National Union, at a place were there isn't a single woman?  
(27 Nov.2003, Afrika)

We come across examples of masculine language that indirectly degrades women with sexual innuendo e.g. the news related to the USA trying out the most powerful non-nuclear bomb, is given as follows:

- The USA is going to try the mother of all bombs.  
(20 Nov. 2003, Afrika)

The expression “trying the mother” carries sexual connotations in Turkish. Thus it’s interesting to note that this expression is chosen for the headlines.

In discussions of the Cyprus problem, male writers frequently use expressions that liken the island to a woman.

- Unfortunately we have come to understand what it is to be liberated. We have fallen into the situation of the cowboy, the Indian and the girl. In short, the one who liberates gets to fuck...  
(S. Incirli, 17 Nov. 2003, Afrika)
- How sweet this girl named Cyprus. It’s hard to decide who’ll have her. On top of that Hasipoglu insists, “I want a kiss too”.  
(Afrika, 14 Nov. 2003)

In general, there are very few by-lines belonging to women in the media of the Turkish Cypriot community. Except on days that are special to women, such as March 8, International Women’s Day; issues such as women’s disadvantageous position in society, policies for improvement in women’s status etc. are not raised. Women’s points of view are hardly seen or heard in the media. In the press, women journalists are the only ones who remind the readers of the existence of women.

YeniDüzen, Afrika and **Kıbrıs** newspapers do have women journalists and columnists. Women columnists talk about the power relationships between men and women, and the reflection of this relationship on the Turkish Cypriot agenda, which is focused on the problem of the status of Cyprus. They talk about the silencing of women’s voices. In other words, it’s only female writers who touch on the themes of the disadvantageous position of women and the inequality between men and women in the public sphere, and in debates related to issues such as politics, peace and democracy.

Throughout the month of November, 2003, female columnist Faize Ozdemirciler, discussed these issues in her writing. In other newspapers, no male writer mentioned this dimension of the issue.

- We walk as women whose words are censured in the shadow of the males who hold power, and as men whose sentences face barricades constructed by those who hold even greater power.  
(F. Ozdemirciler, 19 Nov. 2003, Afrika)

Ozdemirciler, in her column entitled *Saturday Mothers of Cyprus*<sup>14</sup>, addresses her own mother, and tells the story of the mothers of Cyprus searching for their lost loved ones (23 Nov. 2003, Afrika). In a column entitled *Two Women, One State*, she writes about the parallels between former MP in Turkey, now prisoner, Leyla Zana and Titina Loizidu who has won her case before the European Human Rights Tribunal, and has forced the Turkish government to pay her compensation (17 Nov. 2003, Afrika). In a column entitled *The Gender of the Status Quo*, Ozdemirciler criticises the point of view of a guest writer who discusses the absence of female TV executives or owners, and his assumption that there is democracy in this society.

It is the women journalists who criticise the masculine language in the media. In other words women journalists are the only ones who are aware of women's secondary position in media discourse. Tijen Zeybek, in her article entitled *Did You Say Discrimination?* criticises the repeated references to the "Greek woman Titina," and is the first to put an important question to media texts who repeat continually that Loizidu is a woman. She points out the fact that a group of women who organised a press conference to denounce discrimination against women refused to allow men into the meeting -- and ironically, the person who had given the opening speech was a man.

- I bet that no one would feel the need to insert words indicating gender, while reporting the story. Could this be because winning a case before the European Human Right Tribunal is assumed to be a male task?

(T. Zeybek, 22 Nov. 2003, YeniDüzen)

In her column entitled "The homeowner is also the owner of the state", Bolayir touches on the importance of the sacred role assigned to women in the family. She reminds her readers the social values of the past, which accepted the secret authority of women as the true owners of the house, and invites women to the political arena, by establishing the state as a large model of the family.

- The participation of cooperative and competent women will embrace all sections, whether they belong to her tribe or not, will do democracy proud.

(18 Nov. 2003, Afrika)

Columnist Sevgul Uludag of the newspaper YeniDüzen is the only journalist who has produced a news report on the occasion of November 25, International Day of Condemning Violence Against Women (26 Nov. 2003, Afrika). In newspapers, it's not possible to find portrayals of women. The interviews made by Sevgul Uludag with two women, one from Southern Cyprus and one from the Turkish Cypriot community, are important both from the point of view of presenting the public face of these women, and also from the point of view of showing women's participation in an important social and political process (26 Nov. 2003, YeniDüzen).

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<sup>14</sup> *Saturday Mothers* were the group of women who gathered in a square in Istanbul every Saturday, to demonstrate against the loss of their children or their husbands under detention.

In a column, Oya Talat invites her readers to the Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission established within a political party, and emerges as a writer who points to the importance of a gender sensitive approach in all political parties and non-government organisations, and who draws attention to the terminological difference between the terms of sex and gender. In another column, Talat likens house-visits that are made to win votes for husbands, to activity in a political kitchen and says this experience indicates “women are candidates to govern the country”. From this point of view, she finds the increase in the numbers of women in the press and in the field of education, significant (4 Nov. 2003, YeniDüzen). She is the only journalist that stresses women are being underrepresented in the media.

- While I cruise between various TV channels, I notice discussion programmes where all the participants are males. It’s always male speakers who are in the forefront...the women try to overcome obstacles through their own efforts, and to participate in TV and radio discussions on the telephone. This seems to tacitly support the view that women can’t cope with male speakers, and that they can’t discuss politics. Women might be interested in things related to the house or at most, in social issues... They are always the last whose opinions are sought.

(O. Talat, 10 March 2003, YeniDüzen).

The Chief Editor of **Kıbrıs** newspaper has explained women’s disadvantages in media. For him the most important reason why women do not exist in media is irregular working hours and working conditions in the sector. That’s why women journalists -- especially if they are married and with child or children -- cannot follow this working tempo for a long time. Considering the last developments in the Turkish Cypriot community he believes that other women do not support women in political life. **Kıbrıs** recruits more women journalists than men (7 out of 10). The editor believes that women journalists make media discourse softer and less masculine. Women readers are active. According to feedback 55% of the readers of **Kıbrıs** are female<sup>15</sup>.

The Chief Editor of Ortam says the newspaper never discriminates women in term of recruitment. They have women workers, journalists and columnists. A woman journalist holds the second post after his position. They do not think a women’s page necessary. The political understanding followed by the newspaper, which is social democracy, assumes that as well. The paper does not have a women page and does not plan to have it in the future either. Because having a special women’s page filled with magazine news and gender-based clichés is a kind of discrimination or accepting the traditional way of perceiving women.

Both editors mention women’s position in society and its effects on social life and that the difference between men and women cannot be overcome since they are different in nature.

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<sup>15</sup>**Kıbrıs** used to publish a naked woman’s photo called “beauty of the 18th page” with info of sex life drawn by books and experts. Since the editor thinks **Kıbrıs** is pioneer in print media in North Cyprus he still believes the page was useful for public training. But after the discussion of the necessity of this page in the newspaper’s administration, it was decided that the page would no longer be published in 2001.

## ••• WHEN WOMEN BECOME THE SUBJECT OF THE NEWS

Studies show that women are evaluated as source of news when they are needy, when they become victims, or when they make sacrifices as mothers and wives. Sometimes these two identities are constructed in interaction with each other. A woman, who is helpless, crushed, could be a self-sacrificing wife and a good mother. Outside these roles, to become subjects of news, to make declarations, to speak for themselves are privileges offered only to women who have a political identity. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, “for women to become part of the news is an extraordinary event”. The period of our study is an unusual period in the Turkish Cypriot community because the media representation of women has many such extraordinary examples due to the approaching general elections.

No news items reporting on the meetings and activities of women’s organisations are found in the media of the Turkish Cypriot community. This might be interpreted to mean that women’s organisations do not have activities that are worth reporting on, however it is not realistic to assume that such organisations that exist in large numbers are inactive.

During the period of this study, press announcements of a conference where the results of a study on the women of the two societies in the south and the Turkish Cypriot community would be announced appeared widely. The results of the research covering all ethnic groups living on the island were offered to the public at two separate meetings. However, while the announcement of the conference was given, no information was available on the contents and the conclusions of the conference (2 Nov. 2003 **Kıbrıs**, 4 Nov. 2003 **YeniDüzen**, 11 Nov. 2003 **Afrika**, 7 Nov. 2003 **Yeniçağ**, 8 Nov. 2003 **Birleşik Kıbrıs**).

Various interviews related to the religious holidays after Ramadan, and to holiday shopping appear in news stories. Of the ten people interviewed, saying they are not able to go on vacation, eight are women. In the news item about shopping for the holidays, all eight of the interviewees are women, and they talk about the difficulty of finding reasonably priced gifts and clothes for their children (14 and 24 Nov. 2003, **Kıbrıs**). In both of these stories, it is apparent that the small-scale shopping done for the family is considered the responsibility of the woman/wife/mother. In the same newspaper, there are some interviews on the subject of the EU progress report on Turkey’s application, discussing whether Cyprus is an obstacle to Turkey’s membership. Seven out of 10 people interviewed for that news are males (8 Nov. 2003, **Kıbrıs**).

Two news items appeared on BRT on Dec. 10, 2003, concerning two different women’s associations. Members of one of those associations had visited the offices of the BRT to state that although it had applied to UNOPS with three different projects, it had not received UNOPS support, and that UNOPS supported the opposition. The second news item concerned another women’s association whose representatives had visited a centre for the education and rehabilitation of handicapped children.

The theme of motherhood is used to address the conscience of public opinion. The priority of women's role as mothers is emphasised not only in the media, but in all public forums and activities related to women. This pattern is very noticeable in the media of the Turkish Cypriot community. In newspapers and TV talks right wing politicians and authors prefer to address people's conscience, reminding the public that woman and children were killed and raped in war-time Cyprus in 1963 and 1974.

## ••● WOMEN'S PAGES, MAGAZINE LIFE-STYLE AND ADVERTISEMENTS

Examining the women's pages in the Turkish Cypriot community print media, we see that only **Kibris** and Cumhuriyet have separate "women's pages". The other newspapers have "life style" pages which include women's issues, and generally, these pages do not have bylines.

An examination of the "women's pages" of the newspaper **Kibris**, which has the highest circulation among the newspapers of the Turkish Cypriot community, reveals several recurrent themes. These are, health problems and advice, recipes, sports, beauty and childcare.

- Pay attention to your stomach during Ramadan, in order not to endanger your health!  
(4 Nov. 2003, **Kibris**)
- Neither a depression, nor a cold: Folic Acid Revives.  
(6 Nov. 2003, **Kibris**)

A closer look at these headlines shows that the topics are of interest not only for women but for everyone. We find a similar presentation in the newspaper Cumhuriyet. For example,

- Diets that you Follow Together with Your Partner are Much More Effective,' or 'Hairloss is a Common Problem.  
(10 Nov. 2003, Cumhuriyet)

The fact that food recipes appear not on any ordinary page of the newspaper but in the women's section -- and this is valid for the Ramadan period -- reproduces the stereotype that it's the woman who is responsible for the kitchen, for food preparation, and for the sundown meal in Ramadan. It underlines the notion that food preparation is a role belonging to women, and the kitchen belongs to women according to the traditional gender roles assigned to women. Another women's page emphasises and reproduces the assumption that women's health problems are embarrassing and shameful. The article below the headline explains:

- We have gathered for you, suggestions from experts to solve problems such as vaginal itchiness, and experiences after orgasm, that are experienced frequently but are too embarrassing to ask for help.  
(Nov. 2003 **Kibris**)

During the period of our research, we note that many of the topics that aren't directly women's issues contain issues that nonetheless, directly concern women. For example:

- What should I feed my child so s/he'll be intelligent.  
(25 Nov. 2003, YeniDüzen)
- The Child of the Working Mother is Unsuccessful.  
(25 Nov. 2003, YeniDüzen)
- Attention to post-partum depression.  
(21 Nov. 2003, Cumhuriyet)

The woman's role as mother is continually reinforced and re-established. Here, the point that has to be underlined is that the role of mother is not individual but social.

Another important ingredient of women's pages, is "beauty secrets". For instance:

- Eat healthily to avoid wrinkles.  
(7 Nov. 2003, Cumhuriyet)
- Would you like to be one of those "perfect women" whose makeup is never smeared, whose hair is never messed-up, whose skin never shines, and who looks well groomed no matter what the conditions are?  
(21 Nov. 2003, Cumhuriyet)

When we look at the media of the Turkish Cypriot community in general, we see that the women are sent thousands of media images each day, suggesting that women should be not only thin, pretty, competent in the kitchen, and knowledgeable on health matters; but that they should be perfect wives and mothers.

Another point that should be mentioned is the use of women's pictures as visual material within newspaper pages. The images of women are used whether they are related to the subject or not. For instance, articles entitled "Extreme Stress Affects the Learning Section of the Brain" (11 Nov. 2003, Birlik) and "Health Strategies in Nutrition" (23 Nov. 2003, **Kıbrıs**) are accompanied by photographs of women. The examples of using women images can easily be multiplied. As far as the women's page is concerned, the editor of **Kıbrıs** stresses that it is not a serious page and it needs to be revised from women's perspective, which is now on their agenda. In a magazine programme broadcast on BRT on December 6, 2003, images of singers and dancers at various entertainment centres are shown with comments such as "Nadide Sultan was noticeable with her graceful movements and sexy clothes," and another female dancer is described as "the sweetest candy of this candy holiday". But no such description accompanies the presentation of male dancers and singers.

Based on the above observations, we can say that the women of the Turkish Cypriot community, who do not have an alternative media text to reflect a feminine viewpoint to public opinion, are not able to be sufficiently represented within the mainstream media. Furthermore, the women's pages that are produced especially to address the needs of women, serve to reproduce and

reinforce male dominant discourse, with stereotypical definitions of women based on concerns related to beauty and motherhood. Another point to note is that when we look at the women's pages in the print media of the Turkish Cypriot community, we cannot see a reflection of the issues that directly concern Turkish Cypriot women.

Women's pages mostly give messages to a made-up target group that is middle class, educated who are eager to look beautiful and attractive, and are ready to spend money on clothes, cosmetics and etc. "Women's pages" display at least one photo of a woman's face. In the media in general, and in women's pages and programmes in particular, women are represented insufficiently, to put it optimistically. It's not clear if the topics that women's pages deal with are those preferred by women or topics that men would like to see women interested in.

Unlike the other pages of newspapers and magazines, in magazine pages, we come across a representation of women where sexuality is emphasised. The woman we see here, is very different from the faithful wife, self-sacrificing mother and good cook. The woman whose sexuality is emphasised represents the second extreme that the media offer to the female identity. The objectification and commodification of women and women's bodies is very widespread, with the tradition of a photo of a scantily clad woman on the cover of every magazine supplement.

Newspapers and magazine supplements that briefly touch on news, devote large spaces of their pages to images of women. On the whole, they use stereotypical and sexist adjectives such as sexy, young, beautiful etc. to describe women artists and models. For example:

- Nadide was sexy... she addressed both the eyes and the ears throughout the programme on Nadide Sultan... Oriental dancer Eylul, drew attention with her agile movements... Sibel Cagatay, the princess of the podiums, was the model who attracted the greatest attention with her beautiful body.  
(30 Nov. 2003, **Kıbrıs**)
- Young and beautiful women -- each more attractive than the other -- enjoyed themselves to their heart's content during the entertainment.  
(28 Nov. 2003, **Halkın Sesi**)

In the news below, no mention is made of the drawbacks of the appearance on the podium of an adolescent. In this news, the appearance of a young girl who is under 18 on the podium is not seen as a problem:

- Fearless Betül... At the fashion show organised at Z1Bar, the appearance of 16-year old Betül to display underwear was a surprise.  
(30 Nov. 2003, **Kıbrıs**)

In pictures, women are seen as assistants, translators, interviewers, or without any reason, as if who they are is unimportant. That could be interpreted that women are taken as visual supplementaries. Women are not subjects who speak for themselves, but only supplementary objects



in the news. While photos of women adorn lifestyle, health and magazine pages, in written material and articles, they are treated as victims. In war news, women are shown weeping, wounded, or fainting:

- Our young girls, each more beautiful than the next, confirm that beauty isn't only on the exterior. And we deal with the beauties who have added colour to the rallies this week. We want to share with you the images that our girls who are beautiful on the inside and on the outside display as they seek their rights, and as they question the future. Because they deserve this and more...  
(8 March 2003, YeniDüzen)

Another point that should be discussed is the usage of the female body as an object and a commodity in advertisement. The advertisements for beauty salons, solarium centres, beauty schools and cosmetics are mostly found on women's pages. Here, once again, women's bodies are used to sell everything, whether the commodity being sold is related to the female body or not, and this reproduces and promotes the commodification and objectification of women and of women's bodies.

Newspapers that provide lots of space to fashion shows and models never use photos of an individual male model, but frequently display photos of female models. Photos that frequently illustrate stories about how young people enjoy themselves, show the images of dancing girls.

## ●●● WOMEN IN POLITICAL NEWS

Examining the way women are represented in political news, we are also looking for answers to the question of how much and how women are represented in the largest public arena. We can say that women have found a larger space in political news during the period of our study, because that period has coincided with approaching general elections in the Turkish Cypriot community.

A look at parliamentary politics, which represents one of the most important areas of public life, reveals that in the Turkish Cypriot community, all of the leaders of the seven political parties that will enter the elections are male. According to a report printed in the newspaper YeniDüzen, the profile of candidates for the elections is as follows:

- According to information gathered from the lists of candidates, 3 are independent, and 350 belong to the lists of the 7 political parties that will enter the election. Out of a total of 353 candidates, 49 are women, and this figure represents 14% of the total number of candidates<sup>16</sup>.  
(13 Nov. 2003, YeniDüzen)

Still in the same news report, the number of female candidates in BDH<sup>17</sup> (13 out of 50) are given as "record breaking."

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<sup>16</sup> Among the political parties, Peace and Democracy Movement (BDH) has the highest number of female candidates (13), and Solution and European Union Party (CABP) is next in line, with seven female candidates.

<sup>17</sup> Peace and Democracy Movement.

- The lists of some parties had the effect of an increase in the number of female candidates. The record on this matter belongs to BDH, which has produced 13 female candidates. (YeniDüzen, Nov. 13, 2003)

In general, it appears that the political news about women in the press is taken from the same source (news agents) and they appear in similar texts and similar photographs in different newspapers, with only cosmetic changes to the introduction or headlines<sup>18</sup>. This fact might be interpreted as a “gender blind” stance on the part of the newspapers that are selected. For example, while the communiqué that’s distributed by the women’s branches of CTP-BG during a demonstration appeared in the newspaper YeniDüzen on November 30, 2003, under the head-line “Women March, Yes to Europe,” it appeared in the newspaper **Kıbrıs** on the same date, under the headline “The Women’s Branches of CTP-BG<sup>19</sup> have walked exuberantly with flags and balloons. We make a women’s promise.” The “Women in Decision-Making Mechanisms” conference organised by CABP was also reported in the newspapers **Kıbrıs** and YeniDüzen with different headlines and introductory paragraphs, but with the same text. A press statement by BDH President Mustafa Akinci made during a meeting of the Association of University Women, was printed in the Nov. 4, 2003 edition of the newspapers Afrika, YeniDüzen and **Kıbrıs** with the same text and photographs. All of these examples seem to indicate that the newspapers do not have a policy on reporting women’s issues. And the fact that news items such as the above examples are taken from a news agency or public relations officer and used without the assignment of a male or female reporter might well be interpreted as a lack of sensitivity towards women.

An examination of the newspapers during the period of our research shows that women participate in politics as members of women’s branches of political parties, or as women in a particular political party. And those are the roles in which women are represented in newspapers -- as members of branch organisations or as sympathisers of political parties. For example:

- The Gazi Magusa Women’s Branch of the National Union Party has organised a sundown dinner, where a large number of party members were present<sup>20</sup>. (8 Nov. 2003, Birlik)
- Tea given by the UBP<sup>21</sup> Women’s Branch of the Town of Iskele. (13 Nov.2003, **Kıbrıs**)

One of the roles assigned to women within the platforms of the political parties (and therefore in the political arena) is that of motherhood. In this category, once again, we encounter variations on the motif of motherhood. For example:

- The Women’s Branches of CTP-BG, have organised a solidarity night. The women have said “Europe, yes” so our children will not migrate from here. (18 Nov. 2003, **Kıbrıs** and YeniDüzen)

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<sup>18</sup> In general, these news items are based on information distributed by the women’s branches of the political parties.

<sup>19</sup> Republican Turkish Party.

<sup>20</sup> This and similar news items are supported more by photographs than by content. The women’s images are presented in the photos.

<sup>21</sup> This is the National Unionist Party.

- Our women who do not want their children to migrate from North Cyprus, to be unemployed, or to work in the South as labourers even though they have university degrees; our women who wanted to bring peace to Cyprus, and to produce a meeting between Turkish Cypriots and Europe were on the roads yesterday. More than 200 young girls, women and mothers distributed seedlings and communiqués in the streets of the capital, yesterday. (30 Nov. 2003, YeniDüzen)
- Women of CTP marched for women's rights. (30 Nov. 2003, **Halkın Sesi**)

While the newspaper YeniDüzen gave the news with its own introduction, once again, it underlined the roles of the women as “mothers”. In so doing, it reproduces and reinforces stereotypical judgments that limit women's role in politics, with the role of motherhood, especially in the Turkish Cypriot community.

The statement below from CABP, actually criticises the viewpoint that restricts women's participation to side roles within political parties in north Cyprus, thus relegating women to side roles in the political arena. Even though this seems to be a viewpoint that's sensitive to attitudes that subordinate women's political roles in Cyprus, looking at the profile of candidates in CABP, we fail to see that sensitivity reflected in the ratio of men and women candidates or the party<sup>22</sup>.

- “The Women's Branches of the political parties in the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus reinforce the stereotypical male-female roles, with its very name, they treat women as if they can only find places in the women's branches, and that assigns traditional tea parties and side-roles such as distributing leaflets to the women”. (11 Nov. 2003, YeniDüzen)

On the whole, we can say that women's news on the political news pages of newspapers does not go further than statements issued by political parties and their branches, and the fact that these items are reproduced as provided by these sources, can be interpreted as an indicator of a lack of gender sensitivity.

The period of our research has coincided with an election campaign with candidates being introduced in the newspapers, and thus, female candidates (who represented 14% of the candidates) also were introduced on newspaper pages<sup>23</sup>. There is only one item in the newspaper Afrika on November 28, 2003, entitled “We spoke with the women candidates in Girne of the Party of Solution and the European Union”. The title, “The Gender of Cyprus is Female” features interviews with female candidates. This is the only item produced by a female journalist and in asking the gender of the island, it seems to subtly ask the women candidates if Cyprus as an island is an object of abuse<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Only nine of the 50 CABP candidates are women.

<sup>23</sup> In these news items or interviews, the femaleness of these candidates is not emphasised, except if the candidate is also a mother. This reflects the social connotations of the concept of motherhood.

<sup>24</sup> After the general election held on 14 December 2003, just 3 out of 49 female candidates have become MPs and again a female journalist has done an interview with these MPs.

As mentioned in the previous sections, media texts reproduce the social practice of the hierarchic organisation of the relationships between men and women. Therefore, the representation of women only as members of women's branches of political parties and the absence of alternative news in the press constantly reproduce and reinforce the gender based inequality and discrimination that already exist in society. Party leaders and MP candidates do not mention any particular policy towards women in their speeches and interviews on TV and in newspapers. Only women candidates do this briefly. A female candidate from DP made a speech aimed only at women, during the series of TV propaganda broadcasts (6 Dec. 2003, BRT). BRT Radio has mentioned the drastic rise in the number of women candidates in the Turkish Cypriot community on the election night broadcasting.

## ●●● CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research has indicated that improvements in the media representation of women are essential in several areas. The first one of those areas is the need for more media space for developments related to women. For example, it is generally known that women are the group most severely affected by poverty. It would be appropriate for the news, current affairs and economy pages of newspapers to include articles and news on this topic. News items about women complaining of high prices or women describing their holiday shopping strategies are not sufficient. Media have an obligation to ensure equal voices to women and men.

The second area that has to be improved is related to media workers. It is essential to increase the numbers of women reporters. This is important not only for democracy, pluralism and social justice but also for a reflection of women's reality and points of view in the media. However, just increasing the numbers of female journalists may not be sufficient in itself to change the sexist quality of news stories. Gender awareness at all levels in media activities would ensure better media practices.

Another important improvement that's necessary is the adoption of non-sexist language, to remove the masculine tone of news reporting. This is perhaps the most important field, and this improvement is likely to be instrumental in getting rid of the degrading, inadequate and false representations of women. This also requires the development of an awareness and sensitivity during all stages of the gathering and production of news. Which events and pieces of information are to be considered news? What kind of professional attitudes are required of reporters during news-gathering? How can news be written, and which events deserve to be printed/broadcast as news? (See Timisi 1997: 41-49) As a requirement of positive discrimination, journalists should be in contact with women's organisations and groups, making a habit of going to them to find the news, instead of waiting for news to arrive. Gender awareness at all levels in media activities would ensure better media practices. Gender sensitive non-stereotypical understanding in media and its reflection will be a result of interaction with the audience, media professionals, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and government departments.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> On this subject, texts accepted by the international community such as the Beijing Fourth World Conference of Women Platform For Action (1995) and the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) could provide a highly satisfactory framework.

The media have the potential to make a contribution to the advancement of women. The production and dissemination of either negative or degrading images of women in electronic, print, audio-visual media has to be changed. Media should give priority to the display of diverse and non-stereotyped and public women and their reality that is different than that of men.

Women's pages and programmes should produce articles and programmes to promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities to emphasise gender equality and non-stereotyped gender roles of women and men within the family (career women, men involved with child care responsibilities etc...) to disseminate information aimed at eliminating domestic violence toward women and children.

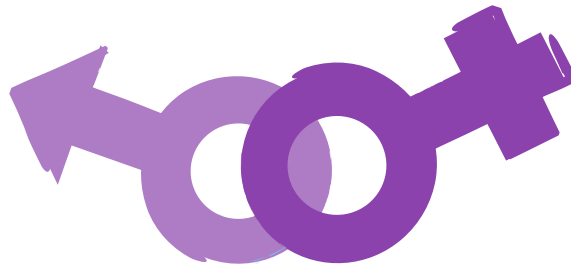
Research shows that motherhood and home-making are not only ideals that make women happy, but also routine chores that restrict women and make them vulnerable. The media should explore these matters. This would not reduce the values of motherhood and home-making, but would reflect a believable and realistic approach.

Women's human rights constitute an area that should be of concern not only to women but also to men. Environments where unequal relationships between men and women produce dissatisfaction among the women are likely to produce dissatisfaction among the men as well. The theoretical equality of men and women as readers, listeners, viewers, individuals and citizens should be seen at every level in the media -- in the content of texts, images, advertisement, page design, the order of news, and the content of news. The duty of media as a powerful force informing and directing public opinion is larger than the duty of other public institutions.

The media should adopt non-sexist representation of men and women as a publication/broadcast policy and as an ethical principle, revising its publications/broadcasts when necessary, and refuse to use some materials. A non-sexist media text does not discriminate in any way.

Although the increase of women professionals in the media would be seen as a positive development, the essential thing is the development of a female viewpoint. Instead of "women's pages" like the ones described above, news that are of interest to women should be found on all the pages of a newspaper, and they should be presented in non-sexist language, with non-sexist images. The media are in need of re-structuring in order to be attentive to the needs of women who make up half of the general population, by highlighting women's issues whenever necessary, with positive discrimination.

The media's approach to communicating with people and informing them has to be gentle and peace-oriented, respectful of all people, and politically equal. Unfortunately, it seems as if the media in the world and in the Turkish Cypriot community have a long way to go, in order to reach the desired equality.



*By Krini Kafiris*

### ••● INTRODUCTION

Any understanding of everyday life and experience at the beginning of the 21st century must have at its heart an understanding of the workings of the mass media. The media are crucial to the economic, political, social and cultural spheres, at the global, national and local levels, as well as to everyday life in the private sphere -- where they are a primary source of information and entertainment. They operate as virtual public spaces for debate and discussion and play significant roles in setting agendas for what and how issues will be discussed. The media do not simply disseminate particular messages to passive audiences. Instead, they provide the resources -- repertoires of ideas, ways of thinking, ideas, images, values -- through news and entertainment, which we use to understand the world and our relationships to others. Such understandings shape our everyday lives in many ways: they influence our social relationships as well as the identities we develop in terms of ethnicity, culture, class and gender. They also have a direct impact on decision-making processes and policy formation in the public and political spheres. For these reasons, such understandings can play a fundamental role in bringing about social change.

A crucial but severely neglected issue on the island of Cyprus is the role of the media in providing many of the resources which we use to think about women and gender issues -- such as gender roles in the public and private spheres, sexuality, as well as what we consider to be, or not to be, natural, normal, acceptable, desirable and possible in these areas. At present, the resources available through the Greek Cypriot media, largely portray and discuss women in ways which support gender inequality. Women are defined in terms of their physical beauty, sexual attractiveness and motherhood. They are portrayed as entities who are only interested in domestic matters. The only truly important role for them in the private and public spheres is motherhood according to the media.

The media do not simply reflect everyday realities in Greek Cypriot society and the unequal power relations which structure the relationships between men and women both in the public and the private domains. The media never simply “tell-it-like-it-is”. First, there are different aspects of women’s everyday experiences which are never portrayed or discussed in the media, such as those linked to significant changes taking place in the workplace, in gender relations and the family; which are shaped by globalisation, EU integration, immigration and developments related to the Cyprus Problem.

Second, the portrayal of women and of gender inequality is constructed by the media. It is the result of specific decisions and choices made by specific gendered entities and is shaped by broadcasting goals, professional practices, artistic and cultural conventions, political and ideological positions, economic and institutional limitations; as well as the historical, social and cultural context in which the media are embedded. Whereas this context may be a factor which currently limits the ways in which women and gender issues are represented, it can also be significantly changed by media production which provides the resources for women to understand themselves in empowering ways and for gender inequality to be challenged.

The existence of extremely limited ways of thinking about and portraying women in the Greek Cypriot media which support gender inequality, means that the ability of Greek Cypriot women and men to challenge and change gender inequality, or to even bring it to the forefront of public debate remains severely hindered. The resources which are necessary for this to be conceptualised or imagined are largely unavailable in the Greek Cypriot media and public. Such resources, which emerge both from media information and entertainment, would be based on an acknowledgement of women as entities with abilities, potentials and roles which go beyond the extremely limited ones portrayed by the media. These resources would involve complexity, diversity and ambiguity in the portrayal and discussion of Greek Cypriot women and their everyday experience, as well as an exploration of empowering potentials and possibilities. Finally, as developments in international media have shown, such resources can emerge from media production which enjoys both critical and commercial success.

This project aims to present an overview of the resources -- or ways of thinking, concepts, assumptions, values and images -- that the media provide on women and other gender issues in Cyprus as well as to provide recommendations for potential changes which could work to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality. This is an important step towards:

- problematising media representations of women and gender issues.
- sensitising those in the world of the media as to the ways that the media currently support gender inequality and to the ways that they can potentially promote the empowerment of women and gender equality.
- promoting public discussion of gender inequality in Cypriot society.

## ••● METHODOLOGY

Interviews were conducted to obtain information on particular media institutions, on the roles and status of women working in Greek Cypriot media, and on gender and the Greek Cypriot media more generally. Twenty-eight entities were initially contacted by telephone for this purpose: media owners, journalists, programme directors, a female writer of a drama series and a psychologist (who often appears on television as a guest expert to discuss gender issues). Follow-up calls were made for those who did not initially reply. Only eight actually accepted to be interviewed. The overwhelming majority of the comments made by those who directly refused clearly reflected a lack of interest in issues of gender inequality as well as the perception that these are trivial or peripheral matters which only concern women.

A selection of locally significant media institutions and media output (both in terms of influence and popular success) were monitored for two weeks for the purposes of this research: news items from four major newspapers, television news on three channels, and four popular Greek Cypriot television programmes (one drama series and three comedies). The issues presented in this report were selected during initial stages of research.

Basic content analysis and interpretive textual analysis, as it is practiced in media and cultural studies, were chosen as the methods best suited to exploring a wide range of issues related to media representations of women in both news and entertainment. Content analysis was used to explore the frequency with which women and gender issues appeared in the news, the types of news items in which they appeared, and the roles of women which appeared in them. Although interpretive textual analysis can take many different forms, it always attempts to go beneath surface meanings or denotation, to explore connotative meanings, and is predicated on a conceptualisation of the media text as something which does not reflect reality but which works to construct it. How this takes place is then what is investigated. Analysis of the media text involves exploration of the relationship of textual elements to each other, of textual genre (or the standard conventions, codes and rules of signification used to produce the media text) and of the dialectical relationships of media texts with the wider historical, economic, social, political and cultural formations in which they are embedded. Thus, interpretive textual analysis is based on semiotic and ideological understandings of the text and of the ways meanings are produced through the text-reader (or viewer) relationship, as well as on a wide range of other extratextual considerations.

## ••● DISCOURSES ABOUT THE GREEK CYPRIOT MEDIA

### *How the Greek Cypriot media and their roles are understood*

A discourse is a way of thinking about and discussing something. One way of defining it is as a set of ideas, concepts, values, images, assumptions and everyday common sense beliefs which are interlinked. Together they work as a framework which we use to make sense of and interpret the world and our relationship to it.



Two polarised discourses seem to dominate the way that the Greek Cypriot media and its roles are conceptualised and assessed. One could be called the “anti-commercialisation” discourse. The central idea of this discourse is that private ownership of the media and commercial media production goals and values, have had negative effects on the nature and range of media and cultural production in Cyprus. In this context, commercial media production is generally understood as “lacking in quality”, “lacking in sensitivity”, “often vulgar” and culturally inferior to state broadcasting, especially that of the past, which was completely “untainted” by commercial considerations. Commercial broadcasting is held responsible for playing a significant role in bringing about “cultural crisis” and cultural and social “decay”. Gender inequality is assumed to be a side effect of media commercialisation and the lack of “quality” which supposedly characterises it. State media broadcasting is thought to provide “quality” broadcasting and is therefore, by definition, more “sensitive” to women’s issues, as well as to other social and cultural affairs.

The other discourse might be called “give the people what they want”. Its central concept is that the media should provide the kind of entertainment that people enjoy the most. Other related ideas through which the media are understood with this discourse are: “commercial media production is superior to that of state broadcasting”, “commercial media understand the audience and know how to provide the type of programmes that people really prefer”, and “people are not stupid because they enjoy commercial broadcasting” (and mass culture). The media are not conceptualised as supporting gender inequality, they simply “reflect” Cypriot society, for better or for worse. In the context of this discourse commercial media are not able, nor should they try, to promote social and cultural change -- this is solely the work of the state media.

These polarised discourses work in effect to obscure the problems and potentials of the media in representing women and gender inequality. It is crucial to note that state broadcasting does not necessarily lead to non-sexist portrayals of women -- in Cyprus, state broadcasting has not systematically challenged gender inequality, either in news or entertainment, nor has it provided a regular space or forum for public debate on this issue.

Also, commercial broadcasting, even with the constraints and limitations under which it operates, does not necessarily preclude media production which supports gender equality. Many commercial television programmes which enjoy critical and commercial success (produced in the U.K. and U.S. but broadcast around the world) involve empowered female characters and challenges to or subversions of gender inequality: for example, *This Life*, *ER*, *Dawson’s Creek*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

## ••• EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

No official data is currently available on the number of women employed in the Greek Cypriot media and on the types of positions they hold. Interviewees from various media institutions claimed that this number is thought to be around forty percent and that women hold positions

in all types of journalism, including news, politics and current affairs, as well as in most aspects of technical media production. Most interviewees however, acknowledged that the “glass ceiling” phenomenon characterises the experiences of women who work in the media. This means that despite participation in a wide range of media positions, fewer women hold positions of real power, participate in major decision making processes, and are able to advance to higher, more powerful and lucrative positions during their media careers.

## ●●● WOMEN AND GENDER ISSUES IN MEDIA NEWS

### *Women in Television News*

Women appeared infrequently in television and print news, especially as the main focus of news items. When women were the subjects of television news, this mainly involved the careers and personal lives of female celebrities, (actors and singers) and the trials and tribulations of motherhood -- such as the news stories on the saga of a Cypriot mother’s attempts to contact her missing son. The most prevalent visual images of women however on television news were those of Greek and globally famous celebrities. Women also occasionally appeared as eyewitnesses to various local events. No woman appeared as a guest, expert, or was interviewed in any other capacity during the period the research took place.

### *Women in News from the Press*

In the press, news items on women were much more frequent. Newsworthy women for the Greek Cypriot media are, to a great extent, mothers. The majority of news items focused on the importance of motherhood to women themselves and to society, on the heroism, strength and self-sacrifice of mothers and on the great cost to women’s health and well-being if they postpone motherhood. This trend included articles on breastfeeding -- which is “good for the mother as well as for the baby”, and also “saves lives during wartime”, on a mother in Los Angeles who risked her life to give birth despite a heart condition and cancer, on the mother of a convicted criminal, and on a “fifty-percent higher rate of breast cancer if children are postponed” into women’s third and fourth decades of life.

Other women who frequently appeared in the news were celebrities -- usually attractive actors and singers. News on these women focused on their careers, love lives and marriages. The overwhelming majority of these celebrities were not from Cyprus but from Greece and abroad. Women regularly appeared in the press as victims of violence from all over the world -- in particular, of rape, assault, murder, and sexual abuse in places such as the U.S., Israel, Zanzibar, the Congo, and on two occasions, Cyprus. Other women who systematically featured in the news were those who were exceptional or unusual in terms of “human interest”, or “soft” news. Thus, included in this trend, were very limited articles on the longest living woman in the world, the local nurse who had to treat her father as a patient and a woman in Paphos who discovered a treasure. Much less frequently news items and articles appeared featuring Cypriot women

who have roles or positions in the public sphere: these included an interview with the government health minister, minor news items or announcements on the death of a poet, the president of a breast cancer association, and a nominee for European woman of the year.

Three types of visual images of women commonly appeared in the press. The most prevalent, as on television, was that of attractive global and Greek female celebrities. Attractive women also systematically appear in stock photographs which accompanied news articles on a wide range of different subjects which did not specifically involve women. They also appeared in photographs which were placed on their own in the newspaper with a caption. In both cases, images of attractive women serve a “decorative” purpose.

Thus, photographs of women accompanied articles on subjects such as golf, film, the Olympics, demonstrations, basketball, gambling and computers. Many of the photographs of women which appeared on their own involved revealing clothing (or bathing suits) and sexy body language. Women also commonly appeared in photographs as victims of war with their children, accompanying articles on war.

## ••● OTHER RELATED GENDER ISSUES IN THE NEWS ON TELEVISION AND IN THE PRESS

Other gender related issues were largely absent from Greek Cypriot media news and information, both on television and in the press, except for that of women’s health. Both on television and in the press, women’s health issues received frequent coverage. The focus was largely on reproductive health issues and pregnancy but also included other issues such as fitness, weight, nutrition and the damaging effects of careers on women’s health and longevity.

In the press, articles on beauty and cosmetics also appeared but they were less significant in the context of the newspapers, taking into consideration their size and placement. One newspaper out of the four monitored did have a women’s page consisting of articles on caring for babies and children, beauty and fashion, the love lives and marriages of female celebrities as well as recipes. Also, one newspaper did feature a few minor articles and announcements on women and collective social and political movements. Here too, women were often portrayed as mothers working for peace.

Articles on female sexuality did not appear either on television or in the press during the period they were monitored. However, several articles did appear on issues which focused directly or indirectly on male sexuality. Thus an article appeared on the medical advances which have made sexual activity a possibility for paraplegics accompanied by a photograph of male paraplegics only. Several articles also appeared which dealt with issues related to male homosexuality. These issues included the “homosexual bishop scandal” in the U.K., a Gay Pride parade in Buenos Aires accompanied by a small (and somewhat blurry) photograph of a man in a woman’s one

piece bathing suit and allegations of homosexuality (or sexual “perversion” as one newspaper put it) against British Prince Charles. A news item, characterised by an attempt at tongue-in-cheek humour, also appeared on what was referred to as the “sex-change” that the British press had given Paul McCartney’s newborn daughter by wrongly announcing that the baby was a boy when in fact it is a girl. This seems to be a vague allusion to the local stereotype which claims that most British men are homosexuals. Both these news items and the lack of any on female sexuality, seem to “exoticise” sexuality all together: it is something unusual, out-of-the-ordinary even “abnormal”, which might involve some men but not women.

## ••● DOMINANT DISCOURSES ON WOMEN IN MEDIA NEWS

The discourses on women (or ways of portraying and discussing them) in media news focus on women’s bodies -- women are understood and defined almost exclusively in terms of their reproductive capabilities (the ability to bear a child) and physical attributes (beauty and sexual attractiveness as well as vulnerability to crime and disease). These discourses also value women solely for physical abilities and attributes -- for being mothers and for being beautiful and sexually attractive. They result in an overwhelming emphasis on motherhood, physical health and beauty. Clearly, however, the most valued of female physical abilities in these discourses, is that of motherhood. The discourse on motherhood is based on the central concept that “motherhood is the greatest role for a woman not just in the private sphere but also in the public sphere”. Mothers are “heroic”, “self-sacrificing” and “courageous” -- generally positive traits which are the opposite of those often associated with women who are not mothers. Motherhood is the most significant “social contribution” a woman can make, as well as the best thing for herself, as it “contributes to health and longevity” -- in the context of this discourse, it is women with careers who have postponed or avoided childbirth who undergo high health risks.

This definition of women solely in terms of their bodies, was also supported by the visual images of women which accompanied articles on general health issues. In photographs accompanying articles on heart disease and fitness, a women is shown running, next to an article on stomach cancer, a women is shown with her hands on her stomach, and next to articles on medical research, women appeared as patients or undergoing examination by a male doctor. It is indicative that the only time men appeared in a photograph accompanying an article on health, the article was on dementia -- a disease which affects the mind, not the body.

## ••● WOMEN AND GENDER ISSUES IN MEDIA FICTION

Three of the programmes monitored were comedies -- their main focus was on family and friends in domestic settings. Most of the humour was based on the clash between traditional attitudes, practices and values and more modern ones. This clash took place not just between different people but often within one single person. The creative use of language and in particular of

the Greek Cypriot dialect, was especially crucial to representing this clash and to the humour of the programmes.

Four discourses (or ways of portraying and discussing women) dominated the comedy programmes monitored for this research. We can label them as “women are annoying”, “woman means mother”, “women are excessive consumers” and “young, single women are sexual objects”. The first discourse which seemed to dominate, is based on the interpretation of women as habitually and perpetually annoying to men. Thus women are “bossy”, “demanding”, “nags”. They “talk too much”, “shout” and “scream”. They are only interested in “trivial” and “boring” things such as housework, childraising, shopping and fashion. Female characters, narratives and plots shaped by this discourse tend to make clear that when women display positive traits associated with masculinity -- such as forcefulness, decisiveness and straightforwardness -- they will be thought of negatively, as annoying presences, and will not be taken seriously. This discourse also precludes the presence of female fictional characters with serious interests in anything other than those mentioned. Visually these women appeared communicating with intense and often exaggerated body language (gestures and facial expressions) and following people around insistently to talk to them. The body language of male characters is crucial to the visual support for this discourse, as it is largely through body language that they signify their annoyance, in particular through things like rolling their eyeballs upwards, shrugging, spreading their arms wide and shaking their head.

Another very common discourse through which women are commonly understood in television fiction is that of “woman means mother”. The central concept at the heart of this discourse is that women are always defined in some way by motherhood -- they are either mothers, or about to become mothers, or they desire to be mothers -- motherhood is what women “know about the most”, “naturally do best” “are destined for” and “the only really important thing in life”. Mothers, but also by extension all women (since in this discourse woman equals mother one way or another) are “self-sacrificial”, “self-denying”, “lacking in sexuality” and of course their natural state is “married” (whether this is in the past or present, or destined for the future). Motherhood is understood in terms of emotional and practical “service” to the child and the domestic environment. The dominant presence of this discourse in the television comedies monitored, means that female characters are to a great extent shown and discussed in these terms. This discourse was supported visually by dowdy looking and often overweight figures, conservative clothing, lack of makeup and asexual body language. Mothers are continuously shown with their babies and children as well as with the accoutrements which symbolise domestic housework, cooking and childcare: aprons, mops, brooms, rolling pins, irons, spoons, knives etc.

The third discourse on women in television fiction is that “women are excessive consumers”. The main assumptions of this discourse are that women are predisposed by nature to excessive consumption and that “obtaining material goods” and “spending money” are their main sources of pleasure and fun. According to this discourse, women consume excessively -- they do not limit themselves to what the household needs but provide themselves and their children with

unnecessary and excessive goods and pleasures. Thus, women are “materialistic”, “greedy”, “big spenders” and “indifferent” to budgetary constraints which are necessarily determined by their husbands. Excessive female consumption is often highlighted by portrayals of the husbands as entities who wish for a more simple, natural and less-consumption oriented life close to nature or in the village. This media discourse results in females being presented as “shallow”, “insensitive”, “unrealistic” and “immature”. Visually this discourse is often reinforced by images of female excess and consumption such as plump women carrying too many shopping bags, eating -- especially sweets and candy -- or feeding someone else.

The fourth discourse, “young, single women are sexual objects” works discursively but especially visually, to differentiate young, single women from married women or mothers. Young, single women in television comedy have slim bodies; wear modern, revealing, tight clothing; short skirts, and often, considerable makeup. They are shown as objects of the male gaze and of male desire. Although their dress style could be described as conventionally “sexy”, often their characters and roles in the narratives suggest that they are actually naïve and immature or even childish. This works to create the impression that sexuality is not a fundamental aspect of their personalities, or to desexualise them. Thus the only females in the comedy programmes who were clearly represented as sexual entities were not Greek Cypriots but Russian and Turkish Cypriot women.

The drama programme focused on a group of friends in their early to mid twenties and their everyday social lives, with emphasis on their romantic entanglements and affairs. Despite the modern appearance and attitudes of the characters and their relatively young age, the “woman means mother” discourse as discussed above was crucial to several of the central female characters as well as to much of the narrative. Thus, one female character in her mid-twenties who had left the home she shared with her husband and was trying to obtain custody of the child she had left behind, experienced great difficulties in trying to reconcile her love for a young man with the discourse of the asexual, self-sacrificing mother -- she claimed that she could not put “love and adventures” above trying to get her baby back, and took for granted that both could not co-exist at the same time. The young man reinforced the guilty feelings she felt for not acting like this type of mother by reproaching her for leaving her child in the first place:

**Young man:** “This is the first time I’ve ever heard of a mother leaving behind her child so it wouldn’t be traumatised.”

**Young woman:** “Me, too”.

Another example of how female characters and story lines can develop in relation to the discourse on motherhood discussed previously (which assumes that marriage and motherhood is the destiny of women and the only truly important thing in their lives) is the case of the female character who could simply not accept that her partner wanted to break up and that the relationship wouldn’t lead to marriage and children:

**Female:** “You shouldn’t go out with someone if you’re going to break up with them...”

**Male Friend:** “Is that a reason to not go out with anyone?”

**Female:** “I want to do something bad, he hurt me, he disappointed me, he threw me away into the rubbish. I want to do something bad to him.”

**Male Friend:** “If this is what happened, it was supposed to happen this way.”

**Female:** “But why?”

**Male Friend:** “Because he is not really your partner. Cancel his credit cards and get together with his best friend. Live the present and work on the future.”

**Female:** “NO. If you lose your partner... that’s it, you’ve lost it all.”

As reflected here in this small excerpt of dialogue, this female character simply could not understand the point of forming a sexual relationship with the opposite sex if it would not lead to marriage and children, and she felt that nothing in life was more important.

The only verbal threat of violence that appeared on the Greek Cypriot television fiction monitored for this research came from this particular character to her ex-partner. Also in what turned out to be a dream sequence, a woman’s hands (probably hers) were seen suffocating a man with a pillow in his bed. This is the only actual scene of violence that appeared on television during this research. Thus, in this programme, a woman was portrayed as (potentially) violent, despite the fact that in everyday life it is women who are almost always the victims of domestic violence.

## ●●● CONCLUSIONS

The Greek Cypriot media provide extremely limited resources (ways of thinking, concepts, assumptions, values, images) with which to understand and think about women, their experiences, their roles and contributions to society. The most important ones are:

- Women are defined in terms of and valued for, their physical beauty, sexual attractiveness to men, and motherhood, both in the private and in the public spheres.
- Women are only interested in domestic matters, relationships with the opposite sex, fashion, beauty and shopping.
- Greek Cypriot women are mostly asexual.
- The most important achievement for women in their private lives is motherhood -- in the context of marriage.
- The most important role in the public sphere for a woman is that of mother.
- The only important contribution a woman can make to Cypriot society is childbirth and the raising of children.

These resources work to limit the opportunities, experiences, roles and potentials of women in the private as well as the public domains -- thus, they reinforce sexism and gender inequality. They hinder the full participation of women in Cypriot public life and the development of their abilities, talents and potentials as multifaceted human beings. This impoverishes women's lives, as well as Cypriot society and culture as a whole.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The media should systematically provide new, diverse, non-sexist images, information and ways of thinking about women, their experiences and potentials.
2. The media should provide regular "spaces" within news/information and entertainment for the presentation of diverse women's experiences and gender issues from a non-sexist perspective and challenges to gender inequality. These spaces should involve journalists and academics but also the public at large. They should include younger people as well as older ones, and men as well as women so that these issues do not remain marginalised.

These goals might partially be accomplished by:

- Including news items on the accomplishments and experiences of women in the news (on television and in the press) which go beyond motherhood, from non-sexist perspectives.
- Setting up writing-for-television workshops to encourage both male and female writers to produce non-sexist images and narratives of women and to challenge gender inequality within the context of television comedy and drama. Foreign and Greek speaking screenwriters from around the world could be invited to teach these seminars.
- Organising contests for new television screenplays which explore various aspects of women's lives, gender inequality or related gender issues.
- Organising contests for the best video-diary on women's experiences in Cyprus, made by women. The top video-diaries should be shown on television as well as interviews with the women who produced them. They should be open to women of all ages and ethnic backgrounds and should bring to light new perspectives, issues or problems related to women's experiences in Cyprus.
- Organising art film festivals (both on television or in the cinema) with films which challenge gender stereotypes and gender inequality.
- Showing popular films on television and television programmes from around the world which challenge gender stereotypes and gender inequality.
- Creating a daily and/or weekly column by and for women in the press to discuss gender inequality from different perspectives which also accepts and discusses letters to the editor on the issue of gender.



## GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, EMPOWERMENT AND THE MEDIA: CONCEPTUAL TOOLS



“We become what we behold.  
We shape our tools and our tools shape us.”

*Marshall McLuhan*



## RETHINKING GENDER

*By Krini Kafiris*

Have you ever heard these comments or similar ones?

- It is only natural that women should have different roles in society than men because they are biologically different.
- Women are mostly interested in how they look, in attracting men, shopping and having children.
- Women are naturally better than men at cleaning, cooking, and changing nappies; that's why it's their job.
- Women are naturally more gossipy, vain, jealous, possessive and cruel than men.
- It's more important for women to be beautiful than it is for men.
- Men are naturally stronger and more dynamic than women.
- Men are naturally more interested in public affairs and what is happening in the world than women are.
- Women are devious and scheming, whereas men tend to be more straightforward.
- There are two types of women, the type you marry and the type that are just for sex.
- Lesbians aren't really homosexuals, they just haven't been with a "real" man yet.
- Gay men are not "real" men.
- True friendship between women can't exist the way it does between men because women are extremely competitive with each other and don't get along.
- Most women need a man to guide them in making important decisions.
- Women generally don't have what it takes to be the boss of a company or a leader of a political party. The women who do are exceptions and are not very feminine.



These comments are based on, or include, stereotypes. A stereotype is a generalisation about a category of people, which is thought to be necessarily true of everybody in that category. Stereotypes work to "erase" the diversity and difference in a category, so that everybody in the category is assumed to be fundamentally the same, even though they're not. Gender stereotypes work to support and promote prejudice and inequality.

Some of the classic stereotypes about feminists in many countries are that they are "aggressive", "ugly", "don't shave their legs or armpits", "can't get a man", or "don't like men". Feminists think about gender issues in different ways and take different positions on them. However, they do believe that:

"A feminist is a person who believes in the equality and full humanity of women."

*Gloria Steinem*

Are you a feminist?

## Exercise

- Where have you heard, seen or experienced the stereotypes listed on the previous page? Do you believe in some or all of these stereotypes yourself? Why or why not?

The stereotypes on the previous page are based on the following false assumptions:

FALSE assumptions

- All women share the same set of natural traits, abilities, needs and desires.
- All men share a set of natural traits, abilities, needs and desires, which, however, are different from those of women.
- Gender, or the set of characteristics associated with each sex, is determined by nature or biology, i.e. by reproductive sexual difference. For instance, the comments listed on page 56, assume that if you were born with a vagina you will naturally be more interested in, capable and fulfilled by housework, cooking, taking care of children and shopping. If you were born with a penis, you will naturally be more interested and capable in public affairs rather than in domestic work; you will be strong, decisive and have "what it takes" to be the boss or a leader.
- Women's "natural" characteristics are inferior to men's "natural" characteristics.
- A person that does not share the characteristics thought to be inherent to their sex might be considered exceptional, unusual, unnatural, unfeminine (if a woman), unmasculine (if a man), or even abnormal.

Gender, or the set of characteristics associated with each sex, is in fact determined by cultural, social and political processes, NOT by nature or biology. This means that all women are NOT naturally and necessarily characterised by the same traits, abilities, needs and desires. It means that women are NOT naturally subordinate to men because of them. Finally, it means that the characteristics associated with each gender have changed throughout history and can continue to change as a result of human efforts and struggles.

- nature >> reproductive sexual organs >> sexual difference
- historical, social, cultural and political processes >> gender

## Exercises

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- Do you ever think about yourself in terms of gender stereotypes? What do you think exactly? How does this make you feel?
- What were considered to be the “natural” characteristics of women when your grandmother was young? What characteristics were considered “unnatural” in women then?
- Are the supposedly “natural” characteristics of women today different than they were when your grandmother was young? If they are, what do you think has brought about this change in the way people think about gender? If they are not different, what do you think could make a significant change in how gender is thought about in your society?
- During a press conference in July 2004, one month before the Athens 2004 Olympics, the Mayor of Athens, Dora Bakoyianni, was asked by a male journalist about the special difficulties and problems involved in working so closely with two other women to make the Games a reality -- the President of the Athens 2004 Committee Gianna Angelopoulos, and Fofi Gennimata, super-prefect of Athens and Pireaus. Can you guess what gender stereotype this question is based on? Does this stereotype exist in your society?

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Ideas about women’s “nature” or “natural” characteristics have been based on stereotypes and gender inequality. Consider the following:

In the early 1960’s, in the U.S., Betty Friedan tried to get an article published that she had researched and written on the myth that all women are completely fulfilled with the roles of mothers, wives and housekeepers; and on the dissatisfaction, unhappiness and silent suffering this myth was causing millions of women in the U.S. Friedan wrote that widespread belief in this myth, on the part of both women and men, did not “permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfill their potentialities as human beings”. The male editors of the leading women’s magazines of the time rejected her article saying that only “sick” women could possibly feel dissatisfied being full-time wives and mothers. Although she initially had difficulties finding a publisher because her ideas were considered to be threatening, Betty Friedan published her research and theories in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), a book which sold 3 million copies by 1966, and is considered one of the most important and influential books on gender inequality.

Read more about Friedan and her work at

<http://www.assumption.edu/dept/history/Hi113net/Betty&20Friedan>

[http://www.search.eb.com/women/articles/Friedan\\_Betty\\_Naomi\\_Goldstein.html](http://www.search.eb.com/women/articles/Friedan_Betty_Naomi_Goldstein.html)



The landmark book, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, widely known as the Kinsey Report, based on the research of Alfred Kinsey, shocked the world in 1953 with its revelations. It was banned in countries around the world, condemned by religious leaders and according to John Bancroft, director of what is now called the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction at Indiana University, where Kinsey conducted his research, led some to regard Kinsey as a scapegoat or even the Antichrist for the “moral decline” in America over the last 50 years.

Kinsey’s research challenged the traditional and stereotypical thinking on women’s sexuality which held that:

- Women didn’t really like sex, they had it to please their husbands.
- Normal women are passive sexually.
- Normal, “good” women refrain from certain forms of sexual practices and behaviours.

Instead, Kinsey found that women are sexual creatures, enjoy sex and that many practices and behaviours that were not considered to be practiced by normal, “good” women were already common and widespread.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> From <http://www.azcentral.com/ent/front/articles/0915kinsey0915.html> and <http://www.indiana.edu/~kinsey>  
Find out more about the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction from their website <http://www.indiana.edu/~kinsey/>

In the mid 1800's in Britain, it was widely thought that higher education was dangerous for women and for society. Here are some examples of this thinking:



- Women risked brain fever or sterility if they were educated.
- Women were supposed to be “pure, pious, domestic and submissive”, ideals which could not be achieved through education.
- Receiving an education was an “act of nonconformity”.
- The social system would break down if women were allowed to be educated.

For references to the above and more information on women in education, see <http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/femhist/education.shtml>

The changes in what is considered “natural” and normal for women and men have taken place as a result of the multi-dimensional activities and struggles of individuals, organisations, feminist and social/political movements, as well as institutions. They are also linked to economic, technological, social, educational, political and cultural changes.

## Struggles for the right to vote



*Emmeline Pankhurst (6th from the left) welcomes hunger strikers from prison, September 1909*

The first country to give equal voting rights to women in national elections was New Zealand in 1893. Although the first leaflet advocating the right to vote for women in the UK appeared in 1847, and many suffrage societies were established and worked towards this goal during the next fifty years, campaigners for women's voting rights were still frustrated by the lack of any such reform at the turn of the century.

On 10 October 1903 the Women's Social and Political Union was established, one of the few political movements in the UK whose members (also called suffragettes) came from all classes. The activities of the WSPU included extreme civil disobedience (such as chaining themselves to railings, smashing windows, disrupting political



*Clashes took place between the suffragettes and the police during 18-22 November 1910 in Parliament Square, London, UK.*

(meetings of men, committing acts of arson), which filled the jails with their members. By 1918 the right to vote for women over 30 was established but it wouldn't be until 1928 that both women and men could vote at the same age.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3153388.stm>

For a wide range of articles and resources on the history of the struggle to win the vote by women around the world, see

<http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrage/>

Did you know that the right to vote for women in Cyprus was established in 1960?

## Exercises

- Consider this classic riddle in the English speaking world. A boy and his father are in a car going for a ride. They have an accident and both are injured and knocked unconscious. When the boy wakes up at the hospital on the operating table he hears the surgeon say to the nurse, "this is my son!" How is this possible?<sup>27</sup> Why do think that the answer isn't immediately obvious to many people?
- In the Greek language, the expression *i yinaika* (woman), is often used when discussing women in general, instead of *oi yinaikes* (women). What does this expression assume about gender? Do you have any expressions that imply the same thing in your language?

<sup>27</sup> The surgeon is his mother.

## RETHINKING MEDIA POWER

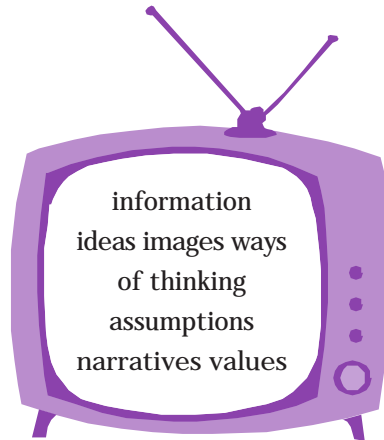
*By Krini Kafiris*

Consider the following two positions on media power which are common in public debate and discussion in many places around the world:

- The media are powerful because they create and send messages to passive audiences that are easily manipulated into feeling and thinking what the media want.
- The media simply reflect reality; they don't change it.

Both these ways of thinking about the media are misleading. A better way of understanding the media and their power is as institutions that produce and disseminate *resources* and provide *spaces* for public discussion and debate.

Media resources take many different forms:



These resources are found in different kinds of media output such as:

NEWS REPORTS

editorials in newspapers

films

debates on radio and TV

television drama series

television situation comedies

documentaries

interviews

advertising

webpages

children's programmes



These forms of media content and the resources they contain do NOT simply reflect reality. They are the result of many decisions and choices made by individuals and groups. Media content and the resources it contains is constructed and produced by individuals and groups and shaped by multiple and often contradictory factors such as:

### *media technology*

Different types of media technologies allow for the transmission of sound, images, moving images, text, storage of content and retransmission.

### *media law and regulation*

Media legislation plays a significant role in shaping the nature and range of media content. It can allow for and promote different types of media ownership and control apart from the state and private/commercial interests, such as media owned and controlled by communities, municipalities, political/social organisations, women's groups, unions, students and others working in the public interest.

### *media finances*

The way that the media are financed also plays a significant role in shaping media content. The media can be financed through advertising, sponsorships, subsidies, taxation, subscriptions, cultural and art activities, sales of promotional items and fundraising drives.

### *broadcasting goals*

What are the economic, political, professional and cultural goals of a media institution? Media institutions usually have multiple goals. They can involve making a profit, playing a role in promoting democratic public debate and strengthening democracy; developing a reputation for excellence and innovation, influencing "hearts and minds", promoting certain cultural forms and shaping the future of society.

### *professional codes and practices*

What are the standard, taken-for-granted beliefs and ideas about how journalists should go about doing their job? What is their role in society? What are the standard routines, processes and procedures involved in media production, media management, and decision-making? All of these play a crucial role in shaping media content.

### *artistic and cultural conventions*

What are the usual, widely accepted ways of producing news and media fiction (both word and image) in terms of their aesthetic qualities and values? These conventions are shaped by the form of technology, the type or genre of media output (such as science fiction film, the evening news, morning chat shows, situation comedies, soap operas) and the historical period, and they change throughout time. What aspects of the usual and widely accepted ways of producing



Each media space involves a different type of discussion and debate - different topics, participants, styles of communication, and rules of managing the discussion or debate. Thus, different media resources (information, ideas, ways of thinking etc.) are provided to the public through different media spaces. Viewers, listeners and readers access these spaces, they think and talk about the same issues and thus also participate in public debate and discussion.

What kind of power do media resources and media spaces actually have?

An individual or group which owns and/or controls a media space, in effect controls the type of media resources that are made public and the type of public discussion and debate that takes place in a society. This means that they have the power to set agendas, to decide what is important enough to be discussed, how it should be discussed, which opinions should be heard and not heard, who will participate and who will be excluded. Media spaces can be owned and controlled by commercial and public interests, the state, women's organisations, minority associations, unions and many other groups working for social change. The greater the variety in who owns and controls media spaces, the greater the range of topics, resources and voices that are made public, and the wider the range of ideas and political positions discussed and debated. This kind of diversity in the ownership and control of media spaces is crucial for social change and participatory democracy.

Media messages are not passively absorbed by media audiences or users. Instead, we ACTIVELY use them to think about and understand the world, others, our relationships and ourselves. We also actively use them to create different pleasures during our engagement with the media. Different individuals and groups can in fact use the same media resources to think and feel differently, and to experience different forms of enjoyment and pleasure.

In her research on soap opera audiences in Greece, Frangou found that different viewers experienced different complex pleasures in relation to Greek and foreign soaps. These pleasures emerged from an “aesthetic” way of viewing the soap (with a focus on the glamour, colours, exotic views, luxury), from adopting the position of “social observer” which provided the opportunity for the observation and discussion of social and political issues, and from a kind of “ironic” watching, which involved making fun of the soap and pointing out its excesses - as well as from other aspects of viewing alone and with others.

Frangou, G. P. (2002) *Soap Opera Reception in Greece: Resistance, Negotiation & Viewing Positions*. Unpublished Phd thesis, University of London.

However, the nature and range of media resources can shape and influence what we think and feel, despite the fact that this influence can differ in nature and extent among different individuals and groups. The specific nature and range of media resources provided in a society can play a significant role in shaping what is thought to be true, normal, acceptable, legitimate and even

possible for gender, as well as many other issues. Thus, changes in media resources can have significant influence on individuals, particular groups and on the direction of society itself.

"More than any other form of mass media, especially in a place where many remain non-literate, television brings a variety of vivid experiences of the non-local into the most local of situations, the home. So when someone like Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz laments the decline of the Cairo coffee house, explaining 'People used to go to the coffee shops and listen to story tellers who played a musical instrument and told of folk heroes. These events filled the role played by television serials today', he forgets that this older form of entertainment, with the imaginary non-local worlds it conjured up, was only available to men. Television gives women, the young, and the rural as much access as urban men to stories of other worlds."

Abu-Lughod, L (1995) "The objects of soap opera: Egyptian television and the cultural politics of modernity" in D. Miller (ed) *Worlds Apart: Modernity Through the Prism of the Local*. London: Routledge.

## Exercises

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- Who owns and/or controls media spaces in your society? Is there significant diversity in ownership and/or control? Is there significant difference in media content?
  - Have you ever enjoyed watching a television programme or reading a magazine for different reasons than other people you know?
  - Can you think of a news or fiction programme, newspaper column or film in your society that has provided the resources for a dominant way of thinking about a social issue or problem to be challenged and reconsidered?
-

## RETHINKING SOCIAL CHANGE

*By Krini Kafiris*



Have you ever thought along these lines?

- The times just change; it's inevitable.
- It is impossible for ordinary people to try to change things, only powerful people can.
- It is impossible to change the situation for women where I live.

The times don't just change! Behind every major or minor progressive social change for democracy, gender and racial equality, human rights, animal rights and the environment, are the efforts of ordinary people -- individuals, groups, organisations, movements, institutions -- working together both locally and globally.

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

*Alice Walker*

Progressive social change requires the persistent efforts and struggles of ordinary people working together in the face of difficulties and often ridicule and hostility.

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."

*Mahatma Gandhi*

Social change is achieved through a combination many different activities.

What is an activist?

"Myth: Only protestors are activists. Reality: Anyone can be an activist.

An activist is someone who takes action to make things better." [www.activist.ca](http://www.activist.ca)

The examples below are about how to bring about social change in relation to gender equality, but these same activities are crucial to promoting democracy, human rights, racial equality, the rights of workers, animal rights, and the protection of the environment and many other important progressive causes.

### *education*

Gender studies, women's studies and feminist studies courses and university programmes focus on the role of gender and gender inequality in humanities, social science and even science subjects. This allows students to see and think about the world through a "gender lens" in whatever job, career or other activities they pursue in the future.

For a list of these courses and programmes around the world, see  
<http://www.york.ac.uk/services/library/subjects/womenint.htm#acadsoc.htm>  
<http://userpages.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/programs.html#outside>

Education on gender takes place for schoolchildren, through additions/adaptations of the traditional classes, as well as through extracurricular activities. For a manual and resource pack on gender sensitive practices in school for teachers and teacher trainers, see  
<http://www.eldis.org/gender/index.htm>.

Many organisations and institutes throughout the world also provide gender training for particular professionals -- such as teachers, journalists and many others, as well as for interested adults in general. Training for women by such organisations also includes entrepreneurship, leadership skills, internet and new media skills, literacy, health issues and many other subjects. See the MIGS website <http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org>, as well as other gender media organisations in Appendix 6 to find out more.

### *scholarship*

Scholarly writing and research involves producing new knowledge about different women's lives, new ideas and ways of thinking about gender issues in relation to many dimensions of economic, political, social and cultural life; new understandings about how gender discrimination is established, maintained, reproduced and resisted through complex power relations in everyday life; and finding solutions to the problems different women face around the world. Such work can also be the basis for policy formation and problem solving undertaken by other entities working for gender equality.

See Appendix 8 for academic journals on gender in the humanities/social science fields as well as the comprehensive academic resources site on gender run by the University of York, UK at <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/library/subjects/womenint.htm#acadsoc.htm>

### *journalism*

The activities of journalists in state/commercial, as well as women's media, reach and influence

mass audiences. They can play a crucial role in promoting gender equality by providing diversity in information, images and ways of thinking about gender and women, and spaces for discussion and debate which privilege progressive voices and diverse points of view from different women. Journalistic practices can avoid reproducing stereotypes and gender inequality through choice of language, sources, subjects, titles, photos and captions.

See Appendices 2 and 4 for practical resources on journalistic practices which avoid sexism and stereotypes and promote gender equality.

### *political activities*

Gender equality can also be promoted through the activities of mainstream political parties as well as through other groups -- such as unions, NGOs, associations, organisations and movements. Political action promoting gender equality involves a wide range of activities such as developing, implementing and mobilising for positions, platforms, policies, legislation, rules, regulations; obbying, forming committees, developing projects, events and activities (including lectures, newsletters, demonstrations and strikes). It also involves voting for candidates at all levels of government who pledge to work for gender equality legislation! For more about how to get involved in a wide range of such activities see <http://www.planetfriendly.net/active.html>

### *artistic and cultural production and activities*

An important way of exploring gender issues, working to make them a legitimate and crucial issue and empowering both women and men to understand, support and work for gender equality, is through the arts and cultural production. Fiction films, documentaries, television programmes, novels, short stories, cartoons, video diaries, songs and works of art about different women's lives, problems and experiences, as well as other gender related issues, can move people in a way that nothing else can! They can be created and produced both by professionals and ordinary people. It is crucial to support these activities and make sure they reach as many people as possible (both adults and children) by organising film festivals, art and cartoon exhibits, literary readings, concerts and also by developing projects which allow ordinary people to engage themselves in cultural production which explores gender inequality and other gender issues.

For one example of how cultural production, in particular the production of video works, can promote the empowerment of women see <http://www.iicd.org/stories/articles/Story.import4937>

### *other forms of activism*

Other important activities which help to empower women and promote gender equality are providing aid and support in establishing women's groups, unions, organisations and cooperatives, mentoring activities, legal information and empowerment programmes, hotlines and shelters for victims of violence, media campaigns, study tours, women's microenterprises, women's village banking and much more. See successful examples of such activities in South Africa at <http://www.cwc.ie/news/art03/womensa.html> and in India at <http://www.csrindia.org/sstory.html>

These activities and efforts can inform people, make them aware of problems and potentials, change the way they and others think, influence emotions, shape practices, decision-making and policy formation, and the ways collective and individual power is used.

## Exercises

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- Can you name two examples of progressive social change that have taken place in your society in the last fifty years?
  - What individuals, groups, movements or organisations played a part in bringing about these changes? How have you learned about them? Where could you learn more about them?
  - What individuals, groups, movements or organisations are working for social change now in your society? What kind of progressive social change are they working towards? Have they been successful? Why or why not?
-



## GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, EMPOWERMENT AND THE MEDIA: PRODUCTION PRACTICES



“It is important to know that words don’t move mountains.  
Work, exacting work moves mountains.”

*Daniilo Dolci*

## GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA PRODUCTION

*By Krini Kafiris*

Some people within the world of media broadcasting believe that:

- Commercial media can't promote gender equality because people won't be interested and the role of commercial media is to give people what they want.
- Gender equality can only be promoted through serious "high quality" media.

These comments assume that

- a) Most people don't care about gender equality.
- b) Promoting gender equality will involve boring or difficult programmes that people don't like.

Promoting gender equality in media production actually involves:

- Producing media resources on gender and gender issues that are free from gender bias and stereotypes and providing resources (information, ideas, assumptions, ways of thinking etc.) which can be used to challenge gender inequality.
- Creating spaces where gender and gender issues can be regularly discussed, diverse viewpoints heard and gender inequality challenged.

Such resources and spaces can be created both in the context of the news and media fiction.

Promoting gender equality in media production is in the interest of every media institution and can result in large audiences, both for commercial and public broadcasting media.

Gender issues in most places in the world are considered to be crucially important and often highly controversial news subjects. Consider this list of gender-related topics:

- Choice on termination of pregnancy
- Single mothers
- Paternity rights
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sex work
- Homosexuality
- Gay marriage
- Reproductive rights

By providing spaces for the discussion and debate of these issues, for diverse and gender free biased resources, the media will be dealing with issues that are important for people's everyday lives and that people do care about.

Media fiction, both drama and comedy, that provides resources which can be used to challenge gender inequality in fiction and a regular space for the discussion of gender issues, can be highly popular, commercially and critically successful.

*Queer as Folk* is a 1999 British television series that chronicles the lives of three gay men let loose in Manchester's gay village around Canal Street. The main characters are Stuart Alan Jones (Aidan Gillen), who is apparently trying to have sex with every male in Greater Manchester (and appears to be succeeding), his longtime friend Vince Tyler (Craig Kelly), who has a little bit of a crush on Stuart and doesn't have quite as much luck regarding men, and finally 15-year-old Nathan Maloney (Charlie Hunnam of *Young Americans* and *Nicholas Nickleby*), who is new to the gay scene but is not exactly lacking in self-confidence.

The first series caused quite a stir in the UK, because many conservatives were shocked at the depiction of a 15 year old as being aware of his homosexuality and wanting to exercise it. Furthermore, a number of the show's explicit sex scenes caused controversy, not least because they involved gay sex. However, with the general viewership the first series became a triumphant success, despite its late-night timeslot and the withdrawal of main sponsor Beck's Beer.

The producers say that *Queer as Folk*, although superficially a realistic depiction of gay urban life in the 1990s, is meant as a fantasy tale, and Stuart, Vince, and Nathan are not so much characters as gay male archetypes.

The huge success of the first series led Channel 4 to commission a second. Although Davies did begin writing a second full series, he decided that there was not that much story left to tell with the characters, and instead finished the story with a two-part special TV movie, *Queer as Folk 2* screened in 2000.

This time, the gratuitous sex scenes were mostly absent, which was applauded by the people who had formerly harshly criticized the series. Also, the tone became somewhat more serious, with each of the main characters having to make hard choices concerning their future.

But in the end, things turn out fine for everyone: Nathan is left behind as the future "king" of Canal Street, while Vince gets to ride off with his beloved Stuart into the sunset - with a flying car, again stressing the fantasy aspect of the series.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queer\\_as\\_Folk\\_\(UK\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queer_as_Folk_(UK))

For a wide range of online articles on the critical and commercial success of *Queer as Folk* see <http://www.advocate.com/html/news/newssubjects/queerlife.asp>

## ●●● PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN ALL JOURNALISTIC PRACTICES INVOLVES THINKING DIFFERENTLY, NOT WORKING MORE!

Have you ever heard a journalist, student or anyone else say something like this, or have you thought it yourself?

- Ideas or comments that support gender inequality really only appear in articles with commentary, not straightforward reporting.
- Gender equality can only be promoted specifically through news articles on gender.

In fact, any type of text, any type of photograph and any combination of the two can have a gender dimension and thus include resources (ideas, concepts, values, assumptions etc.) on gender.

This doesn't mean that everything that you read or see will necessarily include resources on gender, it means that they do not only appear in commentary or articles specifically on gender and gender related issues. Resources on gender can appear in any form of journalistic output, including reports on any topic and even in titles and captions.

The gender dimension in journalism is created through choices made about:

- Language: Are "loaded" or neutral terms used? Are assumptions made about people on the basis of their gender? Are women called girls? They shouldn't be.
- Story angles: Whose point of view is the story told from? Whose interest is it in?
- Are there contradictory "double standards"? Who is excluded? Who is included?
- Context: Is enough context included so that the readers can make up their own mind? When should we include information about someone's marital status and whether they have children or not?
- Sources: How many sources are women? How many are minorities? How many belong to progressive, public interest groups?
- Visuals: Do the images contradict the content? What do they tell us on their own and in relation to the text and the caption?

What is the relationship of the words in a caption or text to a photograph? Roland Barthes used the word anchorage to describe this relationship. He wrote that while visual images can have multiple meanings (as can text), words accompanying a visual image work to fix or anchor its meaning, or to narrow its range of possible meanings.

Barthes, R. (1964) "The rhetoric of the image" in *Image/Music/Text*. London: Fontana.

## PROMOTING GENDER SENSITIVE JOURNALISM

*By Krini Kafiris*



One way of thinking about how to promote gender sensitivity in journalism is by looking through a “gender lens” a phrase used by Cynthia Cockburn and others writing on gender issues, to describe looking at the world with awareness to gender, gender inequality and the many different forms that it can take.

Using checklists is a useful and easy way of making sure that we are doing this in various aspects of journalistic work, such as writing, using photographs, finding sources. Checklists are lists of things that we should consider, or “check” in our work, to make sure that we are not reproducing or reinforcing gender bias or stereotypes. The goal is to use checklists until thinking about the gender dimension of our work becomes automatic and an integral part of our usual, daily professional practices and routines.

Many useful checklists have been compiled by gender and media organisations around the world for use in relation to various aspects of journalistic practices and journalistic texts. Links to several of these are included in Appendix B. Checklists are also available to help us look through a gender lens when thinking about the structure, organisation, policies and practices of the newsroom, and other aspects of news production.

### Exercise

Read the article which follows.

- Think about the language used, the content, and the sources by using the checklists in Appendix 2.
- Does this article provide resources that support gender equality?
- How could this article be rewritten so that it does not contain gender bias or stereotypes?
- Do such articles appear frequently in the press in your society?

## Why ARE you British women such slob?

Patti Stanger, 43, is the founder of The Millionaires Club, a dating agency aimed at rich men who want attractive wives. Here, she explains why British women are falling short of her clients' specifications. Patti lives in LA with her boyfriend of a year, Andy, 47, a property millionaire. Andrea Thompson reports...

Sadly, I have been disappointed so far by the quality of the UK female applicants for my European dating agency compared with the standard of members in New York and LA. Despite having nice faces, British women, on average, are overweight by 20 to 30 pounds and don't take enough pride in their appearance.

Highly eligible men pay me £5,600 for my services and demand top-quality women. They would laugh at me if I set them up on dates with some of the UK women who have applied.

Even your celebrities need grooming. Kate Winslet has a nice face, but I'd have trouble selling her body-shape to many of my clients. It's the same story with Martine McCutcheon. Kate Beckinsale has a great body, but gives out the wrong signals -- she's unapproachable and snotty. Emma Thompson is dowdy and frumpy -- she just doesn't make an effort to look polished. If I had a drop-dead-gorgeous husband as she does, I'd do a bit more with myself to make sure I kept him. Dido is cute but plain. With a few highlights, better-fitting clothes and more glamorous make-up, she could be stunning.

You UK girls should be aiming for that wholesome girl-next-door look that is welcoming and non-threatening to men. You should look sexy, but also like you could bake great bread. Think Britney Spears or Jessica Simpson, not Paris Hilton.

I'm not saying you need to be stick-thin to get on my database, but you British women need to hit the gym if you want to be considered. If you're going to eat a lot, fine, but you need to work out an hour a day to make up for it and keep yourself toned.

You also need to get into grooming. The average American woman has regular manicures, pedicures and highlights. British women need to do the same if they want to compete in the same league.

### 'No excuse'

You also need to improve your teeth. The very first thing a man will notice about a woman is her smile, and UK women have a poor level of dental hygiene. There is no excuse for bad teeth if you live in a civilised country. Go and have your teeth whitened -- and get veneers if they are crooked.

If you can't afford it, put it on a credit card. It is a priority, believe me.

Make your health and appearance the two most important things in your life. If you smoke heavily, stop. No man likes a woman who smokes. Even male smokers tell me they hate dating a woman who smokes.

Finally, you should watch your drinking. Never ever have more than two drinks on a date or eat more than your partner.

This may all sound harsh, but it's true. One girl in LA took my advice, dropped 20lb on Atkins and had her hair done. Now she is dating one of our most eligible millionaires. In my experience, most French and Italian women have sophistication and style. They watch what they eat and keep themselves slim.

But British women don't seem to care enough to make an effort. While they may be better travelled and more cultured than their American and European counterparts, they sell themselves short with their appearance.

### How to attract a better class of man

I recently had a meeting with a top UK fashion magazine editor. When she walked into my office, I was shocked. She had stringy, lank hair, was two stone overweight and wasn't wearing a scrap of make-up. A U.S. fashion magazine editor would never get away with looking like that.

She moaned that she kept falling into casual relationships but couldn't find a good man who respected her. I told her that you get what you pay for. If she spent more money on her appearance, she might attract a better class of man.

The woman we hope to attract is the type who can date whoever she wants and would never have to join a dating site -- so membership for women is free.

Only the top one per cent of applicants are accepted and all 10,000 women, whether they are professional career women or models, are beautiful. My reputation is at stake, so the women must come up to scratch.

### My advice

My advice to any British woman who wants to marry well is to pick up every fashion magazine you can and study the level of grooming you see on the pages. If you have curly hair, grow it long and blow-dry it straight.

Buy yourself a good push-up bra, some high heels and a classy little black dress that shows off your best qualities for dates. Keep make-up subtle. Most importantly, don't go over the top with accessories and jewellery, otherwise your man has nothing to buy you.

Just make some subtle changes to your appearance and you will be surprised how much more receptive men are. I have gone out with men who have approached me in bars to compliment me on my nails.

The priorities of my male clients are always the same -- an intelligent, slim, well-bred woman under 35 who keeps herself in shape, with long hair and a high level of grooming. I have many Harvard-educated Americans and Oxford-educated British clients, requiring women with a similar level of education. However, many millionaires request women who don't work, so that they can accompany them on business trips. They don't want to date waitresses, secretaries or air hostesses.

### Specific requests

Some of my millionaires have specific requests, like a knowledge of politics and the economy. One man asked specifically for a woman with silicon breasts because he did not want to be with a woman whose breasts would droop with age. I had to take his request seriously because this was obviously important to him. I try to give my clients 90 per cent of their wish list; the other 10 per cent is chemistry.

When a powerful rich man decides he wants to settle down, he doesn't have the time or inclination to trail bars and clubs for the woman of his dreams. Male millionaires treat their personal life with the same efficiency as their businesses.

I'm very excited about launching in Europe if I can find enough pretty girls. I already have 50 UK millionaires signed up, including bankers, businessmen and a handful of celebrities. British men are always in high demand in Europe and in America because they are so refined, charming and well mannered. Having seen some of the British women who have e-mailed me, I can see why these men are so eager for me to find them a wife.

11-11-2004

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/standard/article.html?in\\_article\\_id=325683&in\\_page\\_id=25](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/standard/article.html?in_article_id=325683&in_page_id=25)



## Exercises

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- What would you say to a reporter who said that reporters had no time to think about gender sensitivity due to the constraints of their job?
  - Does giving a voice to women in reports and articles necessarily promote gender equality?
  - Discuss the gender dimension of two articles from your own society, one with an accompanying photograph and one without. Use the checklists from Appendix 2 that you consider most appropriate.
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## PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA FICTION

*By Krini Kafiris*

Organising tools alone are rarely enough to change deeply held values and beliefs. To do so, we also need to use the tools of culture and art that throughout history have proved themselves able to break through to the human heart.

*Si Kahn*

Have you ever heard the following comment?

- Popular television drama and comedies are just entertainment, they can't do anything to promote social change or gender equality, only "serious" programming can.

Popular media fiction does matter for social change and for gender equality! Like news, it provides resources (ideas, assumptions, images, ways of thinking) on many subjects, including gender, which we use to think about the world and thus it can play a role in shaping how we think and feel about many issues. These resources can emerge from many aspects of fiction programming: from the ways that characters are portrayed, from the situations they find themselves in and the problems they face, and from the ways that narratives develop.

Media fiction can also provide "spaces" in which many issues (such as relationships between women and men, family life, sexuality, politics, crime) are regularly discussed and debated by the fictional characters, both directly and indirectly.

By engaging with media fiction, viewers come in contact with the resources provided, they consider the different experiences, conflicts and dilemmas of the characters and what happens to them, and they can discuss and debate the issues involved.

Through these processes viewers can come to understandings that can have implications for the ways they think and feel about social issues, as well as for their actions. Thus, media fiction, and the processes of engaging with it, does have the potential to affect the nature and direction of society itself.

## ●●● GENDER SENSITIVITY IN MEDIA FICTION

The portrayal of gender in media fiction is often discussed in terms of stereotypes. A stereotype is a generalisation made about a group of people which is supposed to be necessarily true for everyone in the group and which works to "erase" differences within the group.

However, it is tricky to think about stereotypes in relation to media fiction, because television programmes and films are often complex and constituted through so many multiple and often contradictory different elements -- through the characters (the way they behave, look, dress, and through their body language), their multiple roles, the dialogue, choice of language, the story lines or narratives, the settings and much more.

A more productive way of thinking about media fiction in a gender sensitive way, is to think about the resources it produces on gender and the spaces it provides for gender issues to be considered, discussed, negotiated and contested from multiple points of view and positions.

Media fiction in many places in the world provides a very limited range of resources (ideas, assumptions, values, images, ways of thinking) on gender. This means that:

- Female characters are defined in extremely limited ways, usually only as mothers or objects of male desire.
- They are overwhelmingly portrayed with the same limited characteristics and interests.
- The story lines, or narratives involving women are limited and predictable -- for example, women get married and have children, they sacrifice their own needs and desires for those of others, they are punished for leaving their husbands or for exploring their sexuality.

This type of media fiction does not provide viewers with resources with which to understand women as complex, multi-faceted human beings, who are equal to men. It also generally does not work as a space where discussion and negotiation of gender issues takes place, or if it does so, this takes place in such a way so that limited understandings of women's characteristics, roles and destinies are reinforced. This type of media fiction does not provide media resources which challenge gender inequality.

Media fiction that challenges gender inequality is characterised by

diversity

complexity

ambiguity

Diversity means that different female characters are portrayed as having different desires, needs, roles, ways of thinking and ways of living. It also means that the stories about their lives are characterised by different trajectories and outcomes.

Complexity involves the portrayal of female characters as multi-faceted human beings, who have multiple and often contradictory roles, ways of thinking, ways of living, desires and needs. Such a character cannot be easily summed up simply as a mother or “femme fatale” for example. Complexity in the story line or narrative means female characters face and negotiate many different types of difficult problems and situations in different ways, with different outcomes.

Ambiguity means that female characters are portrayed in a way that does not allow us to be completely certain of what they think, how they feel, what they want -- just because they are women! We cannot necessarily predict the story line or narrative, or be completely certain of what they will do, how they will do it or the reasons for their actions, simply on the basis of gender.

Viewers of this type of media fiction are provided with resources which acknowledge that different women have different characteristics, ways of thinking, needs and desires. It can provide a space where gender and gender issues are directly or indirectly discussed in such a way, so that women are portrayed as equally diverse, complex and human as men.

This type of fiction provides resources that challenge gender inequality. It provides the viewers the opportunity to consider, discuss and debate the range of different choices and decisions that female characters have and make, and the different ways that they handle and negotiate different problems and situations. Thus, this type of media fiction can play a role in changing traditional and stereotypical ideas about gender and what is considered to be normal, acceptable and possible.

Diversity, complexity and ambiguity in male characters and the stories or narratives about them can also challenge gender inequality.

Consider these examples from the US television situation comedy programme, *Friends*, (1994-2004), a popular and commercially successful programme which has been broadcast in many parts of the world.



Monica, one of the female characters, who develops a career as a chef during the series, is a cleaning fanatic; she loves to cook and entertain, and is desperate to get married and have babies. However, her obsession with cleanliness and tidiness, her desire to always be the hostess, and her extreme competitiveness, are NOT considered to be normal or natural, but exceptional, unusual and on many occasions, problematic. The other female characters do not share her characteristics nor do they express her overwhelming desire for marriage and children.



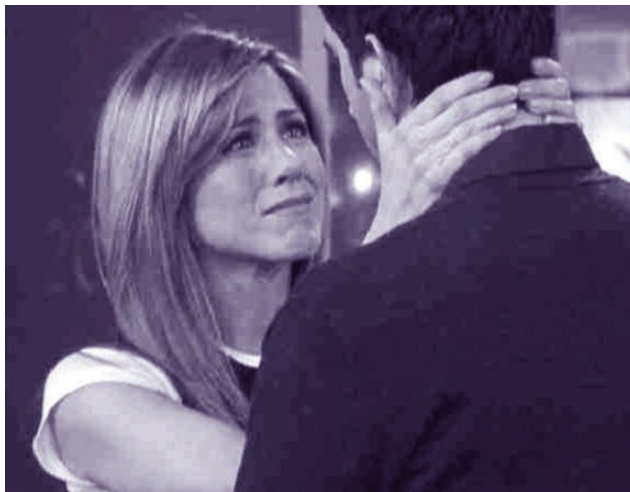
Rachel, one of the female characters, is initially a spoiled, rich "daddy's girl" who is primarily interested in fashion and shopping. However, her desire to be independent leads her to refuse her father's money and work in a coffee shop, which she does until she develops a career in fashion. When she becomes pregnant after a one-night stand with her former partner, Ross, she decides to keep the baby and raise it on her own, with his help.



Ross, one of the male characters has an ex-wife who left him when pregnant with their son to live with a woman she fell in love with and eventually marries. She and her partner are very excited about the prospect of raising the baby as a couple and Ross is jealous. However, he finally realises that the baby boy is lucky to have three parents, in effect, to love and care for him and accepts the involvement of his ex-wife's partner in the raising of his son.



Joey and Chandler, two of the male characters, are often portrayed drinking beer, talking about going to sport events, and ogling the bathing suit clad women in Baywatch, an American television programme about lifeguards on a beach in California. However, both are also portrayed as being sensitive, emotional, sentimental and supportive of their female and male friends. Both are often shown trying to be honest and fair in their relationships with the opposite sex, despite the fact that often their initial inclinations tend towards the opposite.



By the end of the series, Monica and Chandler are married and have to deal with the fact that they can't have children. They decide to adopt. Rachel is a single mother who decides to get back together with the father of her child, Ross, with whom she has had a relationship in the past. Phoebe, who in the past has been a surrogate mother, decides to marry and agrees to have children with her future husband.

## Exercises

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- Discuss the diversity, complexity and ambiguity in these characters and narratives. How do they offer resources that can be used to challenge gender inequality?  
Do you think that the resources this program offers could be used to challenge gender inequality in your society? If not, what do you think the obstacles are to this taking place?
  - Have you seen any television programmes or films in your society that have challenged gender inequality in similar ways?
  - Collectively come up with one female character that you would like to see on television whose life or character challenges gender inequality. Write a half page description of this character and think of three issues or events that you would like to see her deal with, as well as the ways that you would like her to do so.
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A large, rounded rectangular area with a light purple background and horizontal dashed lines, intended for writing notes.



## PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND EMPOWERMENT IN MEDIA ORGANISATIONS



"A woman's place is in her union."

*Coalition of Labor Union Women*



## WOMEN WORKING IN THE MEDIA: A REALITY CHECK

*By Spurgeon Thompson*

A generation ago, journalism was considered a singularly male profession. Women around the world were flatly discouraged from becoming journalists, and those who did succeed in the field were considered rare exceptions. Elli Kotzamani, in her brief 2004 overview, *Women in Media Organisations*, notes that, for example, in 1972, the Federal Bureau of Labour in Germany issued an informative leaflet coldly declaring: “Women do not have the investigative and analytical skills necessary to become journalists”. While the global situation for women in the media profession is improving, it has only taken its first few baby steps towards meaningful equality.

UNESCO data show that in many countries women have outnumbered men among mass communication and journalism students for about two decades. But although the percentage of female journalists and other middle-level media professionals has risen substantially over that period, research continues to document women’s absence from senior decision-making jobs in the media worldwide. These patterns are already being reproduced in the new information and technology industries.

“Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women,” Report of the Expert Group Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon, 12 to 15 November 2002, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNITED NATIONS

### ●●● THE NUMBERS: THE CELLULOID CEILING

According to Kotzamani’s 2004 report, women form about one third of the workforce in media organisations globally. In more developed countries this percentage rises to between 30 or 40%. While relatively high, these numbers don’t reflect the “celluloid ceiling,” under which women are assigned less decision-making and more of the grunt work.

- According to the latest statistics of the International Federation of Journalists (the world’s largest journalists’ group, which represents more than half a million journalists in 110 countries) the figure (in developed countries) averages at 37% of journalists being women.
- In countries where gender equality has been fought for successfully, the numbers are much higher. Take the Union of Journalists in Finland, 49% of which is composed of women.

- In Asian countries the number of women journalists contrasts between the countries of Southern and Southeastern Asia. For example the Association of Journalists in Nepal numbers only 65 women out of 552 members, whereas the state television of the Philippines employs more women than men.
- In Africa women represent less than 20% of professionals in the media industry. The numbers scale from less than 10% in Mozambique, to more than 30% in Zimbabwe, whereas during the last decade there's been a tremendous increase for instance in Tunisia, where in 1998 it was reported that 37% of the members of the local Association of Journalists are women.
- In contrast, the annual newsroom census of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, published on 27 April 2004, showed small advances for women. After a two-year decline, women's overall newsroom share rose from 37% to 37.23%, but currently only 34.2% of supervisors and 26.2% of photographers are women.
- In Cyprus according to the Union of Cyprus Journalists, out of a total of 304 print journalists 243 are men and only 61 are women. That is about the same percentage as Nepal or Zimbabwe.
- Internationally, the percentages of women working as journalists contrast sharply with the numbers of women studying to become journalists. Research carried out in 1993 in 26 countries proved that in most of these countries (among them the United States, Bulgaria and Mexico) women outnumber men in schools of journalism and communication studies and form about 70% of the total. The average number of women students of journalism worldwide is 40% higher than the percentage of women who are active professionals in the media industry, according to Kotzamani.

The Catch. An International Federation of Journalists study indicates that 0.6% of women journalists hold positions of real power and decision-making globally. That means that despite large numbers of women working in the field, and even larger numbers of women studying to become journalists, no progress has been made where it really counts, i.e., at the top.

## Exercises

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- What positions do women working in the media hold in your society?
- What are the obstacles that women face in advancing their careers in the media in your society?
- Mentor or Competitor? Stage a discussion about achieving equality, respect, salary commensurate with work performed, and dignity between a woman editor (who has earned a position of power), and a new intern (just finished her studies). What difference is there between the two roles? What perspectives do each offer the other? What expectations do they have?

- Does the high visibility of anchorwomen or a few key, famous women reporters work to obscure the gender inequities of the journalism profession?
  - Do high level women in the profession have an obligation to younger or less established women to help them earn their places?
  - Imagine three ways to approach reporting on gender inequality in media organisations. Consider the following: 1) how to use informal, autobiographical material, 2) how to use features on or profiles of prominent women in the field, 3) how to use statistics to compare and contrast conditions across regions and countries.
- 

## Fifteen Years of Courage: Ayşe Önal

*By Peggy Simpson*

Ayşe Önal still has a powerful voice on all things Turkish and, since winning the IWMF's Courage in Journalism Award in 1996, has won several other national and international awards.

Since 2003, she has written a column three times a week from London for Turkey's third largest newspaper and has covered British news for a TV network owned by the same Turkish multinational media company.

In August 2004, she stirred the pot with her book on "honor killings" that was published in Turkey. An English version was released in London in September. In her book, entitled *Why Did They Kill*, Önal wrote about 10 case studies where women were killed by their brothers or fathers.

"Last year you weren't able to talk about this in Turkey. The government didn't talk about it. It was just a normal thing, like going to a pub." If a woman in a village that was not very modern began wearing modern clothes, "the men in the village kill her because they think it brought dishonor to them."

Until recently, the men got off lightly under a law that considered honor killings somewhat equivalent to murders done in self-defense. The men profiled in her book "all were convinced they protected the honor of their families." In most cases, if the men were arrested and convicted they often got only a month in prison. And society "considered it normal, thought it was the daughters' fault."

“But the law is changing and these honor killings are trying to be stopped - they’re not seen as normal any more,” Önal said.

To mid-June, 64 women had died this year in Turkey in honor killings, including 16 in Istanbul. She said this is a fraction of what it was for the same period before the law was changed.

Önal has been a controversial journalist most of her life. She was on the hit list of both the revolutionary left and the Islamic radicals. Her early kudos came from reports on prison abuse of children, but she went on to cover the first Gulf War, the war in Bosnia and the evolving political situation of the Kurds. She rattled the Turkish government by many reports about corruption and in the mid-1990s officials put her on a black list, which effectively barred her from employment in any media controlled by the government. That “embargo” against her was lifted right before she got the Courage Award but she was still seen as almost unemployable.

When she returned with the international award in hand, however, the country’s first Islamic network, Channel 7, hired her to anchor a new political show, partly to draw upon her rich mix of sources across the political spectrum, but also to back her vision of a groundbreaking program aiming to show that “Muslims and non-Muslims, in a modern society, could get along.”

She invited Jews and Armenians to share a podium with Turks. It broke the isolation of all three groups and began to be emulated by other channels. The show, called *Minefield*, was 45 minutes in prime time, five times a week. She did it nonstop for two years, until the summer of 1997.

She took time off to care for her daughter, who lost a leg and an arm in a train accident, and, in 2000, moved with her to London to seek better medical care.

After moving to London, Önal became foreign correspondent for Channel 7. When their political party won control of the government and the network became less independent, she joined the private Turkish media group, Karamehmet. She writes a column for the newspaper Aksam and covers British news for its Show TV channel.

And she began to report on a myriad of issues involving Muslims: “terrorism issues, conflicts between Muslims and Christians and oppressed Muslim women.”

She sees it as a conflict that cuts many ways.

On one hand, she criticizes the U.S. invasion of Iraq, even if it got rid of a tyrant. She protests the U.S. abuse of prisoners and suspected terrorists. She also criticizes Palestinian terrorists.

She said that “modern society should take steps to stop Muslims from blaming everything wrong on Western countries” and should “start to face themselves and the problems with their own society.”

That’s a hard sell when the U.S. presence in Iraq is so inflammatory, she said. Once the United Nations assumes more of a role there, she hopes the debate on reforms can begin anew.

“If leaders start telling their own people what is wrong with their society, maybe people will believe them,” she said, adding that this message is rejected when it comes from Western countries.

Önal said that the Courage Award came at a critical crossroads in her life and influenced her next steps, professionally and personally.

It meant a lot to find “that there actually were other people who were doing what they thought was right,” she said. She also realized that she was not alone.

She was surprised to learn “that in the United States, there are people who are rich and who live comfortably, who don’t need to do anything about poor people, but who actually do care about them. That affected me. The rich don’t have any contact with the poor in Turkey,” she said.

Önal took those insights back to Turkey and used them to shape her groundbreaking Channel 7 show, which challenged the racial isolation of Turks from minorities.

The Courage Award also opened her eyes to see that “the suffering and sadness of people does not have a nationality but is a common thing around the world.”

Today, with her daughter educated and, at 25, ready to take a job, Önal is preparing to move back to Turkey. She will keep her column and hopes to keep one foot in television.

Her current challenge, she said, is looking intensively at two major issues: disabled people and “women and their role in the world today, especially Muslim women. Because if women in society start to improve themselves, the countries will be improved. And religion will be reformed.”

<http://www.iwmf.org/features/8617>

## Female Journalists in Iran

*Presentation from the Asia Pacific NGO Forum of Beijing +10.*

*Fariba Davoudi Mohajer*



My country -- Iran -- and many countries in the region are in the grips of the serious peril of patriarchal culture, which takes away innovation and activity from society and obstructs the real participation of women.

This culture of male dominance and superiority has affected all institutions, organisations and layers of society to turn women into the second best gender -- in both hidden and overt ways.

A field that has been hit hardest by the impact of this culture in Iran is "women journalists and women in the press". Female journalists are in no way exempt from the general prejudice dealt out to women in all walks of life. The take men have on women has had profound implications for women journalists working in Iranian press.

Female journalists are confronted with the same political, cultural, educational and financial obstacles that all women face; the same traditions, customs, norms and family and tribal restrictions; the same incorrect interpretations of religion which is far from the true Islam.

These religious interpretations differ from Pakistan to Afghanistan, Malaysia to Saudi Arabia. And unfortunately these differences are most evident when it comes to their take on women. These interpretations define the role and responsibilities of women in society and determine what rights she has.

The same interpretations dictate that I, a journalist and political activist, would not be permitted to travel, choose a residence or even divorce without the consent of my husband. The same interpretations draw red lines for women and women journalist and dictate that we do not cross them by breaking the taboos. The same interpretations allow women only superficial participation, which is not real and effective in the macro policymaking of their country.

The wide range of requests of Iranian men and women led to the election of President Mohammad Khatami. As the political atmosphere opened, many newspapers found the opportunity to be published. Many girls were attracted to work and write in these newspapers due to their educational background, interest and ability, outstanding writing talent, high levels of energy, enthusiasm and curiosity and most importantly for them this was a chance to prove themselves.

But never -- except for very few instances -- did the governing culture allow women to move up towards the posts of manager, editor or director in the media in which they worked. The patriarchal culture governing the media made the growth of women dependant on the decisions of men and drew invisible ceilings to cap the progress of women to ensure that the media's senior management positions would always be out of their reach. As a result women had no say at the decision-making levels and as a consequence the issue of "women in Iran's press" did not get the attention it was due; as the decision for what article to print, where to print it and how was one made exclusively by men.

All our efforts to have a permanent page for women's issues in newspapers were unfruitful. All our efforts for getting permits for publications especially for women were unfruitful, except in a handful of cases which passed through special filters.

All our efforts so we could write what we wanted about women's issues without the final supervision of men did not get us anywhere desirable. The only newspaper that did have a page allocated to women was suspended, and the director of the next newspaper was not willing to allocate a page to the issue.

This is not a desired state to be in when you aim to publicise women's issues and bring it from the sidelines to forefront of the social discussion. Our other aims were to boost the awareness of women through the media, establish a two-way connection with the public and influence public opinion to build norms which redefine the role for women.

I believe that there is a collective decision throughout the world to exclude women from macro decision-making processes; and thus their presence in the most important means in this regards -- namely the media -- has been limited. The United Nations can never publicise women's issues without a variety of media. It can never talk about women's rights until it has adopted practical plans for female journalists and how news relating to women should be reflected in the media. Without advertisement tools the United Nations cannot influence public opinion and make the changes required to reestablish the rights of women.



In my country we have the best, most professional and bravest women journalist. Women who have made the most changes with the least facilities. Women who have consistently and constantly written to change backward interpretations and traditional roles. They have been influential in reversing or stopping governmental actions (for example in regards to executions). They have expressed the necessities and have at times forced the bettering of women's conditions.

Today we female journalists write about women ministers, women lawyers, women judges, and honour killings, and try to continue with our work without losing heart.

Women journalists, like all other Iranian women, lack four essential elements, which must be analysed and addressed.

1. Wealth
2. Power
3. Status
4. Information

Without these four elements women will not be able to organize themselves into claiming the rights they are entitled to. Do not keep telling us to believe in ourselves, we do believe in ourselves; but we cannot make significant changes without these four elements. Even if they do give me a permit to publish my newspaper, to do so I must speak with wealthy men. Men who have achieved this wealth by depriving women of economic independence. We must surely discuss ways in which we women can achieve the four essential elements of wealth, power, status and information. If I want to set up a site, publish a brochure or anything like that I will ultimately be overshadowed by a man, and continue moving in a miserable cycle of helplessness.

Women journalists have been racing for many years to reach the men that have effortlessly skipped up the ladder of progress and the manly atmosphere governing Iranian press is one of the most significant problems faced by Iran's female journalists. Also, low wages paid for press activities, which are sometimes uneven between men and women, are also problems faced by women journalists. The usually male editor-in-chief has the last word on every article and these are the things that must change.

A patriarchal environment and culture will resist any drive towards equal rights. Men do not consider progress a right women are entitled to. While the vision of women is deep, precise and delicate men consider politics to be their exclusive realm and thus do not approve of female political journalists. Men believe the arenas of wealth, industry and production are theirs to command and do not allow

women to enter into their manly environment. They claim sports for themselves as well, which results in the situation we have today.

Another important factor is that the repeated closing of newspapers, which led to the unemployment of many journalists, had its most profound impact on women and many problems in regards to job security emerged for them.

From the 787 publication permits issued between 1997 and 2000, only 59 were granted to women and only 9 magazines had women directors and many of them were unable to publish due to financial difficulties.

From a total of 1200 journalism cards issued from the Head Press Office, 204 were given to women. From a total of 2232 advertisement permits, only 274 were issued to women. This is while 60% of the people studying these courses at university are female and from the 946 students of the journalism courses offered by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 554 were male and the remaining 392 were female.

What is certain is that to achieve these goals we require tools, resources and agents of change. We cannot create change unless we have these three elements at hand, and unfortunately we have none.

The agents of change are all men. The officials of political parties and groups, media, press, television and radio managers and directors are all men. Men write our school books and men write the laws. Men pay us our wages; and in short, men hinder our drive towards change.

Female reporters are left behind closed doors as it is considered indecent for women to take part in some meetings for the purpose of reporting. Reporting on sporting venues is for men only and women sport journalists are not even allowed to enter soccer stadiums. Reporting on fields such as crimes and accidents, religious ceremonies (which are largely segregated) and even unions is exclusive to men. It is clear that opportunities have not been equally divided between male and female journalists.

In my opinion, men are seriously worried about the real and unobstructed participation of women and look to them as serious competitors and try to eliminate them by placing a variety of obstacles in their way.

Newspapers that do not offer insurance, or contracts, job security or professional security limit the opportunities for women's progress and gradually eliminate them. Women themselves are granted but a few publication permits and I myself have been waiting for more than five years for a permit to publish a newspaper.

Yes, if I were given a newspaper, I would use it to talk about having the right to divorce, I would write articles about women having the right to the presidency. I would write about how men and women were created and have evolved equally and have equal rights and I would present the issues and thoughts of women. So the best way is for them not to give me a publishing permit, or label me a radical and take away my editorial power to choose my stories.

## Women's Employment Situation

Employment of women in the media is largely dependant on her family situation and the opinion of managers about the role and main responsibilities of women in society. On one hand, the general view is that the primary role and responsibility of women is being mothers and wives. On the other hand, the women who fulfill these two responsibilities do not enjoy the required stability in their employment situation. A married woman who has children usually cannot work fulltime, which means she cannot maintain her employment situation.

Women journalists are worse off compared to women working in other professions. She goes home late and she does not have regular working hours. The house is her second office. When she reaches home she has to write her reports and articles. Her papers are scattered all over the house and her husband and children -- in accordance with traditional definitions -- want lunch and dinner from a mother who is constantly running between her home and the office, which is scattered throughout the city.

Her needs differ from that of ordinary women and usually the men in her household only except ordinary roles from her. She wants to break away from the rigid restrictions and wants to create new norms and redefine the concepts of herself and women in general; while society and her family do not approve. All this puts her under psychological pressure, the burden of which she must shoulder on her own.

With all these obstacles, female journalists in Iran -- with the assistance of men who are conscious of women's issues -- have been able to create fundamental changes.

A report from the Public Relations Department of the Women's Cultural and Social Revolution Council shows that from 1863 pieces reflected in the media on women's issues in February 2004 the breakdown of the topics were as follows:

- Social perils - 31.6%
- General public issues - 15.4%
- Cultural - 15.2%

- Women in other countries - 12.8%
- Women and politics - 7.8%
- Women's health - 5.9%
- Women's sports - 4.8%
- Legal and judicial - 2.5%
- Science and research - 2.2%
- Education - 1.6%

The Public Relations Department of the Women's Cultural and Social Revolution Council, which is a governmental institution, also announced that 28.1% of the pieces could be classified as positive and 42.4% of the reports were negative and 29.5% were deemed neutral. These reports are indicative of what is going on in society. In October 2003 the newspaper headlines about women's issues were as follows:

- Violence and Harassment - 32.5%
- Prostitution and Runaways - 22.22%
- Murder and Crime - 12.27%
- Other Social Perils - 10.61%
- Divorce - 9.95%
- Theft - 7.3%
- Suicide - 4.14%
- Addiction - 1%

The highest instances of stories in the same month were as follows:

- News related - the death of the Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi - 145
- Political - Shirin Ebadi wins the Nobel Peace Prize - 78
- Legal and Judicial - The murder of Laleh Saharkhizan, the wife of a soccer-player - 25
- Social - Housing loans and assistance granted to single mothers - 17
- Social - The city council's plan to eliminate hijab (Islamic covering) in all-girl schools - 11
- Crime - The members of the group that smuggled Kyrgyz girls to the United Arab Emirates - 8
- Cultural - Feminism - 8

- Sport - Women's soccer - 7
- Science and Research - Smoking Women - 4

### Female Journalists in Iranian Media over the Past Century

Press media started in Iran with the publication of Vaghaye-ol Etefaghiyeh under the management of Mirza Taghi Khan Amir Kabir in 1888. Based on the available information the top officials of all the newspapers, magazines and publications up until the constitutional revolution were men and women had no activity in the press. As in this period women were used only for reproduction, farming and objects of pleasure in the harems.

Then Iran came into contact with western culture and schools for girls were set up as a result. As girls became literate their demands also started getting expressed. In 1909 the first publication specialising on women -- named Danesb -- was published. This publication was published once every week in eight pages, under the management of Ms. Kahal and was closed after a year due to financial reasons.

Later in 1951 the first illustrated daily publication dedicated to women called Shokufe was stone printed in four pages. Ms. Mozayan-ol Saltaneh, daughter of Seyed Razl Khan Doctor Tabatabaei Semnani, founder and principal of Moayaneh School became the director of this publication.

Ms. Sadighe Dolatabadi, sister of Haji Mirza Mohammad All Dolatabadi, published Zabau-e Zanan Daily in 1958, three years after the closing of Shokufe. This was the third publication focusing exclusively on women's issues and was published in Isfahan once every fortnight.

Alam-e Nesvan was published under the license of Ms. Navab Safavi by the students and graduates of American schools. Zanan-e Iran was another publication that was published in 1920, but there isn't much information available on it. In 1920 Nameb-e Banoon was published by Shahnaz Azad. In 1922 Jahan-e Zan was published by Fakhr Afagh Parsa in Mashhad. In 1923 the Society of Nationalist Women published their publication and its editing board was consisted of Fakhr-ol Saltaneh Foruhar, Nour-ol Hoda Mangeneh, and Fakhr Ozma Arghavan. In 1925 Marziyeh Zarabi published Nesvan-e Shargh and later the magazines of Sa'adat, Dokhtaran-e Iran and NourAfshan were published in Bushehr. It is worth mentioning that Shokufe had put forward 12 candidates for the third parliamentary elections and had called upon men to vote for them. This campaign provoked the reaction of the government which closed the publication. Later in 1924 and during the rule of Reza Khan, Aftab-e Shargh was published by Narjes Amozegar and then Zan-e Emrouy was published by Badrol Moluk on a weekly basis.

As you can see, Iranian women have a long and proud history of participation in the press, but unfortunately this proud tradition has not continued to this day.

From: <http://www.irandokht.com/editorial/index4.php?area=wor&sectionID=29&editorialID=766>

## WHAT TO DO TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA WORKPLACE

*By Spurgeon Thompson*

### ●●● CHANGE WORKING CONDITIONS

Across the world, women have made progress toward achieving gender equality in the newsrooms and studios of the profession. Activists in NGOs, professional associations, single journalists acting alone or in isolated situations, have all demanded change in different ways. Their efforts have paid off.

What the UN says:

*What can be done by media organisations and professional associations  
A Nine Point Plan*

- Set goals or targets for the achievement of gender balance among media personnel in different categories and levels of media employment, including technical areas of media operations.
- Establish policies and transparent procedures for recruitment, remuneration, promotion, work assignment, and other matters that affect professional access, employment and advancement. These should be guided by the principles of gender justice and equity, with special attention to women from disadvantaged groups.
- In view of the growing evidence that many women are dropping out of media professions at different stages of their careers, conduct research to examine this global trend, publicise the findings and implement measures to ensure that women are enabled and encouraged to stay within the media.
- Recognise the existence of negative gender-based attitudes and behaviours within media enterprises and organisations, including sexual harassment in the workplace, and institute measures and mechanisms to create a gender-friendly work environment.

- Establish more flexible work schedules, not as a special concession to women, but in recognition of the need for all human beings to achieve a healthy balance between professional and personal life, which would in turn enhance both productivity and creativity, especially since technology has made this a feasible option.
- Provide management, negotiation and leadership training for women to help them succeed in media companies by anticipating and dealing with the realities and challenges of the media environment, including professional power structures and relations. Such training should also help women to develop the self-confidence necessary to overcome obstacles such as sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based discrimination and exploitation.
- Ensure diversity among media personnel through recruitment and training that addresses the specific needs of young women, older women, rural women, indigenous women, migrant women, and women from other socially disadvantaged or excluded groups.
- Foster gender-awareness among women and men in the media by conducting workshops and training, or by setting up mechanisms for media practitioners to critique their work.
- Establish mentoring systems and other supportive strategies to enhance women's capabilities and potential for advancement in the media.



## ••● SET UP AN ASSOCIATION/NETWORK OF WOMEN MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

Gather women from your community who are committed to advancing the role of women in the media. Try to get representatives of different sectors and from various media.

### Issues to be discussed

- What are the problems, status and challenges faced by female media professionals?
- How could an association help?
- What would be the formal goals of the association?
- Find out about other similar associations around the world and allow them to inspire you and give you ideas!

### Moving forward

- Elect officers of the association with specific, well defined tasks.
- Set up an internet and/or mailing list, website and bank account.
- Find out procedures for registering your organisation if this is desired.
- Develop a charter.
- Seek funding if necessary.

### Launching the association

- Distribute a press release announcing the association to media companies, organisations, NGOs, ministries, professional associations, journalism/media schools and other relevant entities.
- Set up a press conference combined with an event: a roundtable discussion, a reception, short talks given by prominent women in leadership positions. Seek to cover costs by contacting businesses, NGOs, media companies, government agencies and international organisations.

### Activities

- Hold regular meetings to discuss issues, problems, provide support, inform each other.
- Conduct a survey of women media professionals. Gather information about obstacles faced, opinions on how the association can help, e-mails/addresses and make everything available in an online databank.
- Establish a media monitoring project to examine how women are portrayed in the media.
- Distribute checklists on promoting gender equality in all aspects of media production to the members of the association so that they can use them and also pass copies on to others, both women and men.



- Publish some form of online newsletter, or set up a bulletin board.
- Work with a local university or college on events, conferences, speaking engagements, student projects, courses and other activities.

From <http://www.commedia.org.uk>

## PARTICIPATE IN ASSOCIATIONS/NETWORKS OF WOMEN MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

*By Spurgeon Thompson*

The range of professional women's media associations around the world is extensive, thanks to the women and funding bodies who support their efforts. Most associations structure a range of activities to include training, development, and empowerment through interaction and knowledge acquisition. By joining together, women focus their creative talents to bear on discovering new ways to make change happen, from conferences to legal advocacy. Here is a short sample of associations and recent activities.

### SHOWCASE ● ● ●

#### The International Association of Women in Radio and Television (founded 1951)

See Appendix 4 for contact details.

The International Association of Women in Radio and Television arranges international conferences with workshops, screenings, lectures, training sessions and professional networking. It holds regional meetings in different geographical areas, presents Awards of Excellence to publicly recognise programmes that demonstrate the ability and creativity of women producers. It also publishes a newsletter to provide information and to update members, individuals and institutions, and sponsors a study scholarship programme for deserving members.

IAWRT maintains a website for information sharing, membership news, links to relevant sites, and a chance to see and hear clips of members' programmes: [www.iawrt.org](http://www.iawrt.org)

#### IAWRT's recent activities include a 2001 conference in Berlin:

"Journalism in Conflicts, War and Peacemaking -- a Gender Perspective" the theme of the 2001 Berlin conference, was an emotional experience bonding the IAWRT members as never before. Reporters and producers analysed their experiences and difficulties in conflict situations, and spoke of their fears and triumphs, reaffirming

that women journalists can make a difference in their contribution towards peace. The sharing on professional matters was frank and free in the spirit of IAWRT traditions. "Herstory -- Changing History", the theme of the radio and television awards, had more than a hundred entries and demonstrated the creative and artistic skills of women. The programmes reflected the concerns of women and their insights into the lives of sex workers, pornography, adolescence, pregnancy, forced labour during the war, victims of violence in war and at home. Stories were recounted of women who have changed society, gender perspectives on war reporting and women's contribution towards conflict resolution and reconstruction were discussed.

## SHOWCASE ● ● ●

### The African Women's Media Center

The African Women's Media Center, a project of the International Women's Media Foundation, was founded in 1997. Located in Dakar, Senegal, and directed by an advisory committee of African women in the media, the centre is the only continent-wide organisation working with and on behalf of African women in the media. Since the centre's founding, more than 900 women journalists have taken part in 21 programmes and workshops conducted by the AWMC.

- The AWMC has created a wide range of programmes for women journalists throughout Africa with the goal of bringing the voices of African women more prominently into the media -- as reporters, producers, managers, executives, CEOs and media experts. The AWMC offers a wide range of programmes for women journalists throughout Africa and provides women journalists with the opportunity to network throughout the continent.
- The AWMC offers training workshops on topics such as leadership development, media management, computer training in new media technologies, journalism ethics, specialised journalism skills, balancing work and family, coalition building and more.

<http://www.awmc.com/>

### Soap Opera Series With a Soul

*By Rita Colorito*

Critics who scoff that soap operas offer little or no redeeming value should tune into Soul City, South Africa's widely popular drama series. The series was created by the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication, a non-governmental organisation founded in 1992 by local doctors Garth Japhet and

Shereen Usdin on the principle that edutainment -- using entertainment formats for educational and health promotion purposes -- was the most effective way to reach the general population.

With 29.4 million people infected, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate in the world, more than half the 42 million infected worldwide, according to UNAIDS global estimates published in December 2002. In 2002 alone, an estimated 3.5 million new infections occurred in the area. In the face of these statistics, Soul City uses the addictive intrigue of a television and radio soap opera series to educate the public about the realities and misconceptions of HIV/AIDS and other serious health and social issues. Other topics that have been covered by the series include domestic abuse, xenophobia and land ownership.

<http://www.awmc.com/features/7642>

## SHOWCASE ● ● ●

### Women Journalists in Finland

The main themes of the activities of the WJF are:

- 1) Influencing public opinion
  - 2) Professional training in all branches of journalism
  - 3) Recreation
- Influence is exerted by arranging public seminars in order to inspire social debate, particularly on issues concerning women and equality. The association invites top officials and politicians to take part in background discussions on topical issues.
  - Once a year, the Women Journalists in Finland elect a “Torch Bearer of the Year”, a person with a message who, through his or her independent activity, has brought into public consciousness and stimulated debate on a current social issue or a problem which has not otherwise received the attention of the public.
  - Training ranges from exercises in creative writing and women's well-being at work to studies of the European Union from a woman's point of view. The members keep up with data technology and run a special group for those interested in economics and the secrets of the stock exchange.

<http://www.naistoimittajat.fi/womenjournalists.html>

## Exercises

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- Of the activities that women's media associations conventionally engage in, conferences are at the top of the list. But the conference topic is often the most important draw, and on it depends what kinds of empowerment can be achieved. Choose 3 conference topics and decide who you would invite. Would men be included? Would gender issues be the conference topics' central concerns? Or would other issues such as reporting in conflict situations, etc., help broaden the focus?
  - Invent a soap opera that uses the "edutainment" format of "Soul City" (see box on pages 104-105) to explore an issue key to your community. Which issues would be best for the format? Would fictional characters be used, or real-life examples? Or could "mock-reality" formats be used?
  - From the women and men in your community, elect one to be the "Torch Bearer of the Year." Then profile that person, describe what work they have done to advance the cause of women in media (or social issues left under-represented in conventional media), and compare notes with others. Discuss what makes a "Torch Bearer" and what doesn't.
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## ESTABLISHING AN ASSOCIATION/NETWORK OF WOMEN MEDIA PROFESSIONALS IN CYPRUS

*By Krini Kafiris*

At the training workshop entitled *Gender, Conflict and the Media: Working Towards Egalitarianism and Peace*, held by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) and conducted by Krini Kafiris from 4-7 of June 2004, in Nicosia, the participants working in the Greek Cypriot media decided to form a network or association of women media professionals.

The many activities and lively debates of the participants over the three days included identifying and discussing the significant problems faced by women in the Greek Cypriot media. These problems are:

- Participation in decision-making that is symbolic and not real, decisions are imposed by men
- Attitudes to women in the workplace that are sexist and demeaning
- Assessment of women in the workplace in relation to their obligations related to motherhood
- Lack of support to working mothers
- Lack of encouragement to women (for their work and advancement)
- Lack of trust in women professionals

- Verbal abuse
- Threats of physical violence in the workplace
- Lack of support from other colleagues, both women and men, in dealing with gender discrimination and sexism
- No organisation to which women can go to for support and help in dealing with gender discrimination

It was decided by a democratic, majority vote that an association or network of women media professionals would be a crucial first step in dealing with these problems.

The goals of the network or association were determined as follows:

- To raise awareness about the gender inequality that exists in the media workplace and in the media
- To provide women working in the media with a regular opportunity for:
  - Open discussion and debate
  - Identifying the specific problems that women face in media workplaces
  - Exchange of ideas
  - Sharing of information
  - Exploring strategies to deal with gender inequality
  - Providing support to each other

It was also decided that the very first steps to be taken in order to establish this network or association would be to:

- Find other women working in the media committed to or interested in promoting women's rights and gender equality in the workplace
- Contact the existing media union for information on setting up a women's group as a "sub-group" or affiliate
- Contact the legal office of the media union for information on legislation concerning civil rights and employee rights
- Set up a mailing list for the group
- Set up regular meetings
- Announce regular meetings through the mailing list
- Adopt a short checklist which helps media practitioners check for the use and reinforcement of stereotypes in their work (based on the checklists in Appendix 2) and discuss the best ways to distribute it in the workplace

The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) pledged to provide support and guidance for the implementation of the above goals.

## Exercises

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- What are the benefits of a formal association instead of an informal one?
  - After having read about the activities of the associations for women media professionals which ones do you think are the most important for where you live at present, and why?
  - What are some important, specific things that such an association or network could do where you live (whether it exists or not)?
  - Do you think that you would like to get involved in some way in such an association (if one exists, or if one existed where you live) even if it is in a very minor way? What do you think you could do? Even reading a newsletter counts!
  - What problems might arise if you were involved in an association or network of women media professionals in terms of your schedule and how might you solve them by working with others who have similar problems?
  - What kind of help in overcoming obstacles do you think you and your association or network could receive? Where could you go for this help? Take a look at various sections of the Appendix to get an idea, if you can't think of anything.
-

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY,  
& EMPOWERMENT : GENDER & MEDIA ACTIVISM



“We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

*Mahatma Gandhi*



## WHAT ARE WOMEN'S MEDIA?

*By Spurgeon Thompson*

Simply put, women's media consists of journals, magazines, newspapers, television, radio, video, film, internet, and all other forms of media - except that it is owned by women, run by women, and directed at women. It has a long and fruitful history, and has bloomed into a wide range of formats and styles, taking into its fold issues and concerns relevant to women around the world.

It has its own unique characteristics that distinguish it from conventional, male-owned and male-centred media. As such, it is an empowering alternative to mainstream communication networks, and it speaks "a different language" than the one most women are used to hearing when they switch on the evening news or open a newspaper.

**Don't hate the media, become the media!**

*Jello Biafra*

### ●●● HOW DID THEY BEGIN?

According to Martha Leslie Allen, in *The Development of Communication Networks Among Women, 1963-1983: A History of Women's Media*, many women's media arose out of international struggles for equal rights begun in the early 1960's. It began as a way to forge new networks of communication and information exchange free from the interference of men.

Forging these extensive multi-media networks during the two decades, 1963 to 1983, not only held together women of common interests and backgrounds, but created networks between women of diverse interests and cultures. Women of various ethnic backgrounds; women in service work and the trades; disabled women; women concerned with international issues, economic issues and issues of sexuality, health and safety - these and others shared experiences and perspectives among themselves and then with other women. Working together in this way, they produced vibrant and growing communication networks.

Allen, M. L. "The Development of Communication Networks Among Women", Women's Institute of Freedom of the Press, <http://www.wifp.org/tableofcontents.html>



## ••• WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES OF WOMEN'S MEDIA?

Women's media break with male conventions of reportage, writing styles, topic selection, emphases, etc. Rather than compete with male dominated media forms, they open up a space apart.

"You will be amazed to discover so many hundreds of periodicals you never heard of, full of information you didn't know replete with characteristics quite different from what you always thought was journalism. You'll wonder where you have been in the land of male-dominant media which, natch, doesn't tell you there is any other kind."

Allen, D. "The eight characteristics of women's media that are different in our media from men's media and the five categories of women's news," *The Quill*, May 1991 issue, pp. 36-37.

In a helpful 1991 article (see insert above), Donna Allen spells out the key characteristics of women's media -- after having reviewed hundreds of examples. She distills the key features to the following 8 points:

1) **The conventional journalism of male-owned media reports news in the third person.** Women's journalism reports its news in the first person, allowing the newsmakers to speak for themselves. Both claim their styles result in greater accuracy. A few examples: "When we publish material about the experience of members of groups which are targets of discrimination in our society, the author must be a member of the group. We feel that it is important for members of each group to speak for themselves rather than having those who don't share their experience speak for them." (*Broomstick, A Bi-monthly National Magazine By, For & About Women Over Forty*). "Women worldwide are claiming the space to tell our own stories, define our own issues and agendas, create our own organisations and networks, develop our own approaches to mobilisation and political action." (*Women in Action*).

2) **Men tend to define "news" as conflict and violence** -- fights (political, economic, physical), murders, suicides, floods, fires, and catastrophes of all kinds. Attacks and name-calling usually guarantee a well-attended press conference and subsequent news coverage. Women-owned media define news differently, as these commonly-stated editorial policies indicate: "*Women of Power* seeks to generate harmony and interconnection by taking care that our words and images nurture and affirm our wholeness... It is therefore our policy... to refuse to print works which are racist, classist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, ageist, culturally elitist, or which in any other way further divisions among people..." (*Women of Power*). Our aim is "to make every interview informational rather than adversarial." (*Women's Radio at WMFO*). "The challenge to all of us, but most particularly those in film

and television, is to transform the violent macho role models... creating media heroes and heroines who are intelligent instead of belligerent, cooperative rather than combative, nurturant rather than destructive," (Mary Batten in *Women in Film* newsmagazine).

3) Male-owned media claim a journalistic goal of "objectivity". The journalistic goal of women's media is the "effective use of media as an instrument of change." (*Echo on Sauti Ya Siti*). "More than a simple conveyor belt of information, it has also served as an agent for change..." (*Women of Europe*).

The next two characteristics relate to structure.

4) Women-owned media are nearly all non-hierarchical. "The newspaper in its very structure will attempt to avoid the pitfalls of masculine-oriented models of hierarchical organisations. We will have no intellectual elite on top with peons on the bottom. We will all share in reading what goes into the paper, we all share in the menial labor." (*Second Coming*). "We are committed to... non-hierarchical relationships, and valuing diversity. There are no editors or review board members; the material for each issue is reviewed, selected and prepared by local Websters (members of the web)." (*Cassandra, Radical Feminists Nurses Newsjournal*).

5) Women's media would replace the competitiveness of male media's "scoops" and financial rivalry with cooperation. "Aurora could not have put together our insert without the help of our sister publications, *Off Our Backs* and *Up From Under*. We encourage you to subscribe to these feminist journals along with *Aurora*..." (*Aurora*).

6) Women-owned media tend toward a common carrier concept of journalistic function. "*WIV News* is a world-wide open communication system by, for and about women of all backgrounds, beliefs, nationalities, and age groups." (*Women's International Network News*). "*Sojourner* was founded in 1975 on the principle of offering an open forum for women -- a space where women could speak freely about their concerns as women... on any subject, so as to encourage the widest possible diversity in submissions." (*Sojourner*).

7) The greatest difference from male-owned media is women's characteristic analysis of mass media as hostile to women. "The mass media portrays feminists as sadistic trigger-happy bull dykes... This image is intended to turn people off." (*Plexus, West Coast Women's Press*). "We aim to balance the 'freakish women's libber' coverage (presented by media coverage.)" (*News Sheet*) "Men are the gatekeepers of power... of the dominant ideology ... The making and shaping of cultures -- the systems of thought, belief, values, attitudes, and the symbols and images by which these are expressed -- are the works of men... and serve to legitimise male domination." (*Mediterranean Women, KEGME Review*).

8) **The eighth difference is in content.** "Women's newspapers report all the news the male press finds unfit to print; it frames women's issues in a different way than the straight press, it reports what's going on in the women's movement..." (Susan Cavin in *Womanews*, NY). "The Women's Movement isn't dying, you just haven't heard any news coverage of women on television... It's just not getting any news coverage." (*Womenews*, Cleveland). "For 14 years *WIN News* has been reporting the often disturbing facts about and from women all over the world -- information that has been entirely ignored... and is still passed over as irrelevant by the international press." (*WIN News*).

## ●●● SOME EXAMPLES OF WOMEN'S MEDIA



There are literally thousands of examples of women's media produced around the world, by, for, and directed toward women in various regions and countries. The best resource for a comprehensive guide is located at the Directory of Women's Media set up by the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press. Included here are just a few examples of what women can do; by and for women.

### SHOWCASE ●●●

#### Africawoman

Set up in 2001, *Africawoman* connects 80 women journalists from Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Nigeria, who meet in a monthly virtual newsroom. It covers business, conflict, culture, education, entertainment and sports, the environment, family issues, gender issues, health, has special sections of HIV/AIDS and human rights. It also regularly features profiles of women, such as the article that follows.

<http://africanwomen.net/>

## Love Conquers the Age Gap

*By Grace Gathaiga*

In what was billed as the marriage of the century, renowned freedom fighter Wambui Otieno married Peter Mbugua on July 11, 2003, in a lavish civil wedding. No big deal, you might say. Weddings happen daily all over Kenya. The difference: She was 67 and he was 28.

Predictably, this marriage would split both their families and the country. Controversy tends to dog Wambui, who in 1986 put up a marathon legal battle to bury her lawyer first husband against his clan. She may have lost, but she had earned her place in history.

Back to the marriage. From the very moment that Wambui and Mbugua tied the knot, they became the subject of talk shows on radio stations and maintained a presence on newspaper front pages for four straight days. One comedy group even made it their prime topic of the day.

The majority of Kenyans dwelt extensively on the fact that Mbugua married a “grandmother”. This amounts to trivialising critical matters of the heart. What exactly is wrong with a grandmother having a loving man around her?

Many argued that Mbugua was attracted by Wambui's wealth. The stonemason first met Wambui when he went to fix her broken chimney. Wambui further upset the apple cart when she openly declared her intention to bequeath her wealth to her new husband. Mbugua says, however, that he was motivated by love and nothing else.

The man is over 18, I say. Where is the crisis, as long as the decision to marry was reached by two consenting adults? Society speaks vaguely of the right age for marriage. But what exactly is this right age? As one of Wambui's supporters put it, age is “just a depreciation of the body and body cells”.

<http://africanwomen.net/>

### SHOWCASE ● ● ●

#### Fierce Magazine (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)

In their own words, *Fierce Magazine's* publisher Tara Roberts and Managing Editor Candi Lace, describe the orientation of this woman-owned, woman-made, woman-directed magazine.

## Fierce Magazine

### Who We Are

*Fierce* is a revolutionary magazine for all women over 21 (and young, smart, edgy chicks over 18). We have a definite urban and multi-cultural spin, and we deliver articles from a women's point of view with undeniable style, funk and wit. We do not do to-do lists or offer how-to advice. We believe young women are smart, curious and opinionated about more than "How to Get Slimmer Thighs" or "Ten Ways to Satisfy Your Man in Bed". Instead we offer women a vehicle to express their outrageous opinions and connect with other like-minded women.

### Who Reads Us

*Fierce* is for all the tattooed and pierced rebels who are unafraid to throw the rules back in the world's face, just as we're for the quiet agitators who fit right in and urge for change with the softness of your voice and a gentle and easy smile.

<http://www.fiercemag.com/home.html>

## SHOWCASE ● ● ●

### WINGS: WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL NEWS GATHERING SERVICE (Vancouver, Canada)

"Raising Women's Voices Through Radio Worldwide"

*WINGS: Women's International News Gathering Service* is an all-woman independent radio production company that produces and distributes news and current affairs programmes by and about women around the world. WINGS programmes are used by non-commercial radio stations, women's studies, and individuals. Programmes can be heard on local radio stations, on shortwave, on the internet, and on cassettes.

It not only does all this, but it records the plenaries of the National Women's Studies Association, provides training and advice on how to set up local women's radio stations, does audio production (recordings by and for women on cassette, CD, etc.), offers internships, and coordinates with a local TV station to broadcast strong women's voices from around the world.

<http://www.wings.org>

## SHOWCASE ● ● ●

### Radio Zohra (Kunduz, Afghanistan)

*Radio Zohra*, an independent women's community radio station in Kunduz, Afghanistan, was officially inaugurated on International Women's Day (March 8) 2004. *Radio Zohra* is supported by the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Internews, and USAID-OTI. The purpose of the station, in the words of IMPACS's project director, is "to give women a greater voice and to link and educate women around Afghanistan".

#### Main Communication Strategies

*Radio Zohra* will reach women through programming on women's affairs, health, education, children, parenting, leadership, and community issues.

In light of the upcoming national election in 2004, the station will also focus on educating women about the political and electoral process and the significance of women's participation as voters and decision-makers.

*Radio Zohra* broadcasts on 90.5 FM in Kunduz. It covers a radius of 20 kilometres and reaches a population of approximately 350,000.

IMPACS is a Canadian NGO committed to the protection and expansion of democracy and to the strengthening of civil society. IMPACS has been working in Afghanistan since August 2002 to support the development of women's media, community media initiatives, media legislation and elections reporting capacities. Internews Network is an international non-profit organisation that supports open media worldwide. The organisation fosters independent media in emerging democracies, produces innovative television and radio programming and internet content, and uses the media to reduce conflict within and between countries.

Radio Zohra is the third in a network of independent women's community radio stations IMPACS and Internews have established in Afghanistan. The first station, Radio Rabia Balkhi in Mazar-i-Sharif, celebrated its 1-year anniversary in March 2004. The second station, Radio Sahar in Herat, went on air in October 2003.

For more information, contact:

- Najia Khodayar  
Radio Zohra Station Manager  
House 252, Kasani St.  
District #2, Kunduz (across the street from IOM)  
Tel.: +99-56-87-33

- Jane McElhone  
Project Director, IMPACS Afghanistan  
Tel.: +70-281-157 or +79-566-383  
jmcelhone@symantico.ca
- Sanjar Qiam  
Radio Network Coordinator, Internews Afghanistan  
Tel.: +70-277-071

<http://www.comminit.com/experiencec/pds32004/experiences-1895.html>

## Exercises

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- Re-write a mainstream news article by using the strategies of women's media Donna Allen calls attention to above. Fill in the gaps which are common in the mainstream media by imagining interviewees that were not included and voices that were left unheard. Try to use the first person throughout.
  - Write the mission statement for a women's magazine aimed at girls (ages 13-17). Call the magazine "Teen-Rebel" (or come up with your own title) and sketch its ideal reader, much in the way that the editors of *Fierce Magazine* do. Draft a table of contents for the first issue, and include articles on subjects almost never reported or explored in the mainstream teenage-directed press. Shape the contents list to apply to your particular region and community.
  - The strength of women's media lies in its inclusiveness and its refusal to compromise with mainstream media. Discuss the inclusion of women from all age groups in the setting up of a local women's radio station. What different experiences would young women bring to the project? What about middle-aged and senior women?
-

## GENDER AND MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

*By Spurgeon Thompson*

Without women's Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), media associations, and other groups, arguably the struggle for gender equality in the world would be dead in the water. NGOs in particular serve as focus points, spaces and institutions that procure the funding, provide the help, do the research, and structure services for women who need it. Associations and NGOs rally women together around common issues, and are in almost all cases completely run by women who are leading the way with their energy, their commitment, and their sacrifices toward dignity and equality.

Most women's NGOs and associations focus on the key issues of getting more decision-making power for women, providing training, doing research that can be used to influence gender related policy, providing legal advocacy, coordinating communication among women. Some are umbrellas for a range of issues; some are single-issue based, concentrating on migration, trafficking, rape, freedom of expression, family planning, providing shelter to violated women, or channelling funds to women's media.

In particular the NGOs with a focus on gender and media are involved in a three pronged strategy to promote gender equality: first, through creating critical awareness and understanding of the ways that sexist, biased and stereotypical representations of women are produced, second, through working to change the media from within, and finally through creating alternative spaces, such as women's media, so that other voices and opinions can be heard.




Take a look at the gender and media organisations in Appendix 6.

### Exercises

- What do you think would be the best way for a gender and media organisation to reach people where you live? What activities do you think would be the most successful and why? What activities do you think would be the most problematic? What is it that would make them problematic?



- Think of one important goal that a gender and media organisation could have where you live. List the activities of a gender and media organisation that would lead to achieving this goal.
  - What would be the best ways for a gender and media organisation to reach housewives, young girls and elderly ladies where you live? What projects could be developed to promote gender equality and to empower them?
  - What kind of activities could a gender and media organisation in your area develop to promote gender equality among the male population? What would be the obstacles to the success of these activities and how might the organisation overcome them?
  - Would you be interested in joining the activities of a gender and media organisation, or in implementing your own project with others? What problems might arise if you did this in terms of your schedule and how could you work together with others who have similar problems to solve it?
  - What do you find interesting or exciting about the activities of gender and media organisations and women's media?
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## APPENDICES

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“Purple is to lavender as woman is to feminist”

*Alice Walker*



## APPENDIX 1: HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

### ••● OVERVIEW

The handbook is designed to be adapted and used by trainers and teachers in order to fulfill specific needs. The different sections of the handbook can be used independently as well as together, depending on the specific topic of the training. However, any training session on gender and the media should try to include both *Gender and the Media: The Situation, the Problems, the Potentials* and *Promoting Gender Equality in How We Think About Gender and the Media: Conceptual Tools*, as they provide the necessary framework and basic tools for thinking about gender and the media and working towards gender equality. This handbook can also be used as a resource book as it contains much practical information, as well as on-line and paper bibliographies.

### ••● TARGET GROUPS

This handbook can be adapted for use in gender training for journalists, other workers in the media, students of journalism and media studies, activists and other individuals working to promote gender equality, in Cyprus and elsewhere.

### ••● METHOD

At the beginning of any training session it is useful to ask the participants what their specific expectations are and to try to adapt the training sessions accordingly, to the extent that this is possible and useful. Participants can be asked to write down relevant ideas, questions and issues, in a "journal" if the training takes place more than one day, that they wish to discuss during discussion periods.

The materials presented in the handbook can be read out loud by the trainer or teacher, or by the participants. What is crucial is that most of the exercises are discussed collectively and that plenty of time is allowed for open discussion. For a training that takes place over a period of days, some exercise questions may be given to participants to think about as "homework", and discussed the following day. For a large number of participants, in order to facilitate maximum participation, some exercises may be discussed in small groups which then summarise their key points or "findings" to the whole group. If using the section *Promoting Gender Equality in Media Production*, make sure to find two articles beforehand, one with an accompanying photograph, one without, from a newspaper or magazine in your own society to use as a basis for the discussions, as indicated in the text. Also, make sure to print out one or some of the checklists so that they can be used in conjunction with the exercises on

journalistic practices which promote gender equality. The sections specifically on Cyprus may not be necessary for everyone's training needs, however, the exercises can be used on their own, or in conjunction with presenting and discussing local gender and media realities (as a supplement or substitute to the sections on Cyprus).

At the end of each session the materials presented should be summarised as well as any other significant and relevant points raised and discussed during the discussion period, especially those which pertain to local gender and media realities.

At the end of the whole training, a summary of the main issues and key points discussed and debated should be prepared collectively by the participants and the trainer. This can be done by asking participants to bring a summary to the final session, based on their notes and "journal". After the final session, they should be compiled by the trainer and used to write a final report summarising the activities and discussions of the training. The final report should be distributed to the participants after the training as a reminder of the event, and as a useful resource, which can also be used to encourage others to promote gender equality.

For more helpful information on training see this site:

<http://www.apc.org/english/capacity/training/trainers.html>

For further exploration of issues related to media training and education see the following media literacy site:

[http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/readings/contents/online\\_articles\\_index.html#](http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/readings/contents/online_articles_index.html#)

## Helpful Tip

Internet addresses, or the links provided in the text, are often long, difficult to type in correctly, and do not work properly. If problems arise, type in the first section of the address and try to find what you are looking for through the main website which then appears.

## APPENDIX 2: USING CHECKLISTS

The use of checklists to promote gender equality in journalistic practices and media production is a successful and popular way of promoting gender equality in the media in many places around the world.

Checklists provide easy to understand guidelines, they save time and they provide legitimisation for efforts to promote gender equality in journalism.

How to use and adapt the checklists:

- Widely distribute the checklist and the brief information provided on how it was developed and its success in promoting gender equality.
- Discuss the checklist informally, and if you can, formally as well. Try to present and discuss it at meetings, as well as over coffee, at lunch, on breaks, or after work.
- Emphasise the fact that checklists are being used all over the world successfully.
- Adapt the checklist if necessary, for example if you think people might initially respond more favourably to a shorter one. This does NOT mean that you should change the questions. This simply means you can make the checklist smaller by leaving in only the points or issues that you consider most relevant to your particular professional activities and circumstances. You can also combine elements of different checklists to cover the aspects of journalistic practice that are especially useful and relevant to your type of work.
- Follow up meetings or informal discussions after a week and then after every couple of weeks to see how the use of the checklist is going.
- Write down problems that people might have encountered in distributing and using the checklist.
- Meet with people who are interested in promoting gender equality and the use of the checklists and collectively come up with ideas about how these problems in distributing and using the checklists might be overcome.
- Write down your strategies for improving the distribution and use of the checklist. Widely distribute them by hand, through a newsletter, a website or mailing list -- this is a follow up and support mechanism for gender checklist use.
- Let people know that you are available, in person and/or through e-mail, to discuss using the gender checklist and other issues related to working towards gender equality in journalism and media production.

Some of the best checklists available online follow.

### ••● THE CHECKLIST

Produced by the African Gender and Media Initiative and Gender Links, this comprehensive checklist covers the promotion of gender equality in a wide range of media production practices including policy, recruitment, management, training, monitoring and evaluation, regulation, advertising as well as many aspects of journalism and reporting.

From the *Whose news? Whose views? Southern Africa Gender in Media Handbook*

<http://www.media-diversity.org/resources%20categories/diversity%20manuals.htm>

### ••● GUIDELINES ON GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE, 3RD EDITION

From UNESCO, in English and in French, 1999

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950.pdf>

### ••● PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGE CHECKLIST

Pictures that accompany a story play as important a role in delivering information as words do. Visual elements can be very powerful and greatly affect readers and viewers. This checklist helps journalists and editors select appropriate images for newspaper or magazine texts which avoid exploitation and stereotypes. It was developed by The Media Diversity Institute (MDI) a non-profit, non-partisan organisation that mobilises the power of media to lessen inter-group conflict, advance minority and human rights, and support deeper public understanding of all types of social diversity.

From the Reporting Diversity Manual, pages 115-116

<http://www.media-diversity.org/resources%20categories/diversity%20manuals.htm#>

### ••● REPORTING DIVERSITY CHECKLIST 1

Reporting on diversity means reflecting all members of the community in a fair and accurate manner, and applying equal standards of scrutiny for all groups. This checklist on how to promote and sustain diversity and equality in journalism, has different sections for beat/general reporters, editors and senior management. It was developed by journalists, journalism professors and diversity advisers at a workshop at Carleton University in 1995. After an important exchange of information and a vigorous debate, they drafted this checklist and would like to share it with others.

From the Media Diversity Institute

[http://www.media-diversity.org/articles\\_publications/diversity%20checklist1.htm](http://www.media-diversity.org/articles_publications/diversity%20checklist1.htm)

## ••● REPORTING DIVERSITY CHECKLIST 2

This is a short checklist for promoting fairness, equality and diversity to be used by reporters in relation to many journalistic practices: such as developing a story, language usage, dealing with sources, addressing personal bias and considering the consequences of a report or story on individuals or communities. It was developed by the Society of Professional Journalism from a variety of sources, ranging from the Seattle Times RAPP group to suggestions from Sandy Rivera at KHOU-TV, Houston; Mervin Aubespain, the Louisville Courier-Journal; and Sherrie Mazingo, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

From the Media Diversity Institute

[http://www.media-diversity.org/articles\\_publications/Reporting%20Diversity%20%20Checklist%202.htm](http://www.media-diversity.org/articles_publications/Reporting%20Diversity%20%20Checklist%202.htm)

## APPENDIX 3: USEFUL HOW-TO RESOURCES FOR GENDER AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

### ••● HOW TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN ANY ACTIVITY

#### A Practical, Everyday Guide to Gender Mainstreaming

A short and handy document for day-to-day use. The document is conceived as a framework for the mainstreaming of gender in ongoing projects or programmes concentrating on the phase of project implementation. The annexes provide additional information for analytical work or project design.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/matmanila/gender/index.htm>

#### Gender Mainstreaming: Learning and Information Packs

Resources and tools for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities -- policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

<http://www.unpd.org/gender/capacity>

#### Gender Mainstreaming Learning Manual & Training Package

Resources include gender analysis toolkit, glossary, information on advocacy, and knowledge sharing.

<http://www.undp.org/gender/infopack.htm>



## ••● HOW TO PLAN A GENDER PROJECT

### Gender Planning

Gender planning is an approach that recognises that because women and men play different roles in society, they often have different needs. Therefore, an understanding of gender roles, responsibilities and needs must be part of the initial planning activities. This online manual includes information on how to plan a gender project every step of the way, from initial project formulation, to document preparation, to getting funding, monitoring and evaluation.

[http://www.unep.org/Project\\_Manual/13.15.asp](http://www.unep.org/Project_Manual/13.15.asp)

## ••● HOW TO EVALUATE PROPOSALS AND PROJECTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

### Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM)

A practical guide to integrating gender analysis into evaluations of initiatives that use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for social change.

[http://www.apcwomen.org/gem/all\\_about/](http://www.apcwomen.org/gem/all_about/)

## ••● WHERE TO GO FOR HELP IN DEVELOPING GENDER PROJECTS

Look at the gender and media organisations in this Appendix and contact the ones which are interested in the activities that you are, or which offer knowledge, know-how and support for what your project is trying to achieve.

You can contact the following organisations:

### Isis-Manila

Communicate with Isis-Manila, a feminist NGO committed to creating spaces within information and communications structures and systems, that promote the many voices of women, particularly those from the South. Isis believes women's access and capacity to participate in generating and disseminating their own knowledge and experiences through various mediums of communication can lead to the transformation of society.

<http://www.isiswomen.org/organization/primer/how.html>

### Partners of the Americas

Since its inception, Partners has worked to help women and their families, particularly those living in poverty, to achieve their full potential. Partners projects ensure that women have the tools to access decision-making processes, to make informed decisions about reproduction and

family size, and to confront social problems like domestic violence. Volunteer health professionals, women's activists, community leaders and domestic violence experts from all over the Americas join together to confront the most serious issues that face women and their families today.

[http://www.partners.net/what\\_we\\_do/gender\\_and\\_equality/Gender%20Analysis%20and%20WF.htm](http://www.partners.net/what_we_do/gender_and_equality/Gender%20Analysis%20and%20WF.htm)

### Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace

Look at the website of the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace (WLP): This is an international, non-governmental organisation (NGO) that empowers women and girls in the Global South to re-imagine and re-structure their roles in their families, communities, and societies. WLP achieves this goal through providing leadership training, supporting capacity building, and helping women generate and receive information and knowledge

<http://www.learningpartnership.org>

## ●●● WHERE TO GET FUNDING FOR GENDER PROJECTS

### African Women's Development Fund

Established in June 2000, AWDF is the first Africa-wide fundraising and grant-making fund to support the work of organisations working to promote women's rights in Africa. The AWDF funds local, national, sub-regional and regional organisations in Africa working towards women's empowerment.

<http://www.awdf.org>

### AGFUND

The AGFUND International Prize for Pioneering Development Projects is an annual prize awarded by the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development organisations (AGFUND), having as its President His Royal Highness Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz, to the winning pioneering development projects. The Prize consists of a financial reward amounting to US\$ 300,000, in addition to trophies and certificates of recognition.

<http://www.agfund.org>

### Global Fund for Women

The GFW is an international network of women and men committed to a world of equality and social justice. It advocates for and defends women's human rights by making grants to support women's groups around the world.

<http://www.globalfundforwomen.org>

### Hafkin Prize

APC created the Hafkin Prize because they believe it is essential to encourage and recognise outstanding examples of African initiatives in ICTs for development. The competition for the

US\$7,500.00 Hafkin Prize is open to civil society organisations, government institutions, educational organisations, community-based groups, networks, social movements or individuals anywhere in Africa that have successfully initiated and implemented projects that involve the use of ICTs for development and social justice.

<http://www.apc.org/english/hafkin/index.shtml>

### International Independent Women's Funds Network

This network consists of resource funds for women in South Africa, Brazil, Chile, the United States, Ghana, Holland, India, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal and Ukraine.

<http://www.inwf.org>

### Mama Cash

Mama Cash strives for a peaceful and just world where women are free to make their own choices. Mama Cash financially supports women's groups that blaze the trails with self-initiated projects. The activities of the women's groups supported by Mama Cash are centred around Physical Integrity, Art, Culture and Media, Economic Justice, Peace and Security, Empowerment and Participation.

<http://www.mamacash.nl>

### TEN

TEN is a global network of organisations and individuals whose purpose is to identify, support and empower projects that contribute to improving the state of the world. TEN has a special interest in projects for whom information technology plays a central role in achieving their objectives.

<http://www.techempower.net/0/>

### Web Networks/ APC

The internet explosion is taking place primarily in the North. In the rest of the world, the focus of information technology development is primarily concentrated in large urban centres, and this effort is being driven almost exclusively by commercial interests preoccupied with the latest fads and high-end applications. These factors combine to impede the efforts of NGOs in developing countries to make productive use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in their work. In partnership with the member networks of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), NGOs in developing countries have been able to devise successful online communications strategies that overcome these obstacles.

<http://www.apc.org>

### Women's Funding Network

WFN and its partners provide access to a collective of women and girls' programmes at local, regional, national, and international levels.

<http://www.wfnet.org>

## ••● OTHER USEFUL TOOLS AND METHODS FOR GENDER AND MEDIA PROJECTS

### Film and video producer workshop

[http://www.mediarights.org/workshop/producers\\_1.php](http://www.mediarights.org/workshop/producers_1.php)

### How to be an activist (information, tools and toolkits)

<http://www.planetfriendly.net/active.html>

### How to use digital storytelling to raise awareness

<http://www.storycenter.org/storyplace.html>

### How to write a protest letter

<http://www.undp.org/gender/tools.htm>

<http://www.mediawatch.ca/involved/voice/Default.asp?pg=5&language=English>

### Using and making documentaries to encourage action and inspire dialogue on contemporary social issues

<http://www.mediarights.org/index.php>

## APPENDIX 4: ASSOCIATIONS/NETWORKS OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

### Association of Women Journalists

AWJ promotes the fair treatment of women in the media and the promotion of women in the newsroom through a scholarship program, career grants, networking, advocacy, career seminars and the annual Vivian Castleberry Awards Competition. The Association for Women Journalists was created in June 1988 to assure that women not only were adequately represented in media newsrooms but to assure that women would be fairly and accurately portrayed through the news media. They believe the two issues are intrinsically linked and of vital public importance. To pursue its goals, AWJ has conducted numerous seminars, established a scholarship fund and awards program and has published a newsletter, all of which reach far beyond its membership.

Address:

PO Box 2199

Fort Worth, Texas 76113

USA

Telephone: +1 817 685 3876

E-mail: [jessamybrown@star-telegram.com](mailto:jessamybrown@star-telegram.com)

Website: <http://www.awjdfw.org>

### Gardens Studios (Women in Film and Television)

WFTV exists to protect and enhance the status, interests and diversity of women working at all levels in film, television and digital media industries. WFTV provides a forum for industry professionals, offers a network of contacts, both national and international, safeguards the interests of women both nationally and internationally, champions women's achievements in the industry.

Address:

6 LangleyStreet

LONDON

WC2H 9JA

Tel: +44 020 7240 4875

E-mail: [jane@wftv.org.uk](mailto:jane@wftv.org.uk)

Website: [www.eftv.org.uk](http://www.eftv.org.uk)

### International Association for Women in Radio and Television

The International Association of Women in Radio and Television is a forum for personal contact and professional development among women broadcasters worldwide. The organisation was founded in 1951. Its goals are to share professional input among members through networking, workshops, conferences, programme productions and management skills, to contribute towards the enhancement of broadcasting by assuring that women's views and values are an integral part of programming and to utilise the professional skills of members to support women in developing countries.

E-mail: [nik@netactive.co.za](mailto:nik@netactive.co.za)

Website: <http://www.iawrt.org>

### NAFE - Executive Female Online

Online 'zine of the National Association for Female Executives (NAFE), the largest women's professional association and the largest women business owners' organisation in the country. It provides resources and services -- through education, networking, and public advocacy - to empower its members to achieve career success and financial security. NAFE is owned by Working Mother Media, which includes Working Mother and NAFE Magazines, the National Association for Female Executives (NAFE), WMM Business Advisory Services, and a Conference Division that produces the 100 Best Companies WorkLife Congress, the Best Companies for Women of Color Conference, and the NAFE Women @ Work: Meaning, Money, and Making Connections National Conference.

Address:  
P. O. Box 469031  
Escondido, CA 92046-9925  
USA  
Telephone: +1-800-927-NAFE  
Email: nafe@nafe.com  
Website: <http://nafe.com/magazine.shtml>

## APPENDIX 5: WOMEN'S MEDIA

### ••• WOMEN'S MAGAZINES (ONLINE AND PAPER)

#### AVIVA-International Women's Listing Magazine

AVIVA is a free 'Webzine', run by an international group of feminists based in London. It provides a free listings service for women everywhere, funded by advertising, and sponsorship. It is an International Women's Listing Magazine which enables women all over the world to make contact with each other and needs the input of groups and individuals around the world to provide information for free listings.

Address:  
41 Royal Crescent  
London W11 4SN  
United Kingdom  
Fax: +44 (0) 207 371 6315  
E-mail: [kateb@aviva.org](mailto:kateb@aviva.org)  
Website: <http://www.aviva.org>

#### Bad Jens: Iranian Feminist Newsletter

Bad Jens is a feminist online magazine mainly addressing readers outside Iran. It is hoped to be a step towards improving links between activists/academics inside and outside the country. Seeing as intellectual and cultural exchanges between Iran and its neighbours are few and far between -- especially regarding women's activities -- Bad Jens are particularly eager to reach readers in the Middle East.

Email: [badjens@altavista.com](mailto:badjens@altavista.com)  
Website: <http://www.badjens.com>

## Bitch

Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture is a print magazine devoted to incisive commentary on our media-driven world. Featured are critiques of TV, movies, magazines, advertising, and more; plus interviews with and profiles of cool, smart women in all areas of pop culture.

Website: <http://www.bitchmagazine.com>

## Curve Magazine

Curve, a lesbian magazine, spotlights all that is fresh, funny, exciting, controversial and cutting-edge in our community. Curve brings the latest in lesbian related celebrity interviews, news, politics, pop culture, style, travel, social issues and entertainment. Curve tackles the tough topics, like "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," same-sex marriage, breast cancer and the challenges facing queer youth.

Website: <http://www.curvemag.com/>

## Feminista!

Feminista! is an online journal known internationally for its content and capacity for networking. Feminista! is a journal of art, literature, social commentary, philosophy, humour, and respect, and is currently published on a semi-regular basis.

E-mail: [grr@feminista.com](mailto:grr@feminista.com)

Website: <http://www.feminista.com>

## Girlfriends Magazine

The Girlfriends Magazine was founded in 1994, and is North America's only lesbian monthly. Filled with news, commentary, and entertainment, Girlfriends is known for its celebrity coverage and its innovative annual features. It covers culture, politics, and entertainment from a lesbian perspective.

Address:

H.A.F. Publishing 3415 Cesar Chavez Suite 101  
San Francisco, CA 94110

Telephone: +1 800 475 3763 or +1 415 648 9464

E-mail: [staff@girlfriendsmag.com](mailto:staff@girlfriendsmag.com)

Website: <http://www.girlfriendsmag.com/>

## Good Girl

Good Girl strives to create an independent media space where young women can come together across differences to challenge perceptions, develop their skills, work to change culture, play with stereotypes and have a ripping good time doing it. The periodical is published quarterly.

Address:

837 rue Gilford

Montreal, Quebec H2J 1P1

Canada

Telephone: +1 514 935 7659

E-mail: [info@goodgirl.ca](mailto:info@goodgirl.ca)

Website: <http://www.goodgirl.ca>

## HipMama Magazine

Hip Mama is a magazine bursting with political commentary and ribald tales from the front lines of motherhood. Edited and published by Ariel Gore (print) and Bee Lavender (online), the zine started as a forum for young mothers, single parents, and marginalised voices, but has grown to represent progressive families of all varieties. Hip Mama maintains the editorial vision that qualified it for the title "conservative America's worst nightmare."

Address:

Ariel Gore

PO Box 12525

Portland, OR

97212

E-mail: [tinker@hipmama.com](mailto:tinker@hipmama.com)

Website: <http://www.hipmama.com/>

## Iris: A Journal about Women

Iris: A Journal about Women is a magazine for young women who want to make a difference in the world around them. Filled with women's critical essays, news articles, book reviews, resources, literature, and art, Iris is a journal of women's issues and opinion that strives to represent many different feminist perspectives. The journal celebrates and explores lives, bringing together contributions from writers, artists and university scholars from all over the world. Since the first issue in 1980, Iris has steadily developed a national and international reputation in academic and non-academic circles alike. Iris is a non-profit publication sponsored by the University of Virginia Women's Center and the Studies in Women and Gender Program and is staffed by student interns from the University community.



Address:

PO Box 800588

UVa Women's Center

Charlottesville, VA 22908

USA

E-mail: [iris@virginia.edu](mailto:iris@virginia.edu)

Website: <http://iris.virginia.edu/archives/42/index.htm>

## Ms. Magazine

The international feminist quarterly founded in 1972 by Gloria Steinem, now woman-owned and operated by Liberty Media for Women. Ms. was the first U.S. magazine to feature prominent American women demanding the repeal of laws that criminalised abortion, the first to explain and advocate for the ERA, to rate presidential candidates on women's issues, to put domestic violence and sexual harassment on the cover of a women's magazine, to feature feminist protest of pornography, to commission and feature a national study on date rape, and to blow the whistle on the undue influence of advertising on magazine journalism. Ms. was the first national magazine to make feminist voices audible, feminist journalism tenable, and a feminist worldview available to the public. Today, the magazine remains an interactive enterprise in which an unusually diverse readership is simultaneously engaged with each other and the world. The modern Ms. boasts the most extensive coverage of international women's issues of any magazine available in the United States.

Address:

Liberty Media for Women

Feminist Majority Foundation

1600 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 801

Arlington, VA 22209

USA

Ms. Magazine Editorial Office

433 South Beverly Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90212

USA

Editor-in-Chief: Elaine Lafferty

Telephone: +1 703 522 2214

Fax: +1 703 522 2219

Email: [info@msmagazine.com](mailto:info@msmagazine.com)

Website: <http://www.msmagazine.com>

## Newsletter of Women Against Military Madness (WAMM)

WAMM is a nonviolent feminist organisation that works in solidarity with others to create a system of social equality, self-determination and justice through education and empowerment of women. WAMM's purpose is to dismantle systems of militarism and global oppression. WAMM has around 2100 member households, most of which are in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. WAMM is consciously a local justice and peace organisation, using a non-hierarchical organisational structure. WAMM is governed by a Steering Committee of volunteer activists who use consensus decision making. WAMM programmes from the grassroots -- allowing activists to form committees and act on issues based on their own passions. The worldwide Wamm is published ten times per year and distributed to more than 1600 households. The Newsletter of Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) covers issues related to militarism, human rights, and the progressive movement.

Address:

310 E. 38th St - Suite 225  
Minneapolis, MN 55409  
USA

Telephone: +1 612 827 5364

Fax: +1 612 827 6433

Email: [WAMM@mtn.org](mailto:WAMM@mtn.org)

Website: <http://www.worldwideWAMM.org>

## Raising Our Voices: News from the Global Fund for Women

The Global Fund for Women is a grant making foundation supporting women's human rights organisations around the world working to address critical issues such as gaining economic independence, increasing girls' access to education, and stopping violence against women. Through Raising Our Voices, the Global Fund for Women shares news about the Global Fund's activities and women's rights around the world with our supporters and grantees.

Address:

1375 Sutter Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
USA

Telephone: +1 415 202 7640

Fax: +1 415 202 8604

Website: <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org>

## Woman's Hour

BBC broadcasts available under the "Listen Again" banner.

Website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour>

## Women In the Life

Women In the Life ("WITL") was created in 1993 to empower and enrich the lives of lesbians of colour, through educational, social and cultural programming, and support services. The founder of WITL, Sheila Alexander-Reid is a black lesbian activist and entrepreneur who started WITL because at the time there were no safe spaces for lesbians of colour to socialise, network and share their sisterhood. Initially WITL brought lesbians of colour together through informal social events, such as poetry readings, dances, community fundraisers, and workshops. This site bills itself as "your premiere lesbian portal" but it is much more than a mere gateway to other sites -- it is more like a full-service online magazine including an excellent roundup of news stories and clips.

Address:

1642 R Street NW; Suite 220  
Washington, DC 20009

Telephone: +1 202 483 9818

Fax: +1 202 332 7326

E-mail: [editor@womeninthelife.com](mailto:editor@womeninthelife.com)

Website: <http://www.womeninthelife.com>

## ●●● WOMEN'S RADIO

### WomensRadio.com and WomensRadio Channel

WomensRadio produces a rich website and syndicates web-based programming for women. As WomensRadio progresses, it will be using not only the Web, but also terrestrial radio, digital radio, audio channels of digital TV, private channels in the transportation field, and soon wireless, to target and deliver this specialty market segment.

Address:

2121 Peralta Street, Suite 138  
Oakland, CA 94607  
USA

Telephone: +1 510 891 0006 (x225)

Fax: +1 510 891 0003

Email: [pat@womensradio.com](mailto:pat@womensradio.com)

Website: <http://www.womensradio.com>

## Women's Radio Fund

The mission of the Women's Radio Fund is to build a support network for women radio producers and broadcasters worldwide. The aims are to develop and distribute funding for women's radio broadcasting, production, and distribution projects; to promote and showcase the work of women in radio worldwide, using webpages and netcasting; to forge links between radio women and their allies: funders, a worldwide audience, technical support people, strategic partners, and the global women's movement; to help women worldwide develop their own low-power micropower broadcasting stations; and in doing so to provide technical assistance, production equipment, and training.

Address:

PO Box 242048

Memphis, TN 38124

USA

Telephone/Fax: +1 901 685 6950

Email: [dorothy@womensradiofund.org](mailto:dorothy@womensradiofund.org)

Website: <http://www.womensradiofund.org>

## Women's Radio Group

Women's Radio Group is an arts charity committed to providing training for women in all areas of radio production. It provides information on opportunities for women in the radio industry and a networking resource for women interested in radio. It also regularly works in partnership with media training organisations and community groups to develop opportunities in radio for women.

Address:

27 Bath Road

London, W4 1J

UK

Fax: +44 20 8 955 5442

Email: [wrg@zelo.demon.co.uk](mailto:wrg@zelo.demon.co.uk)

Website: <http://www.womeninradio.org.uk>

## ●●● WOMEN'S FILM/VIDEO

### Boston International Festival of Women's Cinema

An annual film festival celebrating work by and about women. The Film Festival is organised by the Beacon Cinema Group, a partnership devoted to independent film programming, publicity and promotion.

Address:

P. O. Box 308

Eastham, MA 02642

USA

Telephone: +1 508 255 4859

Email: [Marianne@beaconcinema.com](mailto:Marianne@beaconcinema.com)

Website: <http://www.beaconcinema.com/womfest>

## Festival International de Films de Femmes

Address:

Maison des Arts de Creteil

Place Salvador Allende

94000 Creteil

France

Telephone: 33-0-1 49 80 38 98

Fax: 33-0-1 43 99 04 10

Email: [filmsfemmes@wanadoo.fr](mailto:filmsfemmes@wanadoo.fr)

Website: <http://www.filmsdefemmes.com>

## Independent Women Filmmakers (IWF)

IWF's goal is to support and encourage women to envision, create and express themselves through all aspects of filmmaking by sharing access, knowledge, experience, and ideas with each other.

Address:

Los Angeles, CA 90069

USA

Email: [t\\_miele@hotmail.com](mailto:t_miele@hotmail.com)

Website: <http://www.independentwomenfilmmakers.com>

## Video Femmes

Video Femmes is a centre which independently produces films and videos and also acts as a distribution center in Quebec City since 1974. You may view, rent or buy productions covering a wide range of subjects pertaining to the lives of women: health, violence, history, culture, society, sexuality, aboriginal women.

Address:

291, Rue St.-Vallier Est, bur. 104

Quebec, G1K 3P5

Canada

Telephone: +1 418 529 9188

Fax: +1 418 529 4891

Email: [videoifem@cllc.net](mailto:videoifem@cllc.net)

Website: [www.cllc.net/~videofem](http://www.cllc.net/~videofem)

### Women's Educational Media

Since 1978, Women's Educational Media has produced and distributed films on issues ranging from environmental concerns to affordable housing to preventing prejudice. No matter the topic, the Women's Educational Media approaches each project with the goal of creating lasting social change.

Address:

2180 Bryant Street, Suite 203

San Francisco, CA 94110

USA

Telephone: +1 415 641 4616

Fax: +1 415 641 4616

Email: [wemfilms@womedia.org](mailto:wemfilms@womedia.org)

Website: <http://www.womedia.org>

### Women in Film and Television

Women in Film and Television - Toronto is a leading internationally affiliated industry organisation that recognises, trains and advances women in screen-based media. WIFT-T offers a year-round slate of skills development, networking events and industry awards, providing the tools to succeed in Canada's global entertainment industry. In operation for 19 years, WIFT-T serves over 700 women and men in Canadian screen-based media, connecting them to close to 10,000 leading film, television and new media professionals world-wide.

Address:

2300 Yonge Street, Suite 405

PO Box 2386

Toronto

Ontario M4P 1E4

Telephone: +1 416 322 3430

Fax: +1 416 322 3703

E-mail: [wift@wift.com](mailto:wift@wift.com)

Website: <http://www.wift.com>

## ••• WOMEN, THE INTERNET & OTHER INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

### Assemblage: The Women's New Media Gallery

Compiled and curated by Carolyn Guertin, this international gathering of women's voices is a showcase of new media art being created on and off the World Wide Web. The common ground here is the non-sequential - the hypertextual - use of words and images to birth possible worlds in this new art form, and to create present tense textual spaces for readers to explore.

E-mail: [cguertin@ualberta.ca](mailto:cguertin@ualberta.ca)

Website: <http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/traced/guertin/assemblage.htm>

Address:

665 Huntington Avenue

Boston, MA 02115

Telephone: +1 617 432 4619

E-mail: [jzucker@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:jzucker@hsph.harvard.edu)

Website: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet/>

### AVIVA: Women's World-Wide Web

AVIVA is a free 'Webzine', being run by an International group of Feminists based in London. AVIVA is a free monthly International Feminist Webzine, which publishes news and listings about, and of interest to women world-wide and enables women all over the world to make contact with each other.

Address:

41 Royal Crescent

London W11 4SN

UK

Telephone: +44 20 7602 0140

Fax: +44 20 7602 0140

Email: [kateb@aviva.org](mailto:kateb@aviva.org)

Website: <http://www.aviva.org>

### Center for Women and Information Technology

The Center for Women and Information Technology, established at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) in July, 1998, seeks to enhance our understanding of the relationship between gender and IT. The Center has a three-fold mission: to encourage more women and girls to prepare for careers and become leaders in information technology; to communicate information related to the richness and breadth of women's lives, concerns, and possibilities using technology; to foster research concerning gender and information technology.

Address:

UMBC

1000 Hilltop Circle

Baltimore, MD 21250 USA

Telephone: +1 410 455 2822

Fax: +1 410 455 8931

E-mail: cmorrell@

Website: <http://www.umbc.edu/cwit>

## Cyberfeminism

CyberFeminism is a website created by Laura Megan Handy. The site supports that using the internet for feminist activism empowers women to use technology while working toward feminist social change. By exploring 6 areas of CyberFeminist activism, you'll learn about activism on the internet and how to use the internet in your individual or group activism. This website is practical, fun, and hopefully will make these activist resources more approachable.

Website: [http://projects.ups.edu/honors\\_thesis/lhandy/](http://projects.ups.edu/honors_thesis/lhandy/)

## Cybergrrl.com

Sites for, by and about women

Website: <http://www.cybergrrl.com/>

## Femina Web

FeMiNa was created in September 1995 and debuted online to provide women with a comprehensive, searchable directory of links to female friendly sites and information on the World Wide Web.

Website: <http://www.femina.com/>

## Gender - Related Electronic Forums

The Gender-Related Electronic Forums is an annotated, frequently-updated, award-winning listing of publicly-accessible e-mail discussion forums (also known as "lists" or "listservs") related to women or to women-focused gender issues.

E-mail: [j Skor@umbc.edu](mailto:j Skor@umbc.edu)

Web-site: <http://www-unix.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/forums.html>

## GenTech

Gentech is a "gender inclusive pedagogy and technology" research project whose mandate is to create conditions within which girls and women have maximum access to, and confidence in, a wide range of new information technologies



E-mail: [brys@unixg.ubc.ca](mailto:brys@unixg.ubc.ca)

Website: <http://www.educ.ubc.ca/faculty/bryson/gentech/>

### subRosa

subRosa's name honours feminist pioneers in art, activism, labour, science, and politics: Rosa Bonheur, Rosa Luxemburg, Rosie the Riveter, Rosa Parks and Rosie Franklin. subRosa is a reproducible cyberfeminist cell of cultural researchers committed to combining art, activism, and politics to explore and critique the effects of the intersections of the new information and biotechnologies on women's bodies, lives, and work. subRosa produces artworks, activist campaigns and projects, publications, media interventions, and public forums that make visible the effects of the interconnections of technology, gender, and difference; feminism and global capital; new bio and medical technologies and women's health; and the changed conditions of labour and reproduction for women in the integrated circuit. subRosa practices a situational embodied feminist politics nourished by conviviality, self-determination, and the desire for affirmative alliances and coalitions.

E-mail: [subrosa@cyberfeminism.net](mailto:subrosa@cyberfeminism.net)

Website: <http://www.cyberfeminism.net/index.html>

### Webgrrls International

Webgrrls International provides a forum for women in or interested in new media and technology to network, exchange job and business leads, form strategic alliances, mentor and teach, intern and learn the skills to help women succeed in an increasingly technical workplace and world.

Website: <http://www.webgrrls.com>

### A Woman's Cyberspace

A Woman's Cyberspace is a website providing resources for women, dealing with issues of health, woman's space, recipes, women to remember and other issues.

E-mail: [contact@cyberwomanspace.com](mailto:contact@cyberwomanspace.com)

Website: <http://www.transporting.to/CyberWoman/resource.html>

## Women's eNews

Women's eNews is a no-nonsense, not-for-profit website and internet news service, covering issues of concern to women that the mainstream media too often ignore. It is supported by readers, foundations, major donors and reprint and licensing fees. This is what news looks like when women matter, solid -- serious, well-researched news about and for women. Women's Enews asks the intelligent questions that women want answered and probes the implications for women of events, policies and practices.

Address:

135 W.29th Street, Suite 1005

New York, NY10001

USA

Telephone: +1 212 244 1720

Fax: +1 212 244 2320

Email: [editors@womensenews.org](mailto:editors@womensenews.org)

Website: <http://www.womensenews.org>

## ●●● WOMEN'S NEWS AGENCIES

### Women's Feature Service (WFS) Philippines Inc.

WFS Philippines is part of an international all-women news service. It began in 1978 as a UNESCO-UNFPA initiative and was a project of Inter Press Service (IPS) until 1991. WFS covers development issues from a progressive women's perspective in mainstream media.

Address:

313-E Katipunan Ave.

Loyola Heights 1108 Quezon City

Philippines

Telephone: +632 434 9310

Fax: +632 929 9734

Email: [wfs@pacific.net.ph](mailto:wfs@pacific.net.ph) or [ohtqc@codewan.com.ph](mailto:ohtqc@codewan.com.ph)

Website: <http://www.codewan.com.ph/salidumay>

## APPENDIX 6: GENDER AND MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

### About-Face

A San Francisco-based non-profit group, About-Face combats negative and distorted images of women in the media. About-Face promotes positive self-esteem in girls and women of all ages, sizes, races and backgrounds through a spirited approach to media education, outreach and activism. The goals of About-Face is to encourage a healthy skepticism about media images and the messages of popular culture; to empower young people to feel confident about their individuality, their abilities and their bodies; to encourage individuals to identify and give voice to their opinions; to educate parents to empower their daughters and enlighten their sons; to identify companies that show women in unrealistic, distorted or vulnerable poses and hold them responsible for their negative imagery; to endorse companies that promote diverse and healthy images; to educate on subjects of sexism, lookism and the obsession with weight, to create alternative images through posters and art installations; to educate through lectures and special programmes in schools; to use playful and original ideas to generate cultural change, to promote appreciation of diversity and gender equality in schools; to provide a forum for discourse and serve as a resource to researchers, educators and policy makers as well as popular media and cultural trendsetters.

Address:

PO Box 77665

San Francisco, CA

94107

USA

Phone: +1 415 436 0212

E-mail: [info@about-face.org](mailto:info@about-face.org)

Website: <http://about-face.org/>

## AfricaWomen

Africawoman was set up in 2001 by Worldwoman -- a Scottish based charity that trains and publishes women journalists from developing countries. Worldwoman is backed by the British Council, Department for International Development, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and the Six Continents Leisure Group. Africawoman now connects 80 female journalists from Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Nigeria who meet on a monthly virtual newsroom (VNR). On this web site you can read the monthly newspapers which are the products of pioneering virtual meetings across the African continent and across the Equator.

Address:

3rd floor, Rm 324, Hurlingham Medicare Plaza  
Argwings Kodhek Road  
Nairobi, Kenya

Tel : +254 20 272 1429

Fax: +254 20 272 1439

Email: [info@africawoman.net](mailto:info@africawoman.net)

Website: <http://www.africawoman.net>

## The African Woman & Child Network

The African Woman & Child Information Network is a media organisation whose mission is to promote equal gender development through the media and research. Their goal is to increase the participation and visibility of women and children through the media towards development. AWC's strategic direction is to enhance policy through development focusing on their constituency, which is the media, government and bodies involved in gender issues. The strategic direction places emphasis on an integrated approach using lobbying and advocacy, content creation, capacity building, research and networking.

Address:

P. O. Box 48655,  
Nairobi, Kenya

Telephone: +254 2 724 756

Fax: +254 2 569 473

E-mail: [awcin@arso.sasa.unon.org](mailto:awcin@arso.sasa.unon.org)

Web-site: <http://www.awcfs.org>

## African Women's Media Center

The African Women's Media Center, a project of the International Women's Media Foundation, was founded in 1997. Located in Dakar, Senegal, and directed by an advisory committee of African women in the media, the centre is the only continent-wide organisation working with and on behalf of African women in the media. Since the centre's founding, more than 900 women journalists have taken part in 21 programmes and workshops conducted by the AWMC. The AWMC has created a wide range of programmes for women journalists throughout Africa with the goal of bringing the voices of African women more prominently into the media -- as reporters, producers, managers, executives, CEOs and media experts. The AWMC offers a wide range of programmes for women journalists throughout Africa and provides women journalists with the opportunity to network throughout the continent. The AWMC offers training workshops on topics such as leadership development, media management, computer training in new media technologies, journalism ethics, specialised journalism skills, balancing work and family, coalition building and more. In addition to training, the centre is a clearinghouse for information on fellowships, scholarships and exchange opportunities.

### Address:

1625 K. Street NW, Suite 1275

Washington, DC 20006

USA

Telephone: +1 202 496 1992

Fax: +1 202 496 1977

E-mail: [info@awmc.com](mailto:info@awmc.com)

Website: <http://www.awmc.com>

## APC Women's Networking Support Programme

The APC Women's Networking Support Programme is a global network of women which supports women networking for social change and women's empowerment, through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). It promotes gender equality in design, development, implementation, access to and use of ICTs and in the policy decisions and frameworks that regulate them. It is a part of the Association for Progressive Communications, an international network of civil society organisations dedicated to empowering and supporting groups and individuals working for peace, human rights, development and protection of the environment, through the strategic use of ICTs, including the internet. The network numbers over 100 women from more than 35 countries. They are individual women and women's groups and organisations working in the field of gender and ICT and actively supporting women's networking. Our members have formed themselves into regional networks in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Africa and are building an emerging network in Europe. The programme members are specialists in areas such as training, information facilitation, technical work and policy issues. Many work on a voluntary basis and are mostly experienced network users rather than formally-trained ICT experts. We come from different backgrounds: among us are activists on issues such as housing, environmental

protection and women's health; librarians, journalists, web developers, trainers, technicians; and user support providers. Some of us work for Internet Service/Content Service Providers (ISP/CSP) that are members of the Association for Progressive Communications. Some are independent activists, and some are members of women's organisations.

Address:

Executive Director's Office  
PO Box 29755  
Melville 2109  
South Africa

Telephone: +27 11 726 1692

Fax: +27 11 726 1692

Website: [http://www.apcwomen.org/eng\\_index.html](http://www.apcwomen.org/eng_index.html)

### Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE)- MediaWatch Committee

Inspired by a 1984 seminar entitled "Women's Choices, Women's Lives", AWARE was registered in Singapore in November 1985 as a voluntary organisation of women with three main areas of focus: support, research and advocacy. Their vision is gender equity for all and their mission is paving the way for gender equity through: raising awareness of women's and men's rights and responsibilities, developing women's full potential by encouraging full participation in public and private life, enhancing women's knowledge and skills and empowering them to make informed decisions. Media Watch is one of the subcommittees of the organisation.

Address:

Block 5, Dover Crescent #01-22  
Singapore 0513  
Japan

Telephone: +65-779 7137.

Fax: +65-777 0318

Website: [www.aware.org.sg](http://www.aware.org.sg)

### European and North American WomenAction

ENAWA - European and North American WomenAction is a network of media, ICT, information and advocacy organisations strengthening and integrating a feminist analysis in the information and media landscape in relation to social movements and the women's movement in our region and the world. ENAWA participants can create ad hoc partnerships together for specific events. We encourage this, as it is clear to all of us that when two or more organisations work together on a specific activity, their ability to make a difference increases. ENAWA partners also develop collective programmes. ENAWA is presently in the third year of the four-year Effective E-

programme. Effective E-Feminism has the following three components: research, training, and information dissemination.

E-mail: [enawa@iiav.nl](mailto:enawa@iiav.nl)

Website: <http://www.enawa.org>

### Feminists for Free Expression

Feminists for Free Expression (FFE) is a group of diverse feminists working to preserve the individual's right to see, hear and produce materials of her choice without the intervention of the state "for her own good." FFE believes freedom of expression is especially important for women's rights. While messages reflecting sexism pervade our culture in many forms, sexual and nonsexual, suppression of such material will neither reduce harm to women nor further women's goals. Censorship traditionally has been used to silence women and stifle feminist social change. It never has reduced violence; it has led to the imprisonment of birth control advocate Margaret Sanger and the suppression of such works as *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves*, *The Well of Loneliness*, and the feminist plays of Holly Hughes. There is no feminist code about which words and images are dangerous or sexist. Genuine feminism encourages individuals to choose for themselves. A free and vigorous marketplace of ideas is the best guarantee of democratic self-government and a feminist future. Feminists for Free Expression, a not-for-profit organisation, was founded in January 1992 in response to the many efforts to solve society's problems by book, movie or music banning. FFE believes such efforts divert attention from the substantive causes of social ills and offer a cosmetic, dangerous "quick fix." FFE provides a leading voice opposing state and national legislation that threatens free speech; defends the right to free expression in court cases, including those before the Supreme Court; supports the rights of artists whose works have been suppressed or censored and provides expert speakers to universities, law schools and the media throughout the country. FFE is a founding member of the Rushdie Defense Committee USA and maintains an electronic forum about censorship through *Saturday Review Online*, which operates on America Online.

Website: <http://www.ffeusa.org/>

### Guerrilla Girls

The Guerrilla Girls are a group of women artists, writers, performers, film makers and arts professionals who fight discrimination. Since 1985 the Guerrilla Girls have been reinventing the "F" word—feminism, that is. Still going strong in the 21st century, they are a bunch of anonymous females who take the names of dead women artists as pseudonyms and appear in public wearing gorilla masks. In 18 years they have produced over 100 posters, stickers, books, printed projects, and actions that expose sexism and racism in politics, the art world, film and the culture at large. They use humour to convey information, provoke discussion, and show that feminists can be funny. They wear gorilla masks to focus on the issues rather than our personalities. Dubbing themselves the conscience of culture, they declare ourselves feminist counterparts to the mostly male tradition of anonymous do-gooders like Robin Hood, Batman, and the Lone Ranger. Their

work has been passed around the world by kindred spirits. It has also appeared in hundreds of newspapers and magazines, including *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, *The Nation*, *Bitch and Bust*; on TV and radio, including NPR, CNN, the BBC and CBC; and in countless art and feminist texts. The mystery surrounding their identities has attracted attention.

E-mails:

info/comments: [gg@guerrillagirls.com](mailto:gg@guerrillagirls.com)

appearances/gigs: [gg@guerrillagirls.com](mailto:gg@guerrillagirls.com)

guerrilla goods: [gg@guerrillagirls.com](mailto:gg@guerrillagirls.com)

press/interviews: [kathekollwitz@guerrillagirls.com](mailto:kathekollwitz@guerrillagirls.com)

permissions/reproductions: [kathekollwitz@guerrillagirls.com](mailto:kathekollwitz@guerrillagirls.com)

Website: <http://www.guerrillagirls.com/>

### International Research and Training Institute (INSTRAW)

The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) is the only United Nations institute with the mandate for research and training on the advancement of women. A current project entitled "Empowering Women Through the Use of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) Technologies" is aimed at promoting the use of computer mediated communication in women's organisations and institutes.

Address:

Calle César Nicolás Penson 102- A

Santo Domingo, DN

Dominican Republic

Telephone: +1 809 685 2111

Fax: +1 809 685 2117

Website: <http://www.un.org/instraw/>

### International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)

The IWMF's mission is to strengthen the role of women in the news media around the world, based on the belief that no press is truly free unless women share an equal voice. Since its launch in 1990, the IWMF has increased the level and depth of debate about women's roles in the media. IWMF forums, studies and reports explore the obstacles women journalists face when trying to advance in their careers. The organisation also examines the impact on the news business and the community when women's voices are absent from decision-making about news and how it is covered. The IWMF's seminars and training sessions give women journalists the tools they need to enhance their careers and move into leadership positions. In addition to offering critical leadership development opportunities, the IWMF also sponsors training in the techniques of a free press and in the business of the media. The IWMF has built a network of women journalists from more than 100 countries. In addition to fostering alliances and connections, the network helps women in media share their strategies for success and access resources to help them achieve their goals.



Address:

International Women's Media Foundation

1625 K Street NW, Suite 1275

Washington, DC 20006

USA

Phone: +1 202 496 1992

Fax: +1 202 496 1977

Email: [info@iwmf.org](mailto:info@iwmf.org)

Website: <http://www.iwmf.org>

### International Women's Tribune Center

The International Women's Tribune Center (IWTC) is an international non-governmental organisation established in 1976 following the United Nations International Women's Year World Conference in Mexico City. With a philosophical commitment to empowering people and building communities, IWTC provides communication, information, education, and organises support services to women's organisations and community groups working to improve the lives of women, particularly low-income women, in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

Address:

777 UN Plaza

New York

NY 10017

USA

Tel: +1 212 687 8633

Fax: +1 212 661 2704

Website: [www.iwtc.org](http://www.iwtc.org)

### Isis International

Isis International is a feminist NGO dedicated to women's information and communication needs. Documenting ideas and visions, creating channels to communicate, collecting and moving information, networking and building links, Isis International focus on advancing women's rights, leadership and empowerment in Asia and the Pacific. With connections in over 150 countries, Isis International also keeps up with changing trends and analyses concerning women worldwide.

Address:

PO Box 1837

Quezon City Main

Quezon City 1100

Philippines

Telephone: +63-2 967 297

Fax: +63 -2 815 0756

Email: [admin@isiswomen.org](mailto:admin@isiswomen.org)

Website: <http://www.isiswomen.org/>

## Studio XX

Based in Montréal, Québec, Studio XX is a bilingual (English/French) collective of academics, artists, professionals, students and techies dedicated to the enhancement of women's place in cyberspace and to the exploration of the multifaceted possibilities of digital media technologies, to critically examine their social aspects, to facilitate women's access to technology, and to create and exhibit women's new digital art. Studio XX is committed to providing digital technology training and instruction to women at all levels of experience, both artists and non-artists. It is the Studio's goal that women not only use these technologies, but are a defining presence in cyberspace.

Address:

338, Terrasse Saint-Denis,

Montréal, Québec H2X1E8

Telephone: +1 514 845 7934

Fax: +1 514 845 4941

Website: <http://www.studioxx.org>

## WACC Women's Programme

The WACC advocates full and equal participation of women in public communication so that their distinctive needs, insights and experiences become part of the public agenda. Work is directly linked to the principles of democratisation and the right to communicate. The Women's Programme undertakes a wide range of activities on gender and communication issues including advocacy at the national, regional and global levels; organising conferences and training for media workers and communication activists; publishing resource materials, supporting women's networking, media monitoring and research. The programme's philosophy is in keeping with the association's commitment to implement communication programmes and to support projects that lead to the empowerment of people, especially the dispossessed and marginalised, indigenous peoples, refugees, migrants, women, children and people with disabilities.

Address:

357 Kennington Lane

London SE11 5QY

United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7582 9139

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7735 0340

Website: <http://www.wacc.org.uk/>

### WITI Campus - Women in Technology International

WITI was founded in 1989 to help women advance by providing access to -- and support from -- other professional women working in all sectors of technology. Today, WITI is the premiere global organisation empowering women in business and technology to achieve unimagined possibilities. WITI's mission is to empower women worldwide to achieve unimagined possibilities and transformations through technology, leadership and economic prosperity. With a global network of smart, talented women and a market reach exceeding 2 million, WITI has powerful programmes and partnerships that provide connections, resources, opportunities and a supportive environment of women committed to helping each other. Along with its professional association of networks throughout the U.S. and worldwide, including Hong Kong, Great Britain, Australia, and Mexico, WITI delivers value for individuals that work for a company, the government or academia, as well as small business owners. WITI's mission is to empower women worldwide to achieve unimagined possibilities and transformations through technology, leadership and economic prosperity.

Address:

13351-D Riverside Drive #441

Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

Telephone: +1 818 788 9484

Fax: +1 818 788 9410

Website: <http://www.witi.com/index.html>

### Women's International Network of AMARC (AMARC-WIN)

The Women's International Network of AMARC (AMARC-WIN) is a large assembly of women communicators working to ensure women's right to communicate through and within the community radio movement. The organisation works for women's right to communicate as a basic human right expressed through community radio; supports women's empowerment, gender equity and a general improvement in the condition and position of women worldwide; promotes women's access to all levels of community radio, including decision-making; supports women's efforts to express themselves within and beyond their communities by providing training programmes and production exchanges at the international and local level; and aims to change negative images of both women and men in the media and to challenge stereotypes being reproduced by media all around the world.

Address:

705 Bourget Street, Suite 100  
Montreal  
Quebec  
Canada, H4C 2M6

Telephone: +1-514 982-0351

Fax: +1-514 849-7129

E-mail: [amarc@amarc.org](mailto:amarc@amarc.org)

Website: <http://www.amarc.org>

### Women's Leaders OnLine

Women's Leaders OnLine is a unique organisation dedicated to mobilising women over the internet and empowering women politically.

Website: <http://www.wlo.org>

### Womenspace

Womenspace is a Canadian non-profit organisation which promotes women's participation in information and communication technology. Their activities include the development of online resources and learning, research, education and initiatives which support the use of internet for women's equality. We work for the inclusion of women and women's organisations in all areas of ICT policy development and implementation. Womenspace believes that inclusive access, peer networking and creative uses of communication technologies are powerful vehicles for social equality. Women's communication rights and women's equality issues must be included in the public policy process. We want to ensure that women's voices and women's equality are a vital part of online engagement and a vibrant democracy.

E-mail: [info@womenspace.ca](mailto:info@womenspace.ca)

Website: <http://www.womenspace.ca>

### WomenWatch

WomenWatch is an initiative to empower women through the use of electronic communication technologies. It is a gateway to UN information and data on women world wide and an evolving forum on global women's issues in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and other UN global conferences. WomenWatch links the websites of DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW.

Website: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>

## APPENDIX 7: ONLINE MEDIA TRAINING

### ●●● JOURNALISM

#### International Women's Media Foundation

Online courses in editing, building influence in the newsroom, leadership development and radio skills.

Website: <http://www.iwmf.org/training/index.php>

#### The Journalist's Toolbox

Includes online resources, training, publications, media news, web searching techniques, articles, building intranet and more.

Website: <http://www.ejc.nl/jr/toolbox.html>

#### Poynter Online

Everything you need to become a better journalist. Includes resources, tips and guidelines on improving skills in writing, editing, photojournalism and broadcast (television and radio) journalism.

Website: <http://www.poynter.online>

### ●●● RADIO AND WEBRADIO

#### Community radio content development

Website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/onlinecourse>

#### Evaluating radio programmes

Website: <http://www.radiooneworld.net>

#### How to set up and operate webradio

Website: <http://www.darkice.sourceforge.net>

#### Microphones and sound for radio

Website: <http://www.bbctraining.co.uk>

## Online training for women: using new technologies in radio broadcasting and production

Audio online

Audio online free software

Internet and e-mail basics

Radio on the internet

Website: <http://www.amarc.org>

## Producing content for radio

<http://www.itrainonline.org>

## Setting up and managing community radio

Website: <http://www.abculwazi.org.za>

## Starting a radio station

Website: <http://www.prometheusradio.org/outreach>

## Strategic communications

Tutorials for media plans, internet PR, photo opportunities, media events, training, communication strategies for communities of colour

Website: <http://www.spinproject.org/resources/tutorials.php3>

## Technical help for radio production

Website: <http://www.transom.org>

## Webradio browsing unit handout (technical support)

Website: <http://www.itrainonline.org>

## Writing for radio

Website: <http://www.newscript.com>

## ••● INTERNET SKILLS

### A guide to the search engine Google

Website: <http://www.googleguide.com>

### Customisable guide for citizens: how to use internet tools and resources

Website: <http://lone-eagles.com/guide.htm>

### Women Online: online training kit for the internet

Women Online is one of the projects of the AMARC Europe Women's Network. The main aim of this network of women from all over Europe is to ensure and encourage the participation of women in community radios and the establishment of women's programmes within this framework. As such it is part of a worldwide movement, the AMARC Women's International Network (WIN) consisting of representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, North America, Oceania and Europe.

Address:

15 Paternoster Row

Sheffield S1 2BX

UK

Telephone: +44 114 221 05 92

Fax: +44 114 279 89 76

Website: <http://www.amarc.org/wol/English/modules-en.htm>

## APPENDIX 8: A SELECTED, USEFUL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON GENDER AND MEDIA FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

### ●●● ONLINE RESOURCES

#### Eldis Gender Resource Guide: Gender and Development

A wide range of documents, articles and reports pertaining to gender and development issues such as: education, trade, poverty, health, globalisation and more.

Website: <http://www.eldis.org/gender/index.htm>

#### International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement

The IIAV is the source, the intermediary and the supplier of information and documentation for all those who occupy themselves with the position of women, whether it concerns books, periodicals, data, addresses, archives, visual materials, current or historical, national or international. Specialist queries can be answered directly thanks to the computer database facilities and the Women's Thesaurus. In view of the rapidly growing amount of information on women and the fact that it is impossible to collect every piece of information which exists, the IIAV focus their collection policy for the coming years on the developments in, and contemporary theories on, women's studies and on providing information about black, migrant and refugee women.

E-mail: [info@iiav.nl](mailto:info@iiav.nl)

Website: <http://www.iiav.nl>

#### Women's Studies Internet Resources

Includes resources according to academic discipline within the humanities, social sciences and science, resources according to region and theme, libraries, collections and directories.

Website: <http://www.york.ac.uk/services/library/subjects/womenint.htm>

### ●●● BEAUTY, BODY IMAGE AND THE MEDIA

BBC online (2000) "Models link to teenage anorexia", 30 May, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>

Dittrich, L, (n.d.) About-Face: Facts on the Media (images of female beauty in the media and their consequences for women)

<http://www.about-face.org/r/facts/media.shtml>



Jacobsen, M.F. and Mazur, L.A. (1995), "Sexism and sexuality in advertising" in M.F.Jacobson and L.A. Mazur (eds) *Marketing Madness: A survival guide for a consumer society*, pp. 74-87, Boulder, CO.: Westview Press.

<http://www.personal.kent.edu/~glhanson/readings/advertising/womeninads.htm>

## • • ● GENDER ACTIVISM

Mehta, A. (2001) "Why activists cannot afford to neglect the internet", in *Sarai Reader 2001: The Public Domain*, pp. 140-146, [http://www.sarai.net/journal/pdf/140-146%20\(arun\).pdf](http://www.sarai.net/journal/pdf/140-146%20(arun).pdf), from <http://www.sarai.net>

Nankani, S. "Activists Affirm Platform for Women's Human Rights", <http://www.womenswire.net/headlines.htm>

Schwartz, A. (2004) "Why should we be watching gender and media activism in Southern Africa?" <http://www.awid.org/go.php?stid=1396>

## • • ● GENDER, FEMINISM AND FILM

Bery, R. and Stuart, S. (1996) *Powerful Grassroots Women Communicators: Participatory Video in Bangladesh*, [http://c4c.org/video\\_bang.html](http://c4c.org/video_bang.html)

Dagron, A. (2002) *Video: The Image of Identity*, in *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change*, *The Communication Initiative*, <http://www.comminit.com/strategicthinking/pdsmakingwaves/sld-1852.html>

*Documentaries and Activism* (2002), from MediaRights [http://www.mediarights.org/news/articles/documentaries\\_and\\_activism.php](http://www.mediarights.org/news/articles/documentaries_and_activism.php)

Emerson, J. (n.d.) "Thelma and Louise", <http://www.cinepad.com/reviews/thelma.htm>

Kaplan, E. Ann (2000) *Feminism and Film*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Video Activist Resources

<http://www.videoactivism.org/resource.html>

Women in Cinema: A Resource Guide

<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~pm9k/libsci/womFilm.html>

## ••● GENDER INEQUALITY

### Classic Texts

Friedan, B. (1963) *The Feminine Mystique*. London: W.W.Norton.

Greer, G. (1971) *The Female Eunuch*. New York: Bantam.

Wollstonecraft, M. (1792) "A Vindication of the Rights of Women"

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/mw-vind.html>

### Recent

Sen, A. (2001) "Gender Inequality around the World: The Many Faces of Gender Inequality", *Frontline* 27 Oct. - 9. Nov., vol. 18, issue 22.

## ••● GENDER ISSUES IN CYPRUS

Anthias, F. (1989) "Women and Nationalism in Cyprus", in N. Yuval-Davis & F. Anthias (eds), *Woman-Nation-State*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Cockburn, C. (2004) *The Line: Women, Partition and the Gender Order in Cyprus*. London: Zed.

Hadjipavlou, M. (2004) *Women in the Cypriot Communities: Interpreting Women's Lives*. Nicosia: The Peace Centre.

Vassiliadou, M. (1997) "Herstory: The Missing Woman of Cyprus", *The Cyprus Review*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 95-120.

Vassiliadou, M. (2002) "Questioning Nationalism: The Patriarchal and National Struggles of Cypriot Women within a European Union Context", *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 459-482.

Vassiliadou, M. (2004) "Women's Constructions of Women; On Entering the Front Door" *Journal of International Women's Studies, Special Issue: Feminist Challenges. Crossing Boundaries*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 53-67, from <http://www.bridgew.edu/SoAS//jiws/May04/index.htm>

Vassiliadou, M. (2002) "Questioning Nationalism: The Patriarchal and National Struggles of Cypriot Women within a European Union Context", *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 459-482.

Vassiliadou, M. (2004) "Women Promote Technology: Reducing the Gender Digital Divide in Skills and Employment—The Case of Cyprus", from <http://www.peerreview-employment.org/en/germany03/GERM03>

## ••● GENDER AND JOURNALISM

Carter, C., Branston, G. and Stuart, A. (eds.) (1998) *News, Gender and Power*: London: Routledge.

Chenoy, A. (2002) " Militarisation, Gender and the Media" [in India]  
<http://www.indiatogether.org/media/articles/milisigns.htm>

## ••● GENDER AND THE MEDIA - THEORY (INTRODUCTORY TEXTS)

Gauntlett, D. Introductory website to theories of identity and culture, including gender  
<http://www.theory.org.uk/oldresources.htm>

Gauntlett, D. (2002) *Media, Gender, Identity*: London: Routledge.

Kafiris, K. (2002) *Gender, Media and New Technologies: An Overview*, from <http://www.kethi.gr>, (in Greek). Revised version available, contact author at [kkafiris@yahoo.com](mailto:kkafiris@yahoo.com)

Press, A. (2000) "Recent Developments in Feminist Communication Theory: Difference, Public Sphere, Body and Technology" in M. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds.), *Mass Media and Society*, London: Arnold, pp. 27-43.

## ••● GENDER AND TELEVISION

Abu-Lughod, L. (1995) "The objects of soap opera: Egyptian television and the cultural politics of modernity" in *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local* D. Miller (ed), Routledge: London. pp. 190-210

Akass, K., and McCabe J. (eds) (2004) *Reading Sex and the City*. Tauris: London.

D'Acci, J. (1994) *Defining Women: Television and the Case of Cagney and Lacey*. N. Carolina Press: Chapel Hill.

Geraghty, C. (1991) *Women and Soap Opera: A Study of Prime Time Soaps*. Polity Press: London.

Slayage: The Online International International Journal of Buffy Studies, <http://www.slayage.tv>

## ••● GENDER, RACE, ETHNICITY AND THE MEDIA

hooks, bell (1997): *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies*. London: Routledge.

Malik, S. (2002) *Representing Black Britain: Black and Asian Images on Television*. London: Sage

## ••● GENDER, SEXUALITY AND THE MEDIA

Brooke, J. (1997) "Gay characters don't always cost TV ad dollars", 9 April, from CNN.com, <http://www.cnn.com/showbiz/9704/09/ellen/index.html>

Tasker, Y. (1998) *Working Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Cinema*. London: Routledge.

## ••● GENDER STEREOTYPES

Woodward, W. (2000) "Gender stereotypes still hamper young", *The Guardian*, 20 September, from [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)

## ••● HISTORY OF FEMINISM AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

About Women's History

<http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrage/>

Casciani, D. (2003) "The history of the suffragettes", *BBC News Online*, 2 October, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3153388.stm>

## ••● MEDIA ACTIVISM

Blumler, J. and Coleman, S. "A Civic Commons in Cyberspace"

<http://www.ippr.org.uk/publications/covers/Realising%20Democracy%20Online%20-%20in%20.pdf>

Community Radio: A Tool for Social Change

<http://www.radioproject.org/archive/2001/0901.html>

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