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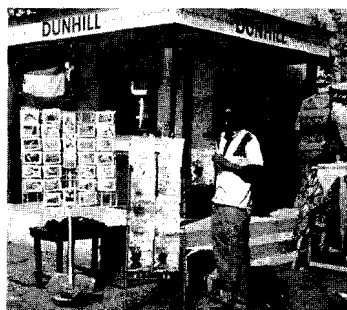
*Communication  
Media*

# NETWORKS — ÇA VA!?



# ¿Y CÓMO?

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# Networking for Gender Equality

## Global Media Monitoring

By Anna Turley, WACC

There is hardly any project which has collected so many superlatives as the *Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)* on gender equality in the media. Described as "the most extensive global research of gender in news media ever undertaken" it involved hundreds of organisations and individuals from more than 80 countries. MEDIAFORUM asked the present co-ordinator, Anna Turley, from the *World Association of Christian Communication* to describe the birth of this participatory network, the development and the lessons learned, resulting from research which took place in 1995 and 2000. Anna Turley is already in the preparatory process for the forthcoming, third GMMP-day in 2005.



Women in bikinis and tangas posing on a beach, heart attacks and snoring. To most of us there would seem to be no obvious connection between these disparate items, but in one Turkish television news report on 1st February 2000, it was deemed appropriate to illustrate a serious story on research into the link between heart attacks and snoring in women with video footage of scantily-clad women posing on a beach. It was stories like these that came under scrutiny in two international media monitoring projects separated by five years. The first *Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)* was held in 1995 and the second in 2000. Together, these two projects constitute the most extensive global research of gender in news media ever undertaken, involving a network of hundreds of organisations and individuals. As such, they provide an enlightening case study of the achievements and challenges associated with networking for social change.

The importance of media monitoring was officially recognised for the first time in Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action, which emerged from the UN *Fourth World Conference on Women* in 1995. However, the idea for a one-day study of gender

portrayal in the world's news media was first conceived prior to Beijing, at the international conference *Women Empowering Communication (WEC)* held in Bangkok in 1994, organised by the *World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)*, in association with the *International Women's Tribune Centre*, New York and *Isis*, Manila.

WACC's work on gender began in 1987 with a series of regional consultations on women and media. These consultations culminated in the groundbreaking WEC conference, attended by over 430 people from 80 countries, where a series of strategies and resolutions for promoting gender equality in the media were produced in the *Bangkok Declaration*. Since then, the *Bangkok Declaration* and the recommendations contained in Section J of the *Beijing Platform for Action* have shaped the aims of the WACC *Women's Programme*: to support women's empowerment through training, gender and media awareness and advocacy; to strengthen women's participation in and access to media expression and decision-making; to network with groups focusing on gender and media issues and communication policy; to empower women to



monitor and lobby media in order to promote gender-sensitive reporting and programming and to raise awareness of gender and development issues.

### Emergence of a Network

When the idea for an international media monitoring day was raised in Bangkok, such was the level of enthusiasm for the project from the 30 or so women from as many countries, who were attending the workshop on media monitoring, that the idea was included in the *Bangkok Declaration*. Continuing this momentum, with the support of WACC and others, *MediaWatch*, a Canadian NGO and one of the pioneers in 'media watching', took up the challenge of co-ordinating this ground breaking initiative – the *Global Media Monitoring Project* – the aims of which were to build solidarity, create media awareness and develop media monitoring skills on an international level.

*MediaWatch* began by contacting their many partners around the world to seek their commitment to co-ordinate the project for their countries, also asking them to approach other local organisations and individuals, and to reach out to other

countries that might be interested in taking part. In this way, over a period of one year, with word spread between colleagues and friends, the first GMMP network was born. In close consultation with *MediaWatch* and the newly formed network of national co-ordinators, the monitoring materials were developed by a professional data analysis company, *Erin Research Inc.*, and were then pilot tested by groups from the network in Argentina, India, Japan and the Netherlands.

At the end of 1994, these materials were distributed to the hundreds of volunteers who had agreed to participate from 71 countries around the world. During the following two months, the participants familiarised themselves with the monitoring materials and shared their queries and concerns, advice and solutions with other members of the GMMP network.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January, the participants in the GMMP global network monitored their local, national and regional news media – television, radio and daily newspapers – for its gender portrayal, together producing more than 50,000 media records. The results of the monitoring were published in the report *Global Media*

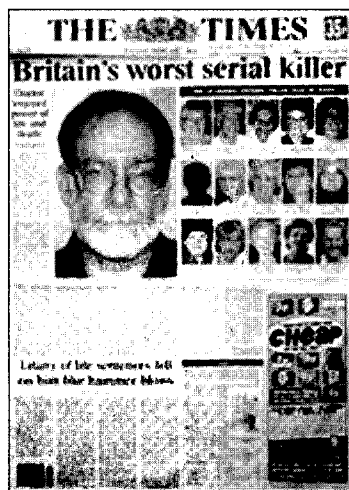
*Monitoring: Women's Participation in the News*, which was then launched by members of the network at the Women's NGO Forum in Beijing in September 1995. The first GMMP was marked by an incredible level of enthusiasm and solidarity amongst those who took part. It was the first

*For the Gender Media Monitoring Project hundreds of groups collaborated in more than 80 countries on all continents. From left to right: GMMP groups in Nigeria, Israel, India, Belgium, the UK and Fiji*

### PROFILE WACC

*The origins of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) date back to 1950 when Christian communicators*

*from Europe and North America were seeking guidelines for the future of religious broadcasting. Today WACC is made up of more than 850 corporate and personal members in 115 countries organised in eight Regional Associations. The administrative work of WACC is carried out at its office in London. Taking the side of justice and human dignity in media, and promoting diverse media ownership, WACC works for the right to communicate especially in situations of censorship and oppression. Among others, WACC publishes the Media & Gender Monitor, exploring gender and communication issues from global, regional and local perspectives and providing information about WACC's Women's Programme.*



Two typical examples: The Times, UK and



El Chino from Peru

Fotos: WACC

time ever that so many different groups and individuals, most of whom had never met before, joined together in a network to accomplish a global initiative of this sort.

Five years on, as part of its research and advocacy work, the WACC Women's Programme co-ordinated a second more extensive and qualitative GMMP. The intention was to improve and build on the original 1995 study by making the study more contextual, in addition to providing data which would allow individual countries and regions to see whether and how the media's portrayal of women had changed in the half decade since the first study.

WACC began the preparations for GMMP 2000 by returning to the network which had developed as part of the first monitoring project. Many of the organisations in the original network had carried out follow-up work to GMMP 1995, continued to monitor their national

media using the GMMP monitoring tools and were keen to participate again, others, over the intervening years, had directed their efforts at alternative gender and media concerns whilst still retaining an interest in the media monitoring work of sister organisations, whilst a few had simply disappeared from the network. As the news that there was to be another GMMP made its way round the globe, the WACC Women's Programme began receiving letters, faxes and e-mails from a wide range of groups and individuals expressing their desire to participate.

Perhaps because of the success of the first project, GMMP 2000 attracted the interest of a much more diverse group of people, and so by mid-1999 a network of gender and media activists, academics, students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations and alternative media groups from many of the same countries that had taken part in the 1995 project, and even more, had been established.

In consultation with some of the participants in the network, the monitoring materials were extensively revised for the second GMMP, to reflect some of the most consistently debated media issues on which gender activists demand gender equality.

In order to ensure that no one who wanted to participate was excluded from doing so, WACC translated the monitoring materials into French and Spanish, and encouraged participants in the network to translate the original English text into their own local languages.

So it was that on 1st February 2000 hundreds of volunteers in 70 countries monitored the day's news on radio, television and in print. Once again, the monitoring day was marked by tremendous excitement and solidarity among participating groups worldwide, linked only by e-mail and a common task.

Messages started coming in to WACC that morning, first from the Philippines, then from many other countries that were monitoring at the same time, and the incoming e-mail messages were immediately shared with the network. The monitoring group from China, for example, e-mailed to say how pleased they were to be included 'in this historic event' and a volunteer in Kenya captured the mood of the day when she said, 'I can't believe I am having so much fun here in Kenya, knowing that other people are out there, doing the same thing.' The preliminary results of GMMP 2000

were released in time for the UN Beijing + 5 events in June 2000 where they were presented by members of the network, and the final results including detailed country tables and qualitative analysis by region, based on more than 16,000 news stories, were published in a book entitled *Who Makes the News?* in December 2000.

Since the end of 2000, GMMP has been used in a myriad of ways by gender and communication groups worldwide. Immediately after its publication many of the monitoring groups launched the report at press conferences in their respective countries, aided by the information exchanged and experiences shared with other participants in the GMMP network. Since then, both the methodology and results of GMMP 2000

have been used in research, media education, advocacy and lobbying work worldwide. GMMP has provided a research instrument that has been easily applied in subsequent monitoring at both local and international level. In 2001, for example, RED-ADA, Bolivia's most important women's communication network, monitored the portrayal of women in advertising on TV, radio and in the press, using the methodology developed for GMMP 2000.

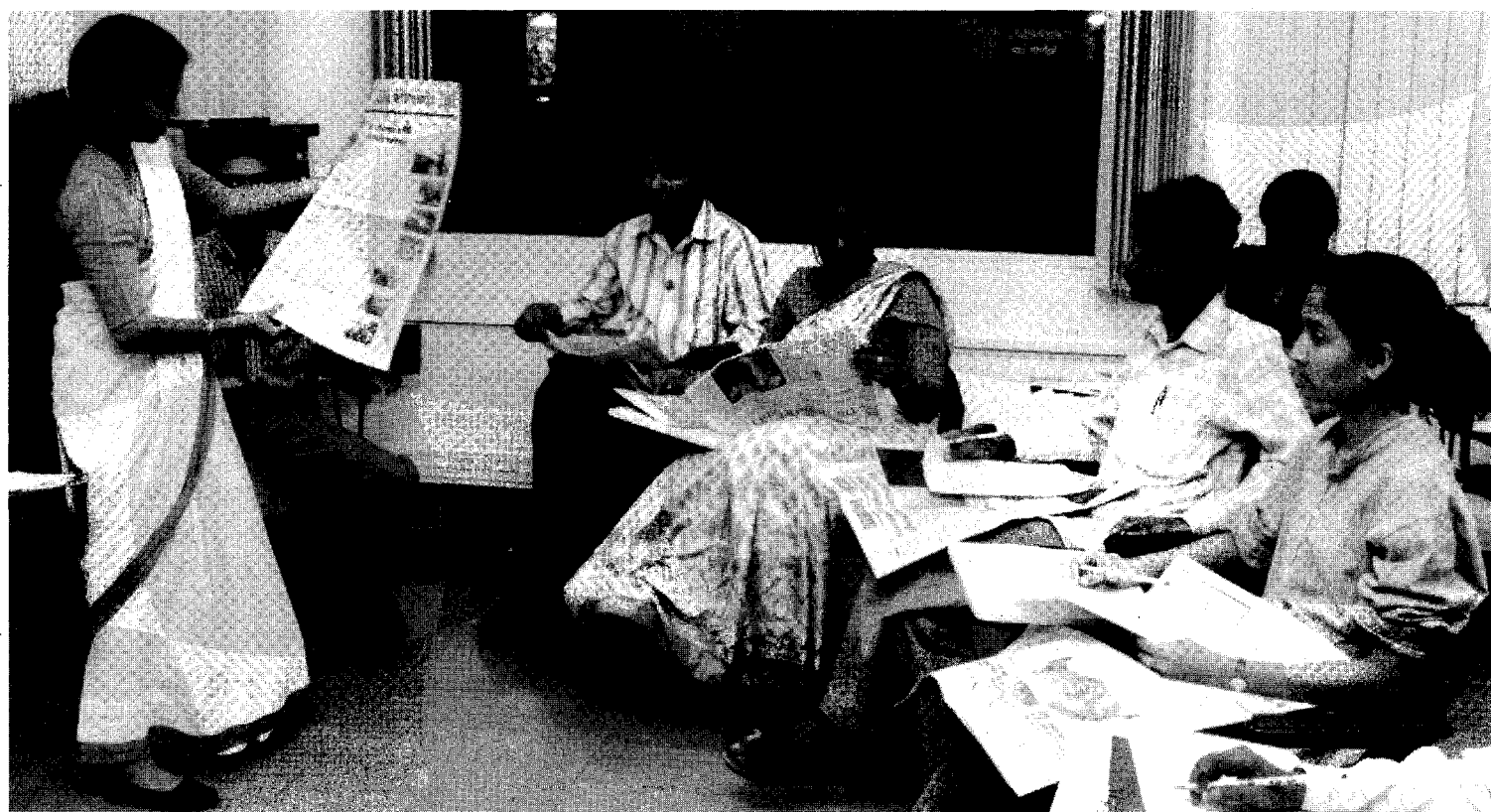
GMMP has also been used extensively for media education work, in particular in Malta where the *Gender Advisory Committee of the Broadcasting Authority* uses the results of GMMP in their research and training programmes. GMMP has also been an important tool in advocacy work, with most success

in Jamaica where, upon receiving a copy of the GMMP 2000 report on the International Women's day on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2001, the Assistant Executive Director of the Broadcasting Commission highlighted the usefulness of the report to communication policy development, saying it had "extremely important information to the Commission's work, particularly in the formulation and implementation of content standards for gender portrayals in the Jamaican mass media."

#### **GMMP: A Network Analysis**

GMMP has been described as "one of the most extraordinary collective enterprises yet organised within the global women's movement". Whilst the successes of GMMP have been many, perhaps its most important

*Study Group in India*



attribute is the solidarity and collective effort it generated through its network. In many ways, the emergence and development of the GMMP network mirrors that of the wider international women's movement. Since its resurgence during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the international women's movement has been built through networking. Diverse and decentralised, it has been held together through a common cause. Accordingly, the movement has multiplied on the basis of autonomous, non-hierarchical, horizontally interrelated organisational arrangements which has largely accounted for their dynamic performance. Paradoxically though, networking was not one of the key objectives of the first GMMP in 1995. Rather, the groups involved

in the project found themselves networking due to the methodological requirements of the project. It was only when planning for the second GMMP began that promoting international networking around issues of women's representation in the media became an intentional part of the project. This new emphasis on networking coincided with the explosion in information and communication technologies (ICTs) which multiplied and enormously accelerated the ability of groups taking part in GMMP 2000 to communicate, access information, develop and share knowledge. Whilst some of the groups in the network in 1995 had access to the Internet, many did not. By 2000, all of the monitoring groups had access to e-mail which transformed their

ability to communicate with each other. That is not to say that the GMMP 2000 network was simply an outgrowth of the new ICTs, but undoubtedly the second GMMP network was considerably enhanced by ICTs because of the possibilities they offer. Whilst the first GMMP network emerged almost as a by-product of the project, the second network was more intentionally constructed in the context of a growing availability of technological tools for networking and the development of a theory on networking as a tool for social change.

At its simplest, the GMMP network was a group of people and organisations keeping in touch with each other and circulating ideas, information, tools, advice,

## GMMP 2000: Highlights of Results

- Women made up only 18% of subjects in the world's news media.
- Women accounted for 41% of journalists in the world's news media.
- More women report on 'soft' news subjects such as the environment (47%), health (46%), as compared to 'hard' news such as international crises (19%), war (25%) and politics (26%).
- Although women were never the majority featured in any news topic, women were more likely to be news subjects in 'soft' stories about the arts, entertainment and celebrity news, in stories on education and health. They were least likely to be featured in stories about labour and politics - such news topics were, of course, dominated by men.
- Women in the news were much more likely to be identified by their family status - as the wife or daughter of a male figure.
- The only occupation where women in the news outnumbered men was that of homemaker or parent - 81%.
- Women who made the news were more than twice as likely than men to be portrayed as victims - victims of crime, accidents or sexual violence.





*From left to right: GMMP groups in the U.S.A., in Croatia and Chad*

recommendations and suggestions, plus – not less importantly – cordial warmth, encouragement and solidarity, as one of the most important functions of a network is simply to remind its members that they are not alone in the world. The GMMP network was woven by the individuals and groups who belonged to it. Even at the second GMMP in 2000, when networking was a stated objective of the project, there was no preconceived plan, or preceding mindset, rather the participants built their network as they related to each other. This flexibility and ongoing process of construction was facilitated by the decentralised nature of the network. Whilst both the 1995 and 2000 projects were co-ordinated at international level by one organisation, the GMMP planning and preparatory process was one of consultation with national co-ordinators, ensuring that decision-making power was as decentralised as possible. Similarly, though it was WACC that distributed much of the core information relating to the project such as the monitoring materials, this information was developed through dialogue with the participants in the network. In fact, much of the exchange of information in the network did not concern the 'official' information of coding and monitoring but rather came in the form of suggestions and recom-

mendations for best practice, with network participants sharing their experiences on how they had managed issues and processes related to the project. This interconnection and multi-directional information flow ensured that all the voices in the network were heard and that everyone had the opportunity to participate in the development of the project.

The participatory nature of the GMMP network was part of the democratising role it played and to this extent it empowered both individuals and organisations. Many of those involved in GMMP had not conducted research before, and it was wonderful for them to discover that even statistical research projects could be democratised and therefore be an empowering process. Many of the network participants also reported that taking part in GMMP was a process of conscientisation which they experienced as empowering. As the French monitoring group in 2000 explained, GMMP "changed the way we 'read' the media... and it will help us to show other journalists how and why things need to change". Perhaps most importantly, GMMP was also a successful actualisation of the links between research, informed citizenship and action. As Gloria Bonder, Co-ordinator of the monitoring effort in Latin America

in 1995 observed, "The results (of GMMP) were not surprising but the insight was that monitoring is a wonderful technique and it's easy enough that we can all do it... and monitoring is a project on the political side, because it's not just the collecting of data – it's the process of involving the audience in the process of acting to change women's images in the media. We have discussed and complained in the past, but this systematic methodology provides proof of the problem and involves people in education and citizens' rights". This sense of collective empowerment is also indicative of the way in which the GMMP network served as a multiplier. The network enabled small, isolated, scattered forces to combine into a much greater power which could 'think global, but act local'.

### **GMMP: Lessons Learned**

As the GMMP experience illustrates, networking is more than just the sum of the efforts of different groups or people, rather it is a process with its own internal dynamics. Whilst GMMP is in many ways an example of a successful networking project, it was not without its difficulties or limitations. Ten years after the project was first conceived, and in response to calls from organisations worldwide, the WACC Women's



*Examining radio broadcasts in Cuba*



Programme has decided to co-ordinate a third GMMP, to be held in 2005. As preparations for GMMP 2005 get underway, one of WACC's key concerns has been to learn the lessons from the past two projects to ensure that the third GMMP can build upon the successes of the past, but also to avoid some of the limitations of the 1995 and 2000 projects. The core of this process is the network upon which the past two projects were built. For GMMP 2005, WACC is committed to moving from a network which developed in a rather ad hoc way in response to the needs of the project, to a much more deliberate approach which assumes networking as a new organisational paradigm. The GMMP 2005 network is envisaged as bringing together diverse groups in a network of networks under the common banner of a shared goal.

To this end, WACC began the preparatory process for GMMP 2005 by contacting past network participants requesting their feedback on their GMMP experience. Armed with this information, WACC then organised a consultation meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, in May 2004, with a group of men and women from different regions of the world, all of whom participated in GMMP,

and have been active in using GMMP in their work on gender and media, to look at ways of moving the project forward, with a particular focus on developing a strategy for network building and consolidation.

The ideas and plans which emerged from the consultation meeting will make for a very different GMMP network from either of the first two. The 2005 network will be made up of smaller regional, sub-regional and national co-ordination networks to ensure a more horizontal, participatory information flow. In the past, whilst opportunities existed for all groups in the GMMP network to participate in the development of the project, it tended to be the

**If you would like to take part in GMMP 2005 contact the Co-ordinator of the WACC Women's Programme by Email: [at@wacc.org.uk](mailto:at@wacc.org.uk)**

more well-established, dynamic organisations which responded to this opportunity. The greater decentralisation that a network of networks brings will facilitate the circulation of information thus ensuring it is enriched by a greater number of voices making the processes of consultation and decision-making genuinely more collective.

Similarly, the capacity of the network participants to carry out follow-up work to the past GMMPs was in many cases clearly limited by resources and experience. In contrast, a key element of the

networking strategy for the 2005 project is to facilitate the network participants' national and regional lobbying and advocacy efforts using the results of GMMP. In the run up to the publication of the 2005 results, regional and national co-ordinators, in conjunction with the GMMP network participants in their area, will develop an advocacy strategy and lobbying materials including national and regional reports and executive summaries. These reports will be launched nationally and regionally following a co-ordinated international launch of the global report. The GMMP 2005 network will also take advantage of recent advances in ICTs to strengthen channels of communication. Not only will network participants be able to communicate by e-mail as in the past, they will also be able to contribute to discussion list servers and a central interactive GMMP website which will provide a common space where each network participant is able to preserve his/her own autonomy at the same time as bringing together a critical mass of information.

With the networking strategy which is being developed in consultation with past GMMP network participants, GMMP 2005 is looking to be an increasingly ambitious project which aims not only to provide a tool to contribute to changing the portrayal of gender by the mainstream media throughout the world, but, more importantly to build a network which will continue in this endeavour long after the results of GMMP are published.

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Anton-Kurze-Allee 2, D-52064 Aachen

P.O. Box 10 21 04, D-52021 Aachen

Tel. \*\*49-(0)241-70 13 12-0

Fax \*\*49-(0)241-70 13 12-33

E-mail [cameco@cameco.org](mailto:cameco@cameco.org)

<http://www.cameco.org>

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