



**GENDER AND MEDIA DIVERSITY JOURNAL**



**When finding strength is**

By Poni Mankishi, South Africa  
 In memory of my son Mando (1988-09-07 to 2006-01-12)

I liked him a lot. He had seemed like a nice man. Unlike other boys who refused to be dated with the father-guard girls, I was happy when he asked me to dance with him. We were both members of the youth club and danced ballroom and Latin American dance together.

The story of our meeting would have made a great tale for our children or even our grandchildren some day, if they had not gone the way they did. Our meeting and shortening partnership developed into a friendship, then a romantic relationship, and when he proposed marriage, I accepted.

That is when everything changed. From the most non-discriminatory and charming young man whom I believed truly loved me, to an aggressive, arrogant and somewhat disturbed man. From the young man who had wanted nothing but happiness for me, to this man whose purpose became to bring misery and independence to my life.

Little things made him angry. Like his belief that I hated his family, because I did not visit his family as frequently as my own. Since we were not working, my mother was taking care of our son. I frequently visited them, and sent food and money. My monthly visits were a problem for my husband. He did not see how they related to our son's stay at my mother's.

It happened on a Friday. He accused me of hating his family, but this time he kicked the dog. I was preparing for bed and was wearing my nightie. As he made these accusations, he hit me with everything that was within his reach and right — the poker from the stove, fists, kicks and even a gunblade.

He kicked me all over. Avoid the kicks and fists, I screamed and pleaded for help. I was hoping that someone would hear my cries and come to my aid. The neighbours heard my screaming and tried knocking against the locked door.

My crying and the beating against the door did not stop him. I could not cry any more, but the beating continued. I could hear people talking and screaming: "Oh, maybe she died".

I felt like my life was going to end. There was



Poni Lydia Mankishi



**MEDIA, ACTIVISM & CHANGE**

### **Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC)**

The Gender and Media Diversity Journal is an output of the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC). The GMDC is a physical and virtual resource centre based in Southern Africa, with linkages in Africa and across the globe. The centre envisages media that are diverse, representative, responsive, and professional, and a citizenry, women and men, who are empowered to engage critically with their media. It facilitates the collection, connection and dissemination of information and resources relating to gender, media and diversity. The centre also collaborates on research, education and training.



The GMDC is a consortium of media NGOs and tertiary institutions. Working with an advisory group, Gender Links and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network manage the centre. The advisory group includes:

- African Fathers, Pan African (Trevor Davies)
- African Women and Child Feature Service, East Africa (Rosemary Okello)
- Highway Africa, Pan African (Chris Kabwato)
- Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ), Pan African (Shehnaaz Bulbulia)
- Inter Press Service, Pan African (Paula Fray)
- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), SADC (Jennifer Mufune)
- Media Monitoring Project (MMP), South Africa (William Bird)
- Norwegian Council for Africa, Norway (Guro Almas)
- NSJ, SADC (Donna Mpengula Tomas),
- Polytechnic of Namibia, Namibia (Emily Brown)
- Rhodes University, South Africa (Jude Mathurine)
- SAFAIDS, SADC (Tariro Chikumbirike)
- Sangonet, South Africa (TBC)
- Sol Plaatjie Institute for Media Leadership, SADC (Francis Mdlongwa)
- Southern African Editors Forum, SADC (Rob Jamieson)
- University of Liverpool, United Kingdom (Professor Karen Ross)
- University of Stellenbosch, South Africa (Professor Lizette Rabe)
- Zambia Institute of Mass Communication, Zambia (Daniel Nkalamo)
- Independent representatives:
  - India, Ammu Joseph
  - Malawi, David Kamkwamba
  - Malawi, Henry Malunda
  - Sweden, Maria Edstrom
  - Sweden, Maria Jacobson
  - United Kingdom, Margaret Gallagher
  - United States, Gifti Nadi
  - Zambia, Hicks Sikazwe
  - Zambia, Rose Nyondo

The objectives of the GMDC are:

- Promote more analytical, responsive and contextual journalism.
- Develop and share a body of knowledge on gender and media diversity.
- Publicise the work of media scholars, students and practitioners.
- Provide resources that makes the links between media theory and practice.
- Create a space for participatory discussion and debate on gender and media diversity.
- Develop global and local partnerships with strategic organisations.
- Become a centre of excellence on new approaches and fresh thinking.

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## EDITORIAL

**Editorial**

By Deborah Walter

During the course of compiling contributions for this fourth issue of the Gender and Media Diversity Journal, many questions and contradictions arose about the role of media, as well as how activists are using media to forward their own agendas. Coincidentally, just at the time of writing this editorial, the South African television programme, *In the Public Interest*, hosted a debate on journalism and objectivity. During the 30-minute programme Amina Frense of SANEF, Aubrey Matshiqi of the Centre for policy Studies, and journalist Lesley Cowley debated the topic of objectivity in journalism. While no one denied that objectivity is something to be strived for, the panellists conceded that everyone comes from a certain historical, ideological background, and that bias comes in many forms – including lack of gender and racial balance in media representation. Thus, “objectivity and bias is something constantly debated as a way of striving towards it.”

This edition of the Gender and Media Diversity Journal, focusing on media, activism and change, aims to do just that, to create dialogue and debate about the interaction between media, activism, and change. It comes when South Africa is coping with a looming energy crisis, food prices are rising, local media celebrity Redi Direko has been active as part of a campaign to end gender violence in taxi ranks. It is

perhaps most fitting then that media be examining their role as activists, and that activists be examining how they are improving their own use of media. Though this edition of the journal focuses on media, activism, and change around the issues of gender, HIV/AIDS, governance and child and youth media, media also engage with such diverse issues as environmental reporting, post-conflict reconciliation, and a wide range of health issues, such as malaria, tuberculosis, and measles.

Zarina Geloo, owner and editor of *Zambian Weekly Guardian*, personifies the struggle between media and activism. Her own self-conflict concerning her role as a human rights activist and a journalist does not prevent her from active engagement in these issues, yet she fully recognises that this role, and how others perceive it, is a difficult balance when it comes to bias. For others, the role of media is more straightforward. Kitty Warnock suggests that communication and media are at the heart of sustainable development, and calls for more support and understanding to further strengthen media as part of the development process.

Perhaps no other community of activists has been as engaged with the media as the gender activists. Colleen Lowe Morna shares the South Africa-based Gender Links experience of promoting gender “in and through the media.” This experience is further detailed by Loveness Jambaya who shares how media strategies have been consistently refined in the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign and Marriete Van Dijk explains how “I” Stories bring out the personal perspectives of survivors of gender violence.

There are many different kinds of biases, and those involved with media for development may argue that their role is to in fact fill in the gaps, adding the missing voices that media do not cover. Saeanna Chingamuka of Zimbabwe shows that marginalised communities, such as rural women, can be empowered when their voices are heard.

Media and HIV/AIDS activists have also seen

increasing interaction, and many media have shown commitment to bringing the issue out into the open. Susan Smuts of *The Sunday Times* in South Africa, shares her experience of managing a campaign in which people affected by HIV and AIDS have the opportunity to tell their diverse stories in a weekly column. Smuts concludes, "I don't know whether this is activism or good journalism. Maybe it's a bit of both."

Again the question of media responsibility arises when Mia Malan discusses what good HIV terminology is, against readers/ listeners/ and journalists ideas about what language can be easily understood. Providing an example from the United Kingdom, Lucy Stackpool-Moore discusses how African communities in the UK can confront stigma through media. A collection of case studies provides example of the diversity of initiatives that aim to use media to promote awareness and reduce stigma related to HIV/AIDS.

When it comes to media, children and youth are often forgotten, yet when given a chance are leading advocates on children's rights and health. Mimi Brazeau explains how Plan has piloted radio by and for young people in West Africa, accomplishing what adult producers never imagined possible. Sikhonzile Ndlovu explains how the first step to media engagement is media literacy, and Daniel Walter explores how participatory media with young people in countries like Mozambique are creating new opportunities for young voices.

Many countries in the region, such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Angola are heading into elections at the time of this writing. In his article, Simiyu Barasa highlights some issues with media coverage in Kenya during the violence that followed the December 2007

elections. On a more positive note, Sibongile Mpofu discussed how media have engaged with the Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU) in Zimbabwe.

Looking ahead to the future, of media and new technologies, Glory Mushingwe questions whether new and emerging social media will change or replace traditional media. The case of YAHANet by Claudia Mitchell, Bronwen Low and Michael Hoechsmann, McGill University, shows how new technologies can be useful to increasing access to information, while Firoze Manji points out that technologies are just tools, that people remain at the centre of any development initiative.

We hope that this edition of the journal will inspire discussion on media and activism, and create more dialogue on both media's role in social change, as well as how activists can make better strategic use of media. This edition contains many perspectives and examples of initiatives, yet many more exist and are continuously emerging.

The recent launch of the Gender and Media Diversity Centre further provides opportunities for media and activists (and those who may consider themselves both) to engage in debate and dialogue, share ideas, and create partnerships. We hope that the dialogue that begins here will continue in that space, and encourage all those involved in media diversity to engage with each other through this and other forums.

We invite comment and feedback on this issue, as well as contributors for future issues. For information about upcoming themes and contributors guidelines, please contact the editor on: [editor@genderlinks.org.za](mailto:editor@genderlinks.org.za).

Happy reading

## NEWS BRIEFS

### **Women Make the News:**

This year, UNESCO held its 8<sup>th</sup> annual *Women Make the News* global action event under the theme "Women's Untold Stories." The event encourages media organisations producing daily news to give editorial responsibility to women journalists and editors on 8<sup>th</sup> March, International Women's Day, as a way to promote gender equality in the media. Organisers say that women in journalism continue to face harsh realities in terms of job security and safety, workplace discrimination, access to facilities, and lingering stereotypes. Women journalists encounter significant obstacles to full participation, especially when it comes to opportunities for management positions. UNESCO's *Women Make the News* campaign has two goals: to promote gender equality in the newsroom, and to highlight the need to promote women journalists throughout the world to decision-making positions.

In addition to encouraging newsrooms to give editorial responsibility to women journalists and editors, UNESCO also invites print and broadcast media to share stories, articles, features and programmes that support the 2008 theme, "Women's Untold Stories." Participants are asked to sign up on the UNESCO website and submit stories that champion women's achievements and contributions to their communities from their own perspectives. The stories collected from participants will be published as a 'best practices' collection, which campaign organisers hope will inspire others and raise the visibility of the multiple roles women play in the news arena: as newsmakers, correspondents and key sources of information.

Source: [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpURL\\_ID=18295&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpURL_ID=18295&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

### **Zambian media push for reform**

13 Zambian media bodies have banded together to spearhead a campaign for media law reforms in the country. One of their main campaign points is

the proposed amendments to the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill. The bodies urge government to publicise the proposed amendments, and encourage Members of Parliament to reject the bill if it is not publicised by the time it is tabled in government.

The media bodies also demanded that public and private officials put an immediate stop to alleged harassment of journalists and threats to media houses. They are appealing to parliamentarians to support an open FOI Act, and to deal with other pieces of legislation that impact on media freedom, whether that means repealing them, amending them, or enacting new legislation.

The FOI Act was withdrawn from parliament in 2002 for further consultation, and was only reintroduced this year when President Levy Mwanawasa officially opened parliament. The organisations involved in the campaign include PAZA, Press Freedom Committee of the Post, the Zambia chapter of both the Commonwealth Press Union and the Southern Africa Editors Forum, the Media Trust Fund and Media Council of Zambia.

Others are the local chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa, the Zambia Media Women's Association, Zambia Union of Journalists, PANOS Institute of Southern Africa, Zambia Community Media Forum, Society for Senior Journalists and Catholic Media Association. MISA-Zambia chairperson Henry Kabwe urged the media to sensitise the public about the FOI Act and what exactly it is about, as many people have been suspicious of the Act, saying it would only benefit the media, and not private citizens.

Source: <http://www.journalism.co.za/news/new-push-for-reform-in-ambia.html>

### **SAfAIDS launches DVD and guidebook**

The Southern African HIV/AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS) launched their new DVD, *Spreading*

*the Word*, together with Red Herring Productions in Harare, Zimbabwe, to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of V-Day

V-Day was started on 14 February 1998 by playwright Eve Ensler, author of *The Vagina Monologues*, a play that deals with women's sexuality and gender-based violence. The play has proved life-changing for her and many other women across the world. The DVD follows three women who try to bring the concept behind Ensler's award-winning play to Africa. The DVD features actors, artists and musicians from Mozambique and Botswana as they tackle issues they were brought up to believe were taboo.

The women develop plays that illustrate how their lives have been affected by gender-based violence and the experiences they've had in their sexual relationships. Through introspection and self-reflection, the women begin to reclaim their inner strength and the right to have their voices heard. They show that the problem is regional, that although the women are from different countries the issues they face when it comes to gender-based violence are essentially the same.

SAfAIDS Executive Director Lois Chingandu said at the launch that gender-based violence and HIV are dual epidemics in the region and she called on civil society to work to find ways to effect lasting change. She stressed the importance of popular media initiatives like theatre and video as crucial to getting the messages across.

The DVD and guidebook are designed for use by individuals, rights groups and community organisations in their work against gender-based violence and HIV.

Source: SAfAIDS listserv,  
partnerszimbabwe@eforums.healthdev.org

### **New radio drama probes gender dynamics**

Kenyan airwaves will soon play host to an exciting new radio drama that not only provides great entertainment, but also raises awareness and highlights key issues around the rights of women. The drama, being produced by CMFD (Community Media for Development) Productions,

is part of a 3-year multimedia campaign by FEMNET and FAHAMU to popularise the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

The Protocol is a key document in the fight for gender equality, and for those countries who have signed, it becomes legally binding. It deals with issues such as marriage and divorce, property and inheritance, gender-based violence, political participation, and reproductive health and HIV. While the majority of African countries have signed the Protocol, and have therefore technically committed to carrying out its provisions at a governmental level, most people on the ground know very little about it. Popularising the Protocol is a crucial step in ensuring that people, especially women, know what rights they have and what legal frameworks are available to them, giving them the ability to hold governments accountable to their commitments.



Josephine Oduor and Maureen Akinyi Obara as Mama Bahati and her daughter Raha in *Crossroads*  
Credit: Roselynn Musa

The new radio drama, titled *Crossroads*, aims to do just that. Through a unique and suspenseful storyline that spans 6 episodes, the drama encourages listeners to look at gender issues from a different perspective, literally. The drama's main storyline sees two people at opposite ends of the spectrum – a market woman with an abusive husband and a corrupt and sexist police chief – switch bodies. The story follows the two characters as they experience life in the other's body, raising questions

about a woman's place in society through the situations they face.

Simiyu Barasa, one of the team of scriptwriters who worked on the project, says, "People listening to the drama will learn that women's rights are not just a 'foreign' concept being blabbered about by women uprooted from their culture, but a human concern that would make society progress better if addressed." The drama will air on Kenyan radio stations later this year.

*Source: [www.cmfd.org](http://www.cmfd.org)*

### **Newly Released digital stories**

Sonke Gender Justice has recently released new digital stories that focus on gender, AIDS and migration in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The stories are part of a digital story project launched in 2007, in collaboration with the Centre for Digital Storytelling, to chronicle the lives of men and women affected by violence, gender issues and HIV/AIDS. Sonke Gender Justice started the project in an attempt to counter the abundance of negatively-stereotyped images of men. By creating short digital stories about their lives and experiences, particularly with regards to violence, the organisation hopes to provide an opportunity for men and women to share more honest and accurate accounts of their lives, and build a more balanced representation of men.

The stories have been used across the country by Men as Partners (MAP) activists in a diverse range of spaces from prisons to churches to inspire men to take an active role in promoting gender justice and ending gender inequalities that slow the response to HIV/AIDS. The Sonke Gender Justice project, started in February 2006, tries to address the social aspects of the HIV epidemic, with a particular focus on gender issues. To achieve this, the Sonke Gender Justice project works to build government, civil society and citizen capacity to achieve gender equality, prevent gender-based violence and reduce the spread of HIV and the impact of AIDS.

For the digital stories project, the organisation also

developed a facilitator's guide to assist individuals and community groups who want to use the stories to promote community action. The stories are available for download on the Sonke Gender Justice website; the facilitator's guide and DVD of the complete stories are also available for groups involved in gender and HIV/AIDS activism.

*Source: [www.genderjustice.org.za](http://www.genderjustice.org.za)*

### **Petition to end gender violence in Kenya**

A Rwandan men's organisation has initiated a global petition to put a stop to gender-based violence in Kenya. Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) founder, Fidel Rutayisire, is currently organising a pledge drive for men across the globe to speak out against the violence against women in girls that has characterised the post-election conflict in Kenya. Reports show that after the violence erupted in December 2007, the number of rape cases presenting a local hospitals and clinics increased alarmingly. Women and girls often bear the brunt of the violence in conflict situations, with rape, assault, femicide and infanticide increasing as conflicts escalate.

Signatures from the RWAMREC petition will be sent to Kenyan Ministers, Parliamentarians, other authorities, and civil society organisations. Their goal is to collect 500 signatures by 1 April. Men's Resources International, an organisation dedicated to promoting healthy, compassionate and responsible models of masculinity, and encouraging men to work with and support women around the world, is hosting the petition. To sign the petition, visit [www.mensresourcesinternational.org](http://www.mensresourcesinternational.org).

*Source: [www.mensresourcesinternational.org](http://www.mensresourcesinternational.org)*

### **Film bill sparks censorship debate**

The Film and Publications Amendment Bill has come under fire from media groups recently, who say certain sections of the bill may be unconstitutional. The Amendment bill aims to regulate, among others, the publication, broadcasting and handling of materials that contain traces of child pornography. Media groups say the bill essentially allows for pre-publication censorship, which they argue is unconstitutional.



Previously, the bill required newspapers to present any material containing sexual content and propaganda for war or incitement of violence for examination by the Films and Publications Board prior to publication. Since the media groups' submission to parliament, that section of the bill has been changed to exclude all newspapers belonging to the South African Newspaper Association (SANA).

However, it is not just media houses who are concerned about the implications of pre-publication censorship. The National Council of Provinces' select committee on social services has also commissioned legal opinion on other aspects of the bill they believe could impose a restraint on freedom of expression. Senior state law advisor Mongameli Kweta insists that in this case, freedom of expression was limited to protect children from exposure to child pornography and other forms of sexual exploitation – that freedom of expression is not being abolished, simply regulated in the best interests of children.

Source: <http://www.journalism.co.za/news/state-lawyer-backs-film-bill.html>

### Media growth looking up

The latest South African All Media and Products Survey (Amps), which looks at the state of the media on an annual basis, shows there was good growth last year across all media, especially for TV audiences and the internet. DSTv, the region's pay-TV operator, increased its viewership by 3%, showing an increase in population penetration from 7.7% in 2006 to 10.7% last year.

Despite warnings of an expected slowdown, especially for print-based media houses, both magazines and newspapers showed rises in readership of at least 2%. According to Adriaan de Buck, director of MediaCompete, *Business Day* still retains the wealthiest readership, with an average household monthly income of R20 700.

Overall internet usage has shown an increase from 6% in 2006 to 6.9% last year.

Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200803180378.html>

### Exciting new gender and media centre launched!



The Gender and Media Diversity Centre was launched at the Gender Links offices in Johannesburg on the 13 March 2008. Attendees from across Southern Africa were present and joined in the celebrations. Clr Nandi Mayathula Koza (Member of the Mayoral Committee for Community Development, Johannesburg Metro) welcomed all guests to the City of Joburg on behalf of Joburg City Mayor Amos Masondo. Mayathula Khoza spoke of the importance of having a regional knowledge centre on gender, media and diversity to assist in the quest for gender equality. Joe Thloloe (South African Press Ombudsman) and Portia Kobue (Executive Producer, Morning Live, SABC) encouraged citizens to take the media to task for gender insensitive coverage. Kobue appealed to journalists to mainstream gender in all their stories.

Gender Links and the Open Society Foundation South Africa (OSF-SA) launched two publications during the launch. The OSF-SA launched *Meeting their mandates: A critical analysis of South African Media Statutory Bodies*. The primary purpose of the research was to assess if four South African public institutions are meeting their 'public mandates'. Gender Links launched the *Gender and Tabloids in Southern Africa*. The study focused on gender in tabloids in Mauritius, South Africa and Tanzania.

Guests ended the evening with a braai and dance to celebrate the launch of the GMDC. Much fun was had by all.

*The GMDC is a physical and virtual resource centre based in Southern Africa, with linkages in Africa and across*

*the globe. The centre envisages media that are diverse, representative, responsive, and professional, and a citizenry, women and men, who are empowered to engage critically with their media. It facilitates the collection, connection and dissemination of information and resources relating to gender, media and diversity. The centre also collaborates on research, education and training. For more information on the GMDC contact [knowledge@genderlinks.org.za](mailto:knowledge@genderlinks.org.za).*

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Narrative Journalism Conference**

Acclaimed South African writer Zakes Mda and Pulitzer Prize winning journalists are set to share their skills and inspire local journalists at the 2008 Narrative Journalism Conference in May. Organiser *frayintermedia* (formerly Paula Frey and Associates) says the conference is a unique opportunity for editors and both established and up-and-coming journalists to take part in debates and workshops, while learning new skills in narrative journalism from international experts. According to *frayintermedia*, this year's conference is aimed at sharpening journalists' and editors' storytelling techniques. In addition to the two day conference, a one day workshop run by Jacqui Banaszynski and Tom French and aimed at senior journalists will also be offered. Only those who have been at the conference may attend. The conference and workshop will be held 21-23 May at Hackle Brooke Estate in Johannesburg. For more information contact Ruth Molopyane or Debby Kramer at: 011 341 0767 or at [rmolopyane@frayintermedia.com](mailto:rmolopyane@frayintermedia.com).

*Source: <http://www.journalism.co.za/opportunities/narrative-journalism-conference.html>*

#### **The Power of Movements: AWID International Forum**

The Association for Women's Rights in Development will be holding its 11<sup>th</sup> annual International Forum on Women's Rights and Development this November in Cape Town, South Africa. This year's Forum focuses on the theme, "The Power of Movements," and like previous Forums, aims to be both a conference and a call to action. Open to anyone who works or has an

interest in women's rights, international development and social justice, and particularly those from the global South and traditionally marginalised groups, the Forum is a place for women's rights leaders and activists from around the world to meet, network and learn from each other. Delegates engage in four days of plenary talks, interactive sessions, workshops, debates and creative sessions that aim to spark powerful thinking on gender equality and women's rights. The Forum also includes informal caucuses, events, cultural activities and social and political events that assist global and regional networking and partnership-building. This year's conference will be held from 14-17 November 2008. For more information about the forum and how to register, visit [www.avid.org/forum08](http://www.avid.org/forum08).

*Source: [http://www.womensnet.org.za/calendar.shtml?AA\\_SL\\_Session=74b3540fcd21d2d2b00948dec25723b3&x=11816](http://www.womensnet.org.za/calendar.shtml?AA_SL_Session=74b3540fcd21d2d2b00948dec25723b3&x=11816)*

#### **Global conference on peace and communication**

The World Association of Christian Communication (WACC) will hold its fourth global Congress on communication in Cape Town, South Africa, from October 6 to 10, focusing on the theme "Communication is Peace: Building viable communities." The deadline to apply is June 30. The full registration fee is 600 CAD (Approximately US \$586). However, those living and working in the 'Global South' are given an automatic subsidy of 200 CAD (Approximately US \$195), reducing their registration fee to 400 CAD (Approximately US \$391).

*Source: <http://www.ijnet.org/Director.aspx?P=Article&ID=307440&LID=1>*