

LET'S END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SECURE GENDER JUSTICE (2022–2030)

#EndCyberGBV and promote #GenderJustMedia

Vision: A coalition of rights-based, ecumenical, and developmental partners acting to advance a media environment that is more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive of girls, women, and marginalized groups

WHY

In recent years, the need for urgent action to monitor and transform all forms of media to advance women's full and equal access, representation, and dignity for all has increased. The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women noted the spread of violence to social media and other mobile communication platforms, blogs, and messaging applications; and new research reveals unrelenting gender-based attacks against women journalists working in the digital space.

The media's role in perpetuating gender-based violence against women and girls has long been acknowledged in international instruments such as the Beijing Platform for Action. The Beijing Platform recommends, among other actions, awareness-raising on the important role of the media in informing and educating people about the causes and effects of violence against women and in stimulating public debate on the topic.

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) promotes communication rights and advances gender equality in and through the media. Partners at community, national and international levels apply gender-focussed news media monitoring to generate the evidence needed to support education, awareness, training, advocacy, and engagement with media professionals about media policy and practice. Gender-focussed media monitoring is necessary to build the evidence needed for awareness-building, advocacy, and policy development to advance gender equality and empower all women and girls.

In the 1990s, the World Council of Churches (WCC) popularized and amplified Thursdays in Black as a campaign against rape and violence. The Thursdays in Black movement has become a simple but powerful global ecumenical advocacy tool against sexual and gender-based violence, adopted by many churches and church agencies, national councils, inter-religious partners, and academic institutions. This type of leadership pushes for new frontiers of advocacy and global leadership of women and men together to bring lasting change.

Together, WACC and WCC are combining expertise and networks to help make our media landscape safe and just for women and girls – and for everyone.

73%

OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS SURVEYED SAY THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO ONLINE VIOLENCE¹



1 in 3
(736 MILLION)

WOMEN AND GIRLS WORLDWIDE HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO VIOLENCE IN THEIR LIFETIME²

58%

OF GIRLS HAVE EXPERIENCED ONLINE HARASSMENT³



¹ICEJ–UNESCO survey report, 2021 ²UN Women ³Plan International, 2020



World Council of Churches

HOW

1. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

KNOWLEDGE CO-CREATION | EDITORIAL & COMMUNICATION RESOURCES | TRAINING

WACC and WCC offer leadership to strengthen the capacity of ecumenical and secular communicators to integrate a critical gender and intersectional lens in their communication practice. We will:

- i. Guide coalition partners to develop directories of women willing to provide expert opinion to media on issues related to faith and intersecting issues.

Media practitioners often attribute underrepresentation of women as experts to lack of awareness about or access to women who have specialist or professional knowledge about the issues.

- ii. Develop, publicise, and implement gender training courses for journalists, including church media staff.

Webinars, virtual forums, regional and global forums to help increase the capacity of communication staff to report with a gender and intersectional lens.

- iii. Offer models of gender-focussed thematic editorial guidelines and support institutional communication desks / departments to establish and implement the guidelines.

This includes a comprehensive resource kit on gender-focussed editorial guidelines on different forms of gender-based violence.

- iv. Create a repository of resources, tools and support for women facing online abuse.

Cyber violence includes hacking, surveillance, harassment, malicious distribution, death threats, doxing, trolling, online stalking, smear campaigns, electronic sabotage, and impersonation.

An online resource portal will offer tools for girls and women to stem and address as many of these forms of cyberviolence, for instance, online safety tools and no-nonsense guides on social platforms' community guidelines specific to GBV.

Stories on gender-based violence (GBV) hardly make the major news of the day and when they do, women and girls are severely underrepresented as subjects and sources. Just 1% of the stories in the total sample were coded [for the 6th Global Media Monitoring Project] under the "gender and related" major topic. This major topic covers primarily news on various forms of gender violence against women and girls.

That girls and women are underrepresented in stories about sexual harassment, rape and sexual assault when such acts have reached epidemic proportions, signals a serious deficit in news media accountability to women.

WACC, 2021.
RESULTS FROM 100+ NATIONS

82%

OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS ACROSS FIVE REGIONS HAVE EXPERIENCED PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE, MAINLY VIA SOCIAL MEDIA, WHILE SERVING THEIR TERMS



UN Women

2. ECUMENICAL GENDER & MEDIA OBSERVATORY

PARTICIPATORY MEDIA MONITORING

Lack of awareness perpetuates the status quo of gender inequality and limits response. Media agencies, social media platforms, and journalists typically do not monitor their output from a gender lens perspective. Gender-focussed media monitoring generates the evidence needed to support education, awareness, training, advocacy, and constructive engagement with the media on policy and practice.

WACC and WCC will build a global **Ecumenical Gender & Media Observatory** that will publicize the evidence, co-create knowledge with coalition partners through participatory media monitoring, and apply the data to advance gender justice in and through the media. The Observatory will:

- i. Publicize the results of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) to build knowledge of the current status and patterns over time in the news media.
- ii. Strengthen alliances with diverse national networks and organisations and work together to regularise media monitoring.

WACC methodology and tools developed over more than 25 years will be adapted to gender-based violence content. Coalition partners will be trained and convened regularly for media monitoring along the GMMP's participatory model.

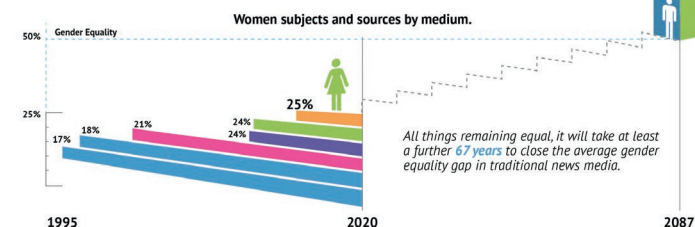
The Observatory will create and empower "Thursdays in Black" media watch groups to monitor content relevant to gender-based violence in secular, faith-based and social media.

- iii. Build critical digital media literacy to raise gender sensitivity and capacity to respond to harassment and abuse online through information and tools hosted on the Observatory's online portal.

- iv. Institute media awards to recognize good practice as well to call out media that outputs sexist content. The Observatory will adapt and use the GMMP gender & media scorecard to assess media output and make the results public.

"[The GMMP is] a strong, evidence-based wake-up call to create change in the media industry. Increasing the representation of women and other gender minorities in news coverage is vital; not only as subjects but as experts and professionals, as well as increasing women's leadership in newsrooms and boardrooms"

PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA, FORMER UN UNDERSECRETARY-GENERAL AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN WOMEN, GMMP REPORT FOREWORD.



3. EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY

TO ADVANCE MEDIA THAT ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

The right to gender equality is enshrined in supranational and national policies and legislation, as are the human rights to freedom from discrimination to safety and security and to freedom of expression for all persons, including women. The media's role is recognized in various policy instruments, including the Beijing Platform for Action, section J on "women and the media".

Advocacy for gender-sensitive media policies and journalistic practice are essential in order to build a media sector that is accountable to girls and women, who are half of the media audience.

i. WACC and WCC will lead the network in gender & media advocacy at global, regional and national levels. At the global level, we will lead advocacy at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on the role of media in achieving the CSW's priority themes.

ii. We will lead advocacy for the integration and implementation of gender provisions in editorial policies of media and partner organisations, and in policy guidelines of digital platforms.

iii. We will apply the evidence of the Ecumenical Gender & Media Observatory and the Media Awards to urge journalists to improve the gender quality of their output. The advocacy agenda will be to encourage gender balance in sources and the allocation of sufficient editorial resources to reporting on gender-based violence *with a gender lens*.

The media can play a crucial role by refusing to perpetuate stereotypes, such as those that portray women solely as victims or homemakers. We have seen how fast traditional gender stereotypes are reasserted when crisis strikes.

The near absence of coverage of gender-based atrocities committed against girls and women further supports the observation that such acts have been normalized in and through media coverage.

GMMF REPORT. WACC, 2021

PARTNER WITH US

WACC and WCC bring resources, the technical know-how and networks to this ambitious initiative for implementation by the global ecumenical movement. We seek funding support and in-kind partnerships for all components. Please contact Sara Speicher ss@waccglobal.org for information on how you can engage.

Eliminating discrimination against women requires a "whole of society" approach. States, the private sector, and civil society should work together to address discrimination, stereotyping and interpretations of culture, religion and tradition that subordinate and disempower women and are a root cause of sexual and gender-based violence as well as gendered censorship.

JOINT DECLARATION ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND GENDER JUSTICE. FOUR UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS, MAY 2022

