**GBV Prevention Network**

**This Issue’s Theme:**
**Using the Power of the Media for GBV Prevention**

Often, development workers are reluctant to interact with the media because they do not feel they have the know-how or skills for effective engagement. As a result, there is lost opportunity for raising public awareness, stimulating debate and pressuring leaders to take action to prevent and respond to GBV. The media is a powerful tool that can be harnessed to effectively prevent GBV. Read this issue and learn how to make the media your ally and even a champion for GBV prevention.

**To date the Network has registered members since the July 2007 Activate Your Intentions! renewal drive. We welcome all new members and thank all renewed members that have reaffirmed their belief in the Network’s objectives. Please see the newly updated list of active members and learn about their work at www.preventgbvafrica.org**

**Next Issues Theme:**
**Crossing Borders, Pushing Boundaries**

Our next issue will be on focusing on learning from innovative GBV prevention efforts of Friends of the Network – those outside the Horn, East and Southern Africa. If you are a Friend of the Network and would like to connect and share your experiences with members contact us at info@preventgbvafrica.org

**Member’s News**

Want to know what our colleagues in the region are doing? Which new programs and publications are just off the press? Which new energized sisters and brothers have joined the network? Are the publications you are reading? Are new programs and initiatives that would be most useful to your GBV prevention efforts. Across the board, (or could we do it!) that would be most useful to your GBV prevention efforts. Across the board, the Action and Advocacy Kits for 16 Days of Activism and the website came out on top. In response, this year we are going to revamp and re-launch the GBV Prevention Network website, making it as members requested: a one stop shop for GBV Prevention in the region. We are also going to expand our materials production to create multiple campaigns throughout the year – providing ideas and materials that members can use in your own communities to strengthen GBV prevention.

**New Media Watch Campaign**

**What happened? Do Better! We’re Not Washed!**

The Media Watch campaign of the GBV Prevention Network provides two types of postcards you can use to speak your mind to your local, national, or regional media houses.

Red Postcards when you want to raise your voice against insensitive and unethical coverage of women and GBV – and to hold them to account.

Green Postcards when you want to appreciate compliment and encourage timely, sensitive and ethical coverage on GBV. These green postcards give activists an opportunity to appreciate the positive (which sometimes we forget to do!) and build stronger relationships with the media – motivating and encouraging quality reporting.

The media campaign will be carried out simultaneously in all 15 member countries of the Network. We call on all member organizations to actively monitor the media in your area and either reward or call to account the media houses for their coverage on gender-based violence. If there are multiple GBV Prevention Network members in your area and the media houses receive many postcards in response to a piece – this will further strengthen our collective voice.

The post cards have space for you to add full contact details of your organizations and a contact person whom the media house may contact for more information. Each member organization will receive ten post cards of each type. If you’d like to receive more of these cards – just write to Jean at info@preventgbvafrica.org

We are excited about the potential of this Media Watch Campaign and are hopeful that it can contribute to increased quality reporting on GBV in the Horn, East and Southern Africa. This campaign will also strengthen our relationships with the media and help us create strong allies for our GBV prevention campaigns. We look forward to hearing about your Media Watch campaign – send us feedback and stories on the response or impact you’re having – and we’ll share them with other members. Write to us at info@preventgbvafrica.org

**Special thanks to Network member Equality Now and the SOAWR Campaign on the Women’s Protocol from whom we borrowed the idea of red and green cards!**

**STRENGTHENING THE GBV PREVENTION NETWORK TOGETHER!**

At the end of 2007 the GBV Prevention Network asked members what most drew you to the Network and what did we do...
The media is a source of entertainment, information and communication: it plays an important role in society that activists can tap into for the prevention of GBV. The root cause of GBV stems from women’s subordinate status in society and justifications of violence usually evolve from gender norms. We now know that effective GBV prevention strategies and interventions require creating and sustaining a public dialogue to change these deeply rooted societal norms and attitudes and activism.

One of the powerful channels we can use to change attitudes and practices is the media.

There are various categories of media. The so-called ‘old media’ uses technology that has been with us for some time, such as radio, television, and print e.g., newspapers, newsletters, and magazines. ‘Popular media’ are channels of communication that emerge from a community’s cultural context and traditions, for example, storytelling, painting and drama. ‘New media’ on the other hand utilizes more recently developed digital technology to transmit information, such as websites, e-mail, web logs (or blogs), mobile telephones, etc.

The media has a significant influence over society and can be used to shape the opinions and decisions of people in all spheres of society. Yet we must ask ourselves: are we using the media as creatively as we could? Are we really tapping into its transformative potential? Have we taken the time to learn about ‘New’ media or new ways to use ‘old’ or ‘popular’ media? Are we moving beyond providing basic information about types, consequences and cases to asking more critical questions and spark transformative debate?

Positive Prevention

We know that the media can and is often used to highlight horrific stories of violence, to tell the important stories of women who have experienced and survived incredible injustice. This type of reporting has been used for many years by activists – and certainly there is a role for this type of coverage. Yet at this point, could we also be using the media for positive prevention — to engage, convince and inspire communities to think about the benefits of non-violence, of homes where all people are safe, where there is justice, respect and equality? Could this type of reporting and coverage be a new, different and potentially powerful way for advocates to creatively use media but ultimately the transformative work of preventing violence against women?

Using New Media

Many activists argue that new media has tremendous potential to promote positive prevention – primarily because new media is interactive and democratic. Activists are increasingly choosing to use new media channels for awareness creation and other advocacy initiatives. This is because these channels transcend geographical boundaries and allow for active and simultaneous participation. New media are also able to engage people over a long period of time at a lower cost than if they were to use old media channels. For example WOUGNET’s 16 Days of Activism campaign last year sent SMS messages at the same time to several phone numbers in 13 countries across five continents each day for 16 days.

New media allows activists to connect with others despite distance or geographical borders bringing together many voices and strength for focused email campaigns or listserv-based petitions. Equally New frequently engages their members across countries and continents in online campaigns to push for the rights of particular women facing injustice in the world. Members sign petitions or write to concerned authorities as a result of information received through the internet.

Similarly, in remote and resource constrained areas, new media channels may be accessed through DVD and CD-ROMs. Videos, music, audio files and online websites are stored on CDs or DVDs which can be viewed where there is no television or radio signals or internet connection.

Selinah Mudunganu of Southern Africa Media and Gender Institute suggests that, “it is strategic to use new media for a number of reasons, it is faster, less expensive, has the potential to connect geographically distant people, and is more efficient.” While Gorretti Alturist of Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) adds that “new media channels are easily adaptable because the technology (computer) is near you, it is easy to learn, and can reach very many people, even those across borders at the same time.”

Gorretti further observes that “a number of women’s rights activists tend to shun away from the use of new media techniques, feeling that they are designed for the youth, however it is important to keep up with the fast changing environment and adapt to high costs of communication by using new media technology.”

Getting Strategic

The right message for the right medium

Different media channels can be and are used by activists in different situations. Is your organization flexible in adapting the medium for the message or do you usually stick to the same type of media? Newspaper articles with statistics and charts on GBV prevalence and effects may be used to reach out to technocrats and policy makers whereas radio programs and drama

Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)

Using new media to Campaign against Violence against Women within the Horn, East and Southern Africa

WOUGNET is an NGO initiated in May 2000 by several women’s organizations in Uganda to develop the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among women as tools to share information and address issues collectively. Increasingly, mobile phones are being used in advocacy campaigns. In 2007 WOUGNET spearheaded an SMS campaign for the 16 Days of Activism against violence against women using the GBV Prevention Network’s 2007 regional theme: “I commit to preventing violence against women! What about You? Speak out, reach out, stand out!”

The SMS campaign involved sending an SMS on each of the 16 Days of Activism that provided a platform for individuals and organizations to speak out, stand out, and commit to preventing violence against women.

A webpage was established to announce the campaign and emails were sent out to members and other stakeholders outside of Uganda for people interested in receiving the SMS to register their phone numbers with WOUGNET. All the text messages received were posted online so that even those not receiving the SMS could still get involved. By the end of the campaign, over 170 participants drawn from 13 countries (Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Sweden, The Netherlands, Uganda, UK, USA, Zimbabwe) had participated in the sharing and receiving SMS messages.

All the messages are accessible via http://www.wougnet.org/Alerts/speakoutgenderviolence.html. The SMS campaign was conducted in collaboration with Women’snet, South Africa, Oxfam and APC-Africa–Women with technical support from Hivos through use of the BulkSMS host provided by KPN in the Netherlands. For more information contact Dorothy Okello at dokello@wougnet.org
Getting Creative with Media!

No matter what media you select for your campaigns, take time to analyze which is most appropriate for your setting – and be willing to move outside your comfort zone. Try something new in how you frame the topic – or change the medium itself. Old ideas presented in a new way can spark a different level of engagement. Don’t forget: make it ‘newsworthy’ – something interesting, useful, timely, and unique.

This quarter, as you plan your campaigns, think about how you could use media (old, popular or new), discuss the idea of using a positive prevention approach – get creative, take some risks, learn a new media tool – and be a media watchdog. Join the Media Watch Campaign!

WORKING WITH JOURNALISTS?
A Checklist for Ethical Reporting on GBV

- Be Objective
  Separate the news from opinions.
- Do No Harm
  Consider the impact and consequences of the story, do nothing that will bring danger or harm to people in your story.
- Be Accurate
  Get your facts right.
- Maintain confidentiality
  Never expose the names or any other identifying information of ‘victims’ of violence.

- Maintain ‘Victim’s’ Dignity
  Refuse to publish photos that expose ‘victims’ in humiliating, degrading or insulting ways.
- Protect your Sources
  Do not name the names of those you interviewed or who gave you information if they are not willing.
- Never Sensationalize Violence
  Turning violence into ‘entertainment’ is unethical and against all journalistic principles.
- Never Blame the Victim
  Remember that no one is responsible for the actions of another person’s violence. Violence is a choice, responsibility lies with the perpetrator.

Media Advocacy against GBV

Violence against women is one of EWLA’s core areas of concern for which it frequently uses the electronic and print media in its advocacy campaigns.

Among their electronic media campaign is the use of drama on television. Tigist Zeleke, the head of the Networking and Advocacy Department says “Drama on television is one of the best ways to get the attention of most Ethiopians.” EWLA uses forum cinema programs (in which a drama is shown and discussions are held afterward) to show the extent of the problem of GBV in Ethiopia and its negative consequences on the society at large. At the end of the televised drama, a panel of experts explains the existing law and comments on what needs to be improved within the law.

On the impact of these televised dramas, Tigist reports that “the issues in a particular drama often become points of discussion for so long within the Ethiopian public, and we get overwhelming feedback from viewers.” In addition to televised drama, EWLA also sponsors talk shows on television which are always heated and generate lots of responses as people try to discuss the causes, justifications and effects of VAW.

EWLA also has two regular weekly programs on the radio, one of which is exclusively dedicated to domestic violence, they write a column in a weekly national paper and also publish a quarterly magazine and annual journal. To strengthen their relationship with the media, they invite the press to cover their events and to attend their workshops. EWLA learned that in order to have impact, extensive and sustained media coverage in different outlets is essential. For more information contact Tigist Zeleke at: ewla@ethionet.et

Men for Gender Equality Now (MEGEN)

New Masculinity Campaign in Kenya

MEGEN and Development through Media share their innovative use of television to transform masculinity. The Project Coordinator Kennedy Odhiambo Otina represented the face of ‘new’ masculinity on a panel discussion that was recorded with a studio audience and broadcast on Kenya Broadcasting Television (KBC) which has nationwide coverage. The program brought together faces of ‘new’ and ‘old’ masculinity. To represent traditional practices on the panel was the leader of the Luo community popularly known as “Njuri Njeke.”

The program was intended to encourage people to take proactive steps in eliminating GBV by illustrating an existing family’s shift from ‘old’ masculinity to ‘new masculinity.” Kennedy affirmed the value of his daughter and how he together with his family was preparing her to be a future leader, showing the value of the girl child. In the same program the representatives of ‘new’ masculinity challenged the socialization process that he grew up with and sensitized viewers on the role men can play to prevent GBV.

To air the show on KBC, Development through Media acquired free airtime through their strong relationship with the media house. In addition they were able to present a new and unique angle to gender-based violence prevention and women’s rights through the comparison of old and new masculinity. Among the immediate effects of the program is the increased public interest and appreciation of MEGEN’s work which they get through regular feedback.

For more information contact Kennedy Odhiambo Otina at: mentomen@kennet.or.ke

Using Popular Media to Raise Awareness on GBV in Malawi

WOLREC uses both popular as well as old media to raise awareness among communities in Salima and Mzimba. Topics focus on the consequences of GBV and how it impacts women’s rights. WOLREC’s community based educators perform drama, in different villages on human rights and GBV. After the drama communities discuss how GBV can be addressed in their own areas.

WOLREC then linked these popular media events to extensive radio coverage. Radio was selected because being in the rural areas where the districts are located; most people have access to radio rather than TV or print media. In addition, they did not have to pay for the airtime because they have built a solid relationship with the radio stations. The radio stations see WOLREC as a resource and as such provided opportunities for interviews, call-in programs and also included their ideas in the main news bulletins.

In the programs, the staff discussed the forms of violence and their effect; the kind of help survivors can get e.g. going to Victim Support Units at Police stations throughout the country and the fact that there is a law on Prevention of Domestic Violence that they can use.

As a result of the use of popular and old media, more people have approached WOLREC’s office for advice. It is also creating an uptake in services at the Mbuna the Police Victim Support Unit. For more information contact Maggie Banda at wolrec@yahoo.com
Gender based violence continues to occur in many countries of the world despite various measures taken to stop it. It remains a complex problem that requires interrogation from a number of entry points. These include examining policies and legislation to address GBV, the provision of adequate services to survivors and public awareness on the issue.

The media has the potential to play a lead role in changing perceptions of GBV that in turn can help galvanize a movement for change. The power of the media lays in its role; it is widely recognized as an agenda setter, educative, and informative. Media shapes attitudes and perceptions of people and can be an advocate for social change.

It is against this backdrop that the mass media has been recognized as an important strategy for delivering messages on GBV campaigns. Several organizations in the past involved mainstream and local media in their anti GBV campaigns and notable being the 16 Days of Activism against GBV that has received international media recognition with different media houses carrying special programs around this event. The Association of Media Women in Kenya usually compiles daily one page coverage during the 16 Days of Activism with one of the leading dailies in Kenya ‘The Daily Nation’ articles submitted in this section cover human interest stories, informative pieces and women’s stories. The media house co-sponsors this daily page due to their interest in the issue.

Although the media plays an important role, it also stands as a villain. The secrecy and silence surrounding GBV issues contributes to lack of information among the media and a general hesitancy to exposing important issues of gender-based violence. The media has been noted to be one among many influences that contribute to gender role acquisition that lead to gender based violence. Given that GBV is an issue of unequal power relations between men and women, this interplay is reflected within our media. The fact is that media in Kenya and around the world, is dominated by men who bring in the socially acquired patriarchal tendencies and biases into newsrooms. This is of course reflected in the stereotypical style by the on print or electronic - as to what makes news, which makes the news and how gender issues such as gender based violence are covered. Media have also exploited violence against women as a way to increase sales and ratings through sensational, biased stories and projection of women as sex objects.

As the issue of sexual violence gains more attention in our society, there is need to transform the mass media by putting an end to the exploitative and negative images of women that dominate television, newspapers, and magazines and perpetuate social acceptance of violence against women. Editors and journalists require to be sensitized as a means of eliminating stereotypical representations of women from the media. The media practitioners need first of all comprehensive sensitization on gender-based violence, which should be followed by increased coverage of prevention of GBV in the media. More interactive media engagement with the public should be employed. This call for all organizations working in the different areas covering GBV be it research institutions, service providers, women’s organizations and any stakeholder in this campaign to continuously engage the media in their activities. This engagement should be aimed at ensuring that the media players adequately if not thoroughly understand gender based violence, its health, social-economic, political impacts on society, and emphasis on the need for the media to play its role in the campaigns against GBV.

For more information contact Jane Wambui Thuo at: jthuo@amwik.org