

PREFACE

The global media landscape has evolved dramatically in the more than twenty years since the Fourth UN World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) was held, when media were recognized as critical for the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men.¹ Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action underlined several issues, among them, gender bias in media organisations, degrading and suggestive pornographic media images of women, and the unexploited potential of information technology for women's progress. At the time, less than one percent of the world's population was online, while presently, approximately 50 percent² have access to the Internet. Of these, three quarters are active on social media platforms³ that have emerged since the beginning of the millennium. Seven out of 10 people⁴ today own a cell phone capable of transmitting instant messages or connecting to the Internet. Online media content reproduces the exclusion and ghettoization of women – characteristic of traditional media forms – within the media product and in the comments and responses of new interactive audiences.⁵ While the number of women working in media and communications has increased more broadly, their presence in top management remains negligible. For instance, only six of the 100 largest international media corporations in the world had female CEOs in 2017.⁶

Since the dimensions of the women and media experience were reflected in the Beijing Platform, transformations, and corresponding and emerging gender issues

¹ *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995*

² *International Telecommunication Union, 2017*

³ *We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2018*

⁴ *GSMA, 2018*

⁵ *The New York Declaration, 2017*

⁶ *Edström & Facht, 2017*

of the last two decades make it important to take stock and suggest a way forward if intervention strategies on media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) are to be relevant. Thus the position papers in this collection, which emerged out of conversations on the need to update the issues arising since Beijing, while at the same time make a case for the centrality of media and ICTs for gender equality and women's rights' struggles. That the Commission on the Status of Women resolved to discuss the media and ICTs theme at its 62nd session (CSW 2018) made the development of these papers even more pertinent.

Organised in four sections, the papers present the salient issues respective to the facet under discussion, the evidence on progress, persistent gaps and emerging concerns, good practice examples, and authors' recommendations directed primarily at media organisations and relevant State bodies.

Rooted in holistic and intersectional principles, the papers provide ideas for various stakeholders to respond to urgent needs. These include research to inform policy; promoting regulatory and auto-regulatory mechanisms at national, regional and international levels, implementing frameworks for algorithmic transparency, incorporating methods such as third party audits, promoting media and digital literacy programmes with a gender component that specifically focuses on building the information and media literacy of women and girls, and encouraging efforts by women's organisations in using digital media and online spaces to amplify their stories ensuring safe conditions for women journalists and professionals in media and telecommunications corporations and organisations, and tackling online and offline gender-based harassment and violence, and immunity from the law.

Section I considers media policy, structures and employment. Padovani argues that despite prescriptions since Beijing for media policies that empower women and normative frameworks for gender equality in the media, recommendations to review existing policies and to strengthen self-regulatory mechanisms and codes of conduct are still not a priority for governments, media companies, international organizations and the research community. Tracing the legacy of policy-related recommendations,

the paper provides theoretical insights and operational inputs towards making policy development a priority. Byerly contributes an analysis on gender representation on boards of some media conglomerates around the world to conclude that women are peripheral to control of and benefit from the world's communication companies. She offers recommendations that address women's relationship to media structures and argues for the need to develop policy frameworks that include gender equality requirements. Discussing media employment, Ross underscores the gender gaps in career advancement, remuneration and leadership positions in the industry, citing workplace cultures and practices as some of the contributing factors. She suggests that enlightened media employers understand both the ethical and the business case for gender diversity given the steps taken to implement policies and practices which nurture the talent of their whole workforce. Valdéz, Quintero, Farbman, Montiel and Chávez analyse the access and participation of women in community and indigenous media.

Section II covers the longstanding historical issues of both the misrepresentation and under-representation of women in media content, and the epidemic of violence against women (VAW) in and through media and ICTs that has entered into everyday public discourse in the recent past thanks to the #MeToo movement. Macharia contributes insights drawn from the longitudinal Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) study that has followed gender patterns in the world news media since 1995, arguing that the power to change rests with governments, the media and ordinary audiences. Three papers discuss Violence Against Women in media and ICTs. Vega Montiel analyses the role media and ICTs have played in reinforcing the normalization of violence against women and girls in contents. Posetti and Storm call attention to the violence against women journalists online and offline. Ran offers a view on gender-based violence from a journalists' trade union perspective and includes labour organizations' recommendations on tackling violence in the workplace.

A utilitarian perspective has reigned in most debates on gender and ICTs with emphasis on the role that the latter can play for women's empowerment. Left out

of such discussions are concerns about Internet media monopolies, algorithms, surveillance, trolling and other questions that impact women disproportionately. In Section III, Gurumurthy, Vasudevan and Chami offer a feminist perspective on these and other digital sphere issues, underlining actions for global organisations, governments and civil society.

In Section IV, the UNESCO University Network on Gender, Media and ICTs discusses education as a strategic domain to advance gender mainstreaming in communication and journalism curricula. The Network posits that gender mainstreaming is a necessary part of the process if the gender equality gaps in training institutions and the media industry are to be addressed.

Three case studies are presented: On broadcast media regulators as gender equality drivers based on the Moroccan High Authority of Audiovisual Communication experience (Lemrini Elouahabi), on gender integration in African media (Faye) and on sustaining women-led community media in the Pacific (Rolls).

The papers reflect the diversity of voices within the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG), with many of the authors linked to organisations from both the global south and north that lead the debates on the international stage. This collection demonstrates GAMAG's commitment to link with the international community to advance gender equality in and through the media and ICTs.

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Aimée Vega Montiel and Sarah Macharia, Editors

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