‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

Introduction to the Modules
Why this toolkit?

This toolkit seeks to de-mystify the media and gender and media advocacy by illustrating through concrete steps, case studies, pointers, tips and information, that we can all take action to change gender representation and portrayal in and through the media. From writing a letter to the editor to planning and implementing a year-long campaign focused on changing how the media portrays gender violence for example, there are many ways to engage the media in the ultimate journey of achieving gender equality.

GMMP is an effective tool for gender activists to use in their work to change the media. For example, lobbying with the GMMP 2000 findings led to the Jamaican Broadcasting Commission developing its own guidelines for gender sensitive reporting. And in Malta, the Gender Advisory Committee of the Broadcasting Authority uses the GMMP2000 in its training program for media professionals.

Who is it for?

This toolkit is targeted primarily at:

- Organizations and individuals who participated in GMMP 2005
- Groups and media organizations (such as media councils, editors’ forums, journalists’ unions, media women’s associations, among others) working with (or wishing to begin working) with the media on gender and media issues
- WACC’s constituencies and partner organizations in Latin America, the Caribbean and North America, Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East and in Asia and the Pacific engaged in some form of media activism

How to use the toolkit?

This toolkit can be used in the following ways:

- To train activists on how to build gender and media campaigns using the findings of GMMP 2005
- To illustrate and train activists on the various approaches that can be taken to do gender and media advocacy
- As an information tool on the media, and gender and media advocacy
- To learn how to work with and through the media to put gender on the news agenda.

While the primary audience for this toolkit are organizations outside of the media that target the media for their gender activism, the toolkit can also be of value to
professionals within the media as a means of self-reflection and analysis on how the gender biases of those who work within and own the media can and do find their way into media content and workplace conditions and practices. Whilst the modules are general, users of the toolkit can tailor the tips and strategies to suit their particular local context and objective.

**Structure of the toolkit modules**

The modular version of the toolkit is designed to be flexible so that both trainers and trainees can select and use different modules depending on the needs of each advocacy group. The toolkit has been structured around 11 modules which cover both conceptual issues on gender and media advocacy and practical steps, tools and strategies that are useful in gender and media advocacy.

Modules 1-4 builds an understanding of what gender and media advocacy is and what the key issues are. These modules look at why the media should be a focus of gender and feminist activism; discuss the various audiences key to achieve change and highlight the key issues for gender and media advocacy using the findings of the GMMP2005.

Modules 5-10 provide the ‘how to’ in building gender and media advocacy campaigns. These modules outline the steps to developing campaigns and give tips and insights on how to engage with and use the media. Module 11 is a glossary of key terms used in the first 10 modules, and a summary of the key pointers and issues covered in these.

Information boxes, case studies and discussion points are provided within the various modules. Remember to contextualize the activity discussion points to suit your local media environment.

**Module 1: A new agenda for who makes the news: Why focus on the media?**

This module introduces the toolkit and outlines the structure of the modules. It highlights some of the reasons why the media need to be a focus of gender activism. Understanding the media’s various roles, its power and sphere of influence and the role it can play in bringing about change are essential for any type of advocacy that aims to change the media.

**Module 2: Why should gender be an issue for the media? What is gender and media advocacy?**

This module looks at why gender should be an issue for the media and defines what gender and media advocacy entails. It highlights the ways in which gender inequalities, biases and prejudices manifest themselves in the media, among others.

**Module 3: Who are the Target Audiences for Gender and Media Advocacy?**

Successful advocacy depends on taking time to think through how you will work with and influence each target audience. This module identifies key audiences that are significant to bringing about change in the media and highlights some strategies used by gender and media activists throughout the world to promote gender equality in the media.
Module 4: Applying the results of GMMP 2005 in Gender and Media Advocacy
The findings of GMMP 1995, 2000 and 2005 have each shown the media the problems with the representations and portrayals of women and men in the news. The GMMP findings stimulate discussions on how these might be addressed. This module highlights the findings from GMMP 2005 (which took place in 76 countries on 16th February 2005) and illustrates how its findings can be effectively used for lobbying and advocacy work.

Module 5: How to gather evidence to support advocacy
This module identifies different ways that activists can undertake research on the media to gather facts with which they can engage the media when conducting advocacy. Approaches to gathering evidence include media monitoring, audience research and conducting a gender audit of the media.

Module 6: How to Develop an Advocacy Campaign
This module outlines strategies that can be used for developing gender and media advocacy campaigns (planning, setting goals and objectives). It includes a guide that can be used to plan a gender and media advocacy campaign.

Module 7: How to create the right message for the right audience
A message needs to be a carefully thought element of each piece of communication. In media relations, the message is what you tell in your interview or press release. This module outlines components of an advocacy message. It provides 'how tos' in writing press releases, producing a backgrounder for the media, preparing a media event, organizing a press conference, and giving a good interview.

Module 8: How to transform the media through policy
The blueprint for ensuring checks and balances within the media are systems of self-regulation and codes, which take shape in the form of workplace and editorial polices. Policy is important for the media’s accountability, trust and credibility to its audience. This module focuses on how gender and media advocacy can ensure that gender is included in media and communication policy development. It provides a checklist of key questions that can be used to conduct a gender audit of a media institution.

Module 9: How to get the issue on the media’s agenda
This module focuses on different approaches adopted by gender and media activists to get issues on the media’s agenda. It provides tips and insights on how to engage and build a relationship with the media and how to gain visibility in the media by taking advantage of several significant dates already on the world’s calendars.

Module 10: How to monitor and evaluate advocacy work
Monitoring and evaluating an advocacy campaign enables activists to collect feedback and plan for future advocacy. Monitoring establishes if the stated objectives of the campaign have been met and helps to identify and rectify early problems in the advocacy campaign. This module looks at the various approaches to monitoring and evaluating advocacy work.

Module 11: Definitions and pointers in gender and media advocacy