



GLOBAL MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT 2010

Highlights Of Preliminary Findings¹

10 November 2009 was an ordinary day at work for newsroom staff around the world. It was however a special day for groups in 130 countries who gathered to monitor their news media. After months of planning, preparations and training, they brought the Fourth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) to life.

The groups monitored news on major media outlets selected on the basis of reach, density and diversity. The day's most important television and radio newscasts were monitored in their entirety. In the case of newspapers 12 to 14 stories appearing on the main news pages – defined as the pages devoted to national, international and, in some cases, regional news, were coded. Internet news from major news websites was monitored on a pilot basis in some 25 countries.

Key Findings

'It matters profoundly who and what is selected to appear in news coverage and how individuals and events are portrayed. Equally, it matters who is left out and what is not covered.'² The three previous GMMPs showed that women are grossly underrepresented in news coverage in contrast to men, resulting in news that paints a picture of a world in which women are largely absent. The studies equally revealed a paucity of women's views and opinions in mainstream news media content in contrast to men's perspectives, resulting in a male-centered view of the world.

The Fourth GMMP has produced mixed results as demonstrated in the key findings below.

Representation

■ **24% of the people interviewed, heard, seen or read about in mainstream broadcast and print news are female.**

This is a significant change from 1995 when only 17% of the people in the news were women.

On the one hand the pace of increase in women's visibility in the news has been maintained over the past decade. In 2005 women's presence in the news had increased to 21% - a 3% rise from the research carried out in 2000. From 2005 to 2010 there is a second change of 3% which shows a pace of progress in gender-balance in the news that has remained persistently slow in the last ten years, but which is more rapid than the rate registered between 1995 and 2000.

On the other hand, the largest rise in women's visibility is in stories on the major topic 'science & health' (from 22% of news subjects in 2005 to 37% in 2010). In reality this topic receives the lowest media attention (10% of total news stories). In topics that are high priority on the news media agenda, the increase in women as subjects was much smaller – from 20% to 21% in stories on the economy and from 14% to 18% in stories on 'politics & government'.

Further, a significant component of the 3% increase in women in the news can be attributed to the notable increase in women as providers of popular opinion, and much less to women appearing as experts.

Only 16% of all stories focus specifically on women.

Overall, this is an increase from 10% of stories in 2005. There has been an improvement in the ratio of women to men who are central in news stories – in

news on politics/government (from 8% of stories in 2005 to 18% in 2010) and on the economy (from 3% of stories in 2005 to 7% in 2010). Nevertheless, the percentage of stories in which women are not central far outweighs the percentage of stories in which they are.

■ **Women have achieved near parity as givers of popular opinion in news stories. At the same time, less than one out of every five experts interviewed is female.**

Near parity between women (47%) and men (53%) has been achieved in the category of people providing popular opinion. However women are persistently underrepresented as experts and authorities. 81% of experts and 82% of spokespersons who appear in the news are male. The percentages of female experts and spokespersons presently are 19% and 18% respectively.

■ **An analysis of media coverage on selected issues of special concern to women contained in the Beijing Platform for Action reveals such issues receive an average of less than 1.5% media attention each.**

Of the stories appearing in the news during the monitoring day, 1.3% were on gender-based violence, 0.3% on women's economic participation, 1.2% on poverty and 0.9% on peace. 'Women & political participation' received the highest coverage, at 3.4%. An evaluation of the distribution of stories reveals that of the three mediums, mainstream radio is least likely to contain news on issues of concern to women. Print news contained the highest proportion of stories on all five themes, suggesting that newspapers would be the most effective medium for issues of concern to women to find space in the mainstream news agenda.



- 1 The preliminary results are based on a sample of 42 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean Region, Pacific Islands and Europe. The data for North America was not available for inclusion. The sample contains 6,902 news items and 14,044 news subjects, including people interviewed in the news. The full report will be published in September, 2010.
- 2 Gallagher, Margaret. 2005. Who makes the news: Global Media Monitoring Project. World Association for Christian Communication.

Delivering the news

■ **Overall, news stories by female reporters are much fewer than news stories by male reporters.**

In 2010 the percentage of stories by female reporters on radio was lower than in 2005, a drastic drop from 45% to 27%. 44% of stories on television were reported by women, up from 42%. Newspaper stories by female reporters increased from 29% to 35%.

■ **News stories by female reporters are almost twice as likely to challenge gender stereotypes than stories by male reporters**

11% of stories by female reporters challenge gender stereotypes, compared to 6% of stories by male reporters

News stories by female reporters have considerably more female news subjects than stories by male reporters

26% of news subjects in stories by female reporters are female, compared to 19% of news subjects in stories by male reporters.

Journalistic practice

Almost one half (48%) of all news stories reinforce gender stereotypes, while 8% of news stories challenge gender stereotypes.

News stories are 6 times more likely to reinforce gender stereotypes than to challenge them. No conclusions can be drawn on the change over the past 5 years owing to revisions made to the method of collecting data on stereotyping in news coverage.

■ **Only 12% of news stories highlight issues of gender equality or inequality.**

The percentage of news stories that shed light on an aspect of gender equality or inequality in the story has tripled in the last five years. Nevertheless, stories that miss the opportunity to highlight (in) equality issues are by far more numerous.

■ **Women are five times as likely as men to be portrayed in their roles as wives, mothers, etc.**

19% of women appearing in the news are identified by their family status as compared to 4% of men in the news. Portraying women in their gender roles denies their identities as individuals, eroding gains made by women in securing positions of authority and responsibility in life outside the home.

■ **Only 9% of news stories mention gender equality policies or human and women's rights legal instruments.**

This finding suggests that numerous stories miss the opportunity to create awareness on instruments enacted to protect human rights, women's rights or gender equality. The finding also supports an observation by gender and communication groups that human rights, and in particular women's human rights, are relatively invisible in mainstream media coverage.

Key Findings

	1995		2000		2005		2010	
	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men
News Subjects								
All Media	17	83	18	82	21	79	24	76
Television	21	79	22	78	22	78	26	74
Radio	15	85	13	87	17	83	19	81
Newspapers	16	84	17	83	21	79	24	76
Scope of Story:								
Local	22	78	23	77	27	73	26	74
National	14	86	17	83	19	81	23	77
International	17	83	15	85	18	82	20	80
Foreign	17	83	14	86	20	80	29	71
Main Story Topics:								
Celebrity, Arts & Sport	24	76	23	77	28	72	26	74
Social & Legal	19	81	21	79	28	72	29	71
Crime & Violence	21	79	18	82	22	78	26	74
Science & Health	27	73	21	79	22	78	37	63
Economy	10	90	18	82	20	80	21	79
Politics & Government	7	93	12	88	14	86	18	82
Function in Story:								
Popular Opinion					34	66	47	53
Personal Experience					31	69	38	62
Eye Witness	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	70	31	69
Subject					23	77	25	75
Expert					17	83	19	81
Spokesperson					14	86	18	82
% Portrayed as Victim	29	10	19	7	19	8	20	9
% Identified by Family Status	n/a	n/a	21	4	17	5	19	4
% In Newspaper Photographs	n/a	n/a	25	11	23	16	28	20

Key Findings

	1995		2000		2005		2010	
	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men
Reporting and Presenting the News								
% Stories presented on TV and Radio	51	49	49	51	53	47	50	50
Television			56	44	57	43	52	48
Radio			41	59	49	51	47	53
% Stories reported	28	72	31	69	37	63	37	63
Television	N/A	N/A	36	64	42	58	44	56
Radio	N/A	N/A	28	72	45	55	27	73
Newspapers	N/A	N/A	26	74	29	71	35	65
% Stories reported Scope of Story:								
Local	33	67	34	66	66	56	40	60
National	24	76	30	70	70	66	36	64
International	28	72	33	67	67	68	30	70
Foreign	28	72	29	71	71	64	42	58
% Stories reported Main Story Topics:								
Celebrity, Arts & Sport			27	73	35	65	43	57
Social & Legal			39	61	40	60	44	56
Crime & Violence	N/A	N/A	29	71	33	67	36	64
Science & Health			46	54	38	62	40	60
Economy			35	65	43	57	36	64
Politics & Government			26	74	32	68	30	70
% of Female News Subjects - by sex of Reporter	N/A	N/A	24	18	25	20	26	19
News Content								
% Stories with Women as a Central Focus			10		10		16	
Celebrity, Arts & Sport			16		17		20	
Social & Legal			19		17		18	
Crime & Violence	N/A		10		16		19	
Politics & Government			7		8		18	
Science & Health			11		6		15	
Economy			4		3		7	
% Stories that Challenge Gender Stereotypes	N/A		N/A		3		8	
% Stories that Reinforce Gender Stereotypes	N/A		N/A		6		48*	
% Stories that Highlight Gender (In)Equality	N/A		N/A		4		12	
% Stories that mention gender equality policies or human and women's rights legal instruments	N/A		N/A		N/A		9	
Selected topics relevant to the Beijing Platform for Action: % of stories that highlight								
1. Poverty							1.2	
2. Gender-based violence	N/A		N/A		N/A		1.3	
3. Peace							0.9	
4. Women's economic participation							0.3	
5. Women's political participation							3.4	

*Changes in the survey instrument account for the difference between the 2005 and 2010 findings