

MEDIA WATCH MEETING - 10 JUNE 1995:

The meeting was called to discuss the idea of setting up a proactive media monitoring and lobbying group in relation to women's representation and access to the media.

PRESENT: see list

AGENDA:

- Brief motivation for calling this meeting.
- Input from Nirmala Nair on women and media with reference to her experiences in India.
- Discussion around the concept and need for a Media Watch.
- The way forward.

BRIEF CAP INPUT:

The meeting was called to gauge interest in the idea of a Media Watch.

The meeting was planned as an opportunity for informal discussion.

If we are to set up the group, it could become independent of CAP in the longer term. This could be assessed after a period of time.

CAP Media had asked Nirmilla Nair to open the discussion with an input on her experiences of ways in which women in India were fighting for the positive portrayal of women in the media.

INPUT BY NIRMALA NAIR:

See attached copy of input.

Nirmala noted that the following pointers could be used when we develop our own strategies:

- a bi-monthly newsletter which exposed and critiqued negative media
- a compilation of adverts which had come under attack as this impacted negatively on the marketing of a product.
- feminist journals in local languages
- a women's press bureau

Her experience indicated that a strategy which drew in various sectors within society was more effective than one which only incorporate media practitioners. She noted that if we were to launch a media monitoring group then we should link up with rural and grassroots women.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ARISING OUT OF INPUT:

The question of approach, should we aim for a feminist media or for a total transformation of all media? Nirmila argued for the later.

Should a monitoring group be inclusive or exclusive?

How much energy of such a group would go into discussing the case of sexism in an image?

The need for cooperation between activist monitoring groups and women working in the media e.g. unions.

The question of women owned media was raised as an area of critical concern.

Concern was also raised around access to feminist magazines as they do not have access to distribution networks. This resulted a limited market which together with dependence on donor funding had led to the closure of magazines like SPEAK.

It was argued that journalist could make interventions through mass circulation magazines as these magazines had access to a wider audience.

We need to support women working within the media and we need to reach out and support grassroots women.

The term media "watch" may be problematic, we need to ensure that we are proactive and focused on "action".

The following agencies need to be targeted for action:

- Hunt Lascaris - they have produced a number of advertisements which frequently portray negative images of women.
- Financial Mail

It was noted that we need to focus on children and their representation in and access to the media.

At this point the following was noted:

People are interested in participating in the Media Watch group.

We should like to keep the group open and allow for a broad range of interests.

Given the above, the meeting should be more directed.

We decided to brainstorm the possible activities of the Media Watch:

BRAINSTORM OF SUGESTED ACTIONS AND IDEAS ABOUT THE GROUP:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| - creative festival | - party |
| - programming on TV | - marching |
| - graffiti | - in-house education |
| - campaigning | - challenge attitudes |
| - action networking | - protest drama |
| - speak-outs | - monitoring |
| - specialist review groups | - resources |
| - humour | - positive imagery |
| - non-racism | - creativity |

- production
- compose a song
- targeting the Minister of Post and Telecommunications
- lobbying of the print media
- no discrimination against disabled women
- develop an accessible language of media criticism
- take a close look at education media and curricula
- target youth and children
- use existing structures
- access community video and radio
- set up a women's publishing network, use AGENDA for distributing our writings.
- identify and link up with similar projects regionally, nationally and internationally.
- use mass media as a platform
- public awareness programmes on disabled women
- lobby/activist action against the advertising agency clients
- indigenise programmes like soaps and dramas.
- insurrection
- revolution
- fax blitzes to Hunt Lascaris and the Minister of P&T
- lobby the constitutional assembly to fire Hunt Lascaris
- create our own programmes
- deconstruct newspaper articles
- educate grassroots women
- skills training for women in for e.g. photography
- collect research about women, media and violence
- run local workshops on critical media awareness
- develop the Media Watch and target the members for training

We decided to meet on 1 July to develop the vision and programme of action.

GENERAL:

DOROTHY NTONE'S REQUEST:

Gaby indicated that Dorothy Ntone, who was producing a women's programme for the "community" TV channel RWC TV, would like to know if anyone would like to join the studio audience.

At this point a discussion arose as to the nature and history of the RWC TV channel. Colleen Lombard from CVET gave a brief history of the initiative and indicated CVET's response. *See attached notes.*

- It was noted that this is the kind of initiatives that the Media Watch group may need to challenge.

We agreed to the following:

- Those who attend the session could reportback to the group when we meet again.
- Gaby from CAP would gather more information about RWC and distribute it. *See attached notes.*

BEIJING:

CAP indicated that they had been asked to participate in a debate and workshop on Women and Media Violence at the NGO Forum in Beijing in September.

While aware of the problems surrounding this initiative they had decided to participate as it would be a useful opportunity to network with organisations from other countries who were working in this field.

In preparation they are running a number of community workshops. Anyone interested in participating in or hosting a workshop should contact Gaby.

DISTRIBUTED:

- * Letter of invitation to SABC meeting on 19 June re women and media and the CAP Media Project letter of response.
- * Draft African Platform of Action on Women, Information, Communication and the Arts - taken from the 5th Regional Conference on Women, Dakar, Senegal, 1994.