

new logo, what do you think?



As you can see, the newsletter has changed in design and our logo has changed too. We hope those of you who haven't yet seen it like the new one. Let us know.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

To help cover the cost of the production of the newsletters and keep the project running we are asking members who can, to pay annual membership fees. These may be paid monthly.

R240.00 per annum per organisation in South Africa
R120.00 per individual in South Africa
US \$50.00 for members in other parts of Africa
US \$90.00 for members in Europe/USA etc

If you or your organisation cannot afford the fee but want to be active members, you will still be able to have full membership. The membership fees are not there to exclude anyone.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES, LETTERS, CARTOONS AND IDEAS TO OUR NEWSLETTER, OR COME INTO THE OFFICE AND BE INTERVIEWED ON YOUR VIEWS ON THE MEDIA.

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Women's Media Watch acknowledges support from the IWDA and AUSAID

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WOMEN'S MEDIA WATCH IS A PROJECT OF MEDIAWORKS



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w o m e n ' s




n e w s l e t t e r
m a k i n g w a v e s

no. 7 july 1999

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Who's News?
women and the media

running time: 25 minutes 12 seconds

women's  media watch

Who's News? Is the name of the video that the Women's Media Watch has just completed that questions the way women are portrayed in the media. The video was developed as a training

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tool for editors and journalists to raise their gender awareness and encourage diversity in the media.

It has been well-received by the people who have seen it so far and we look forward to more feedback.

The video deals with a wide selection of issues that effect women.

The video will be launched on August 9th at the Gathering Place, 61 Church Street at 13.30. The Gathering Place is behind the City Hospital and in the park of Church Street between Loop and Bree.

l e t t e r s

This space will be used in future for letters, so please start writing. Let us know your views on the media and give us feedback on this newsletter. To start the ball rolling we are putting the SANEF media release on their commitment to breaking the silence on violence against women. It is not exactly a letter but it is so welcome that we take it as a letter to all of us!

(SANEF represents a wide range of media editors and leaders from radio, print, television, magazines, as well as community media and journalism educators)

Violence against women and children and the impact this has on the spread of AIDS and HIV in South Africa is a national crisis. This was one of several key issues which emerged at the South African National Editors Forum's second annual general meeting held in Durban at the weekend. The forum also reiterated its concern that AIDS and HIV was one of the most serious issues facing this country.

The conference heard that recent studies indicated that 17 000 women are killed and raped every year in this country. This is 7000 more than the death toll for the Kosovo conflict. South African women are not killed by strangers. Every six days a South African woman is murdered by her male partner. South Africa is the only country in the world where children are presenting with HIV because they have been raped in the misguided belief that this will cure the rapist of the disease.

The editors resolved to mobilise the media to address this crisis by breaking the silence which has sanctioned the slaughter and abuse of women and children.

Speaking at the Forum's gala banquet at the weekend, Deputy President Jacob Zuma endorsed the campaign and promised his support.

The forum also pledged to guard against stereotyping of all kinds, including sexism and racism, which perpetuate this problem. The editors resolved to form a working group to spearhead the campaign which would focus on media monitoring and encourage more comprehensive and balanced coverage of the issues.

w o r k s h o p a l e r t

Women's Media Watch will be hosting a press briefing workshop for members. The aim of the workshop is to inform and expose members to how the media operate and how to sell organisations or community's stories. The workshop will also be giving tips on how to write your press release and provide some contact details to media organisations.

ber Crystal Orderson.

WHEN: 14 August 1999
TIME: 10:00- 16:00
WHERE: MEDIAWORKS, Norlen House, 17 Buitenkant St, Corner of Caledon and Buitenkant streets, CAPE TOWN.

Phone Gabrielle or Judith to confirm your attendance or get more information at 4610368

DON'T MISS THE WORKSHOP!!!

If you are interested to get first-hand information, be there. Workshop will be hosted by SABC TV NEWS journalist and Women's Media Watch mem-

e d i t o r s l e t t e r

Dear Women's Media Watch members and Friends Happy Women's Day on August 9th. There seems to be a lot to celebrate and a lot to mourn. Domestic violence is shockingly common but there is hope in the form of the Domestic Violence Bill. One of the key demands for Women's Day is the implementation of the new legislation and enough resources to make it happen. Rape is also a huge problem but the Sexual Offences legislation should go through this year, it is something we will need to push hard to ensure. There seems to have been a shift in reporting violence against women in recent weeks. We include a couple of articles that we feel illustrate this shift. Gasant Abarder and Shireen Motara's articles are examples, nice to see a man speaking out about the issue - and he's not the only one! On our new Letters page we have the SANEF commitment to breaking the silence around violence against women in the media and committing themselves to ending media stereotyping. The South African Editors Forum, unsurprisingly, is made up of more men than women and they are well-placed to make those heartening decisions. We applaud

them and will be watching them!

"Who's News?" the Women's Media Watch video is out and so is the handbook for journalists on reporting violence against women. We hope both of these resources will be big help in gender training for editors and journalists.

A workshop for organisations to help them engage with the media and get their stories into the news will be held on August the 14th and you will find information about it in the workshop alert.

One sexist advertisement bit the dust when the Advertising Standards Authority ruled that the Nando's ad about "roger your secretary" was sexist and exploitative.

We wish you well on Women's Day and hope to see you at some of the many events on the day. Remember to wear black.

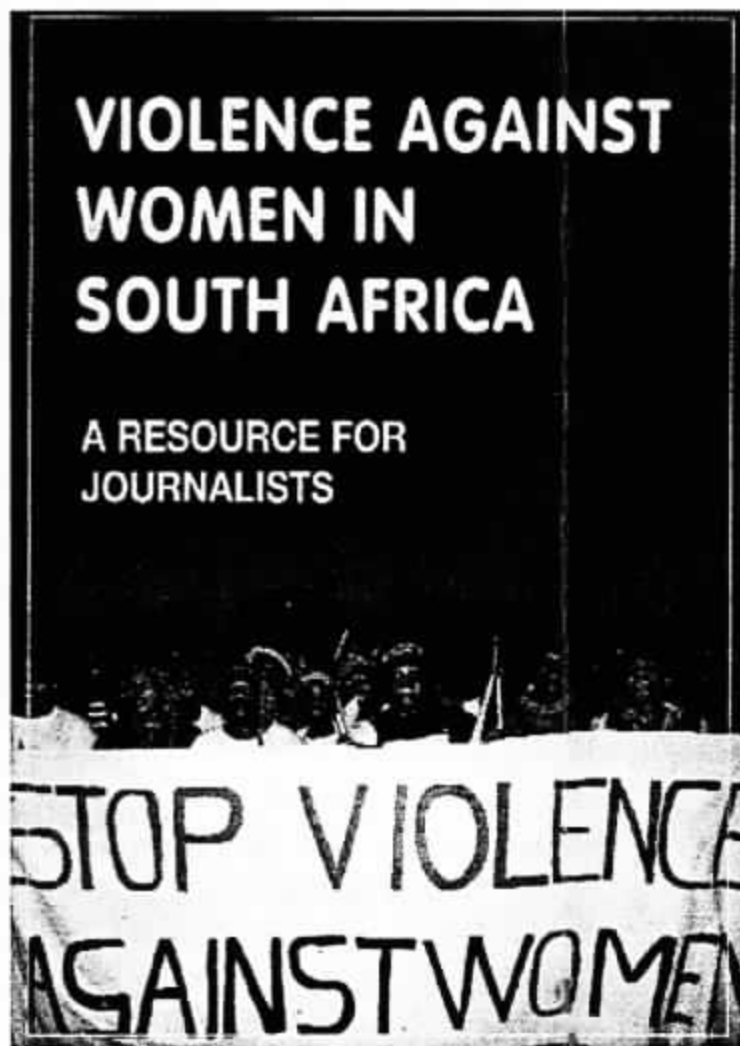
Crystal Orderson is helping to edit the newsletter so good wishes from both of us Crystal and Gabrielle



The journalists handbook on Reporting Violence against Women is complete and was launched at the Commission on Gender Equality in Johannesburg on August 2nd. The handbook is a collaborative effort between Soul City, the National Network on VAW, the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, Women's Media Watch and the CGE.

The Minister of Safety and Security, Steve Tshwete, was at the launch as well as the Deputy Minister of Justice, Cheryl Gillward. The Chair of the CGE, Joyce Seroke, the Director of the IAJ, Hugh Lewin, Mpho from the NNVAW, Shereen Usdin of Soul City and Gabrielle Le Roux of the Women's Media Watch, were proud to be able to present the booklet to the journalists and the Ministers.

The final edit was done by Lisa Vetten of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation who was also present at the launch. The booklet deals with concept of violence against women, the various types of violence against women, how the media currently deals with it and how this impacts on women's lives. It also contains plenty of suggestions for alternative ways of dealing with it and a resource list of contacts that journalists can use as sources



SOUL CITY

Media reports are influential. They shape understandings of particular crimes and also affect attitudes towards both the survivors and perpetrators of violence. Not only do these attitudes impact upon the treatment of women by the general public, and the nature of the assistance offered to abused women by members of the criminal justice system and the health sector, but they also influence the politicians who legislate around these issues and the parents and teachers raising the next generation.



National Network on Violence Against Women



Commission on Gender Equality



Institute for the Advancement of Journalism



WOMEN'S MEDIA WATCH

For women who have been raped or abused, media coverage of how women have lived through and survived similar experiences may provide the impetus to leave an abusive relationship, or speak out for the first time about an experience of rape or child abuse. When these stories are accompanied by the contact numbers of local organisations dealing with the issue, it's often the first time women are made aware of such services.

In an effort to help journalists and newsroom decision-makers, this booklet provides facts, figures and information on violence against women, identifies pitfalls in current coverage, and provides guidelines to help improve coverage. For some, this may be new information, while for others it may be confirmation of what they already know and do.

The Line is sponsored by the Department of Justice and the NNVAW. It is managed by Lifeline



DFID Department International Development

This booklet was sponsored by British development co-operation

for stories about violence against women. We hope the booklet will be a useful resource for journalists and that we will get some feedback from you about it. A big thank you to those of you who read the booklet in its first and second draft and commented. Your input was very valuable. We hope you like the final version. A limited number of booklets are available from Women's Media Watch, please contact us if you would like one.

enough is enough

Women demand an end to the unrelenting scourge of sexual violence
By Shireen Motara
Deputy Director: Policy and research Department, CGE.

The scourge of rape and the killing of innocent women clearly indicate that there is no cause to celebrate National Women's Day this year. August 9, which is supposed to be the one day when we celebrate women's struggle for equality, is marred this year by the avalanche of reports of violence in the last few weeks. Yet the cases highlighted by the media are a drop in the ocean compared to the hundreds of unknown women who experience some form of violence every day. South African Police statistics indicate that a woman is raped every 35 seconds in South Africa, while it is estimated that one in four women are likely to experience domestic violence in their relationships. Many of the women who experi-

ence rape and domestic violence are killed by their rapists or abusers. These statistics mean that each one of us is likely to know one (or more) women who are survivors of this kind of violence.

South Africa is blessed with one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world. It upholds the values of equality, freedom and dignity - all of which are essential to ensuring gender equality in our country. We also have a legislative framework that seeks to promote gender equality. The Domestic Violence Act, the Maintenance Act and the Customary Marriages Act bear testimony to this. In addition, national machinery like the Commission on Gender Equality has been established to ensure that gender equality is promoted and protected.

So then what is the problem? Why do women continue to be subject to this unacceptable plague of violence that not



only affects their physical state, but also leaves them with lasting mental and emotional scars?

Despite the fact that criminal law legislation now provides for a mandatory sentence of 15 years for rape (in certain cases), experience has shown that it is within the criminal justice system that offenders often escape any form of retribution.

The ineffectiveness of the system to adequately deal with rape offenders is reflected in the statistics on the conviction rate of rape offenders. It is estimated that only one out of every 394 rape cases which are reported (a small percentage of rapes that have actually taken place) results in a conviction.

Between the police and the prosecutors, the majority of cases fall through the system and rapists get off scot-free. Police officers are overworked; the court roll is bursting at the sides and both are understaffed. Inefficiency is rife and law enforcement agents are ill equipped to deal with cases which have gender implications. Often cases are dismissed or lost because police officers' statements are incoherent or incorrect. Poor investigations also lead to poor evidence gathering that weakens the case even further. Offenders escape conviction because of a lack of proper communication between prosecutors and police officers. Cases are frequently withdrawn on grounds that there is no case to be made or because files mysteriously disappear. Law enforcement agents perceive that their prospects of receiving a promotion are higher when they successfully deal with "hard" crimes such as gang violence and hijacking.

The new Domestic Violence Act makes far-reaching changes to the previous Prevention of Family Violence Act.

If sufficient resources are committed to the implementation of the Act, it could go a long way towards providing relief for women who are abused. However, a holistic programme which encompasses human resources, training and commitment must accompany the implementation of legislation. This also includes the distribution of resources to shelters that are often the only sanctuary for women who are abused.

Unless and until violence against women is treated with the attention and seriousness it deserves, we will continue to mourn the loss of dignity and life of hundreds of women who are continually exposed to it.

nando's advertisement found to be sexist by advertising authority

by Crystal Orderson

The radio commercial, "Roger your secretary" on Nando's Tasca radio station has been deemed sexist by the Advertising Standard's Authority of South Africa. ASA rules that it should be pulled of air with immediate effect. This decision was made at the end of July.

At a meeting held by the Advertising Standards Committee it ruled that the Nando's Tasca commercial's "Roger your secretary" is sexist, the execution of the line constitutes sexual harassment and exploitation of women.

The Committee received the complaint from a listener that it was sexist and demeaning to secretaries and women.

In deliberating the matter the Committee found that in the context the word "roger" raises a concern more than the word itself. It

It was also felt that the tone of the advertisement was designed to be negative especially when words like "turn against" and "infiltrate" are considered.

Dineo Pooe, consultant consumer affairs said they also found that "rogering a secretary under such circumstances" is morally questionable. "This is also if one considers that we live in an era where sexual harassment at work is a problem that cannot be taken lightly." She said that if one assumes that the secretary is a woman which is normally the case in the country, the advertisement denigrates the dignity of women and portrays her as an object or possession which can be used and abused.

Ms Pooe said that in developing countries like South Africa where gender equality and respect for human values are

emphasized, this advertisement constitutes disrespect for these values.

The matter was considered in terms of Section II, clause 3.4 of the Code which reads: "Advertisements should not contain anything which offends the susceptibilities of consumers. In particular claims or statements which, directly or by implication, discriminate or exploit on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender or religion will not be permitted unless, in the opinion of the ASA, the advertising is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom."

Women's Media Watch salutes the ASA for the landmark decision and hopes that future complaints about radio commercials would be forthcoming.

MALE JOURNALIST TAKES A STAND ON RAPE

The recent spate of rapes in Cape Town has had the media talking. Cape Times crime reporter Gasant Abarder tells us why he decided to put this issue on his newspaper's agenda.

WHEN I saw the tiny figure of six-year-old Veronique Maans' naked body partially buried in the hills just above Tafelsig, Mitchells Plain, in June it moved me to tears.

Veronique was found by teenage boys after she had been kidnapped, raped and murdered by her attacker. I decided then as the crime writer of a well-read daily newspaper, the Cape Times, to lend my support - as a male member of the community - in the fight against violence on women and children. By running rape stories hard and upfront, but also with solid background, context and statistics the issue was quickly viewed as a priority by anti-crime activists in the city.

Cape Town currently has the highest rape figures in the world. All my attempts to find out from the experts why this is

so, were futile. But what I did learn was that if the community stood together and joined hands with the police in rooting out criminals, the perpetrators could be brought to book. The same holds true for rape. It is estimated that only 1 in every 20 rape cases are reported in the Western Cape, but if the silence is broken and enough women and men make a noise about this heinous and unforgivable crime, rapes will decrease and the rapists will be caught. Rape, which is difficult to police, is not only a crime which can be fought by the police.

Education is the key to changing the mindset and attitudes society holds of rape and the participation of men in this process is integral. By teachers educating pupils, the police conducting thorough investigations and prosecutors and magistrates ensuring that rapists get stiffer sentences, we can combat rape. Everybody has to contribute with a lot of commitment.

*Gasant Abarder Crime Writer
Cape Times July 1999*