



WOMEN'S MEDIA WATCH

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Youth and Television Violence

How do young people view the violence they see on television?

This is the question that motivated the most recent research project of **Women's Media Watch (WMW)**, entitled *Attitudes of Youth towards Television Violence*, and sponsored by the **Global Fund for Women**.

I have had the opportunity to be part of this pilot study, which set out to identify how exposure to television violence affects teenage students in their everyday lives.

Psychologist Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory suggests that people learn from one another via observation, imitation, and modeling. We also learn through observing others' behavior, attitudes, and the outcomes of their behaviors.

For **WMW's** pilot study, 152 adolescent students (11 to 18 years) completed surveys. The students included 84 boys and 68 girls enrolled in grades 7 to 11 at three high schools in Jamaica, one rural and two urban.

The study explored the amount of television violence these adolescents are exposed to, and their attitudes towards

allowing him to watch. Even with restrictions in place and no cable tv, my son was able to watch these shows in other homes. Sitting on our couch with my son, watching *Teen Titans*, I am quickly reminded of the difference between what I watched at his age, and the limitations on my access to TV back then, compared to what exists now.

Back in 1976 there was only JBC, and few choices on TV for a child of five. My Grandmother, with whom I spent those formative years, was very strict about the amount and type of television I was exposed to. Now, I am taking a closer look at TV and 'new media' such as the internet.

Violence in Cartoons

The levels of violence in cartoons and programmes aired during the 'watershed' period is astounding. Cartoon such as *'Teen Titans,' 'Ben 10 Alien Force'* and *'Avatar: The last Airbender'* are created for children yet have a constant theme of violence which is shown as a powerful and 'cool' way to resolve conflicts and win.



'Teen Titans' introduced my son to the idea of pretending to be someone's friend in order to come back and destroy them. Violence such as smashing the human body in realistic or unrealistic ways, is shown as a way to resolve teen super-heroes' conflicts.

But then I also remember the old *"Tom and Jerry"* - it was and still is filled with violence - two animals who "rain terror" on each other.

(cont. p.2)

How much television violence are young Jamaicans exposed to?

Does TV violence affect how they resolve conflicts?

this violence. Do they emulate in their everyday lives any of the violent behavior they observe on television? How sensitive are they to the violence and sexual abuse they see on TV? In their opinion does the TV violence affect how they, or those around them, resolve conflicts?

In **WMW's** recent pilot 29% of the students watch 10-12 hours of television during the school week, and 32% watch this amount on weekends. Nearly two thirds (60%) watch cartoons 'a lot', with nearly half (46.5%) listing cartoons as their favourite type of show, followed closely by *action* shows.

As a mother who sees my five year old son imitating *Ben 10*, or *Aang* from *Airbender*, and in doing so, wanting to fight, or hurt someone who is 'bad', I have to question what I've been

100th birthday for 'All ah wi Togedda'

This month as we celebrate International Women's Day, Women's Media Watch is marking a special milestone. On March 29 we will broadcast the 100th programme of 'All Ah Wi Togedda'. Nuff respect to Roots 96.1 FM, to programme host Afolashade and the many guests and callers who've made the show a success!



Youth and TV violence Cont. from page 1

Back in 1997, **WMW** did a study of programming on local stations and found that one third of all violence on television was in cartoons and programmes designed for children. On average, there were five major acts of violence per hour.

A more recent 2006 study by the U.S.-based **Parents Television Council (PTC)** found an average of eight incidents of violence per hour—3,488 incidents in 440 hours of programming. The PTC found that many programmes geared to children are filled with violent, disrespectful and aggressive behaviors (CNN.com, Mar.2006).

The Cartoon Network had the highest number of violent incidents. *‘Teen Titans’* had nearly 22 incidents per episode. The PTC concluded “there is more violence aimed directly at young children than at adults on television today.”

These overseas findings are highly relevant in Jamaica because *‘Teen Titans’* and other cartoons are aired on our local channels. Furthermore the **WMW** study shows that 97% of students have access to TV with many having access to cable channels like Cartoon Network.

‘there’s more violence aimed directly at children than at adults on television today’

‘... a troubling link between teens’ TV habits and their approach to conflict resolution.’

Violence in students’ favourite shows

In **WMW’s** study, students report disturbingly high levels of violence in their favourite programmes. Scenes of killing were seen most often (78%), followed by fighting (69%), shooting (57%), rape (32%) and sexual abuse (30%).

The study also found a troubling relationship between the amount of television viewing, and adolescents’ approach to conflict resolution.

When asked if they used the types of violence seen on television to resolve their own conflicts, over one third (35%) said “yes”. Two thirds (67%) said they used fighting as a way to resolve conflicts.

While half the students said it was *‘not okay’* to show violence on television, a disturbing 25% said *‘it is okay’* while 26% said *‘sometimes okay’*.

Desensitization to sexual violence

Responses for 29% of studentst suggests there was desensitization to TV violence, while 17% responded that sexual violence on TV *“no mek dem feel no way.”*

Many students said that scenes of killing on television affected them, but more often they felt that violence and sexual abuse affected others far more than it affected them.

With our pilot study, **Women’s Media Watch** continues to promote ‘media watching’. The Jamaica Broadcasting Commission consistently asks the public to monitor radio and television, especially the media’s adherence to the **Code for Children’s Programming** which aims to protect children from harmful content. The impact of violence portrayed through television highlights the importance of parents being mindful of the shows our children watch.

Teaching skills of critical viewing:

We can limit television viewing on school days. Having the television on during meals and homework is distracting. We can learn how to critically evaluate media content and teach our children these skills of critical

analysis. We can learn how advertising tries to influence our thinking, and teach our children how to challenge media messages.

We have a personal responsibility to our children, let us guide them into becoming active users of the media!

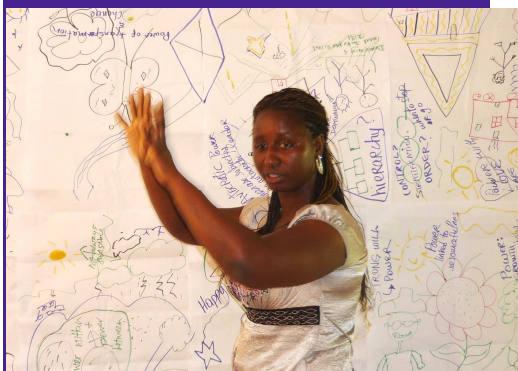
- Kameela Abdul-Maajid



Some WMW Highlights



WMW’s Keishagay Jackson (c) and Hilary Nicholson (L) at the launch of the “Silence Hurts” campaign in Cayman with hosts from the ESR Foundation. For the launch of this campaign against gender-based violence WMW held several workshops and presentations.



FES-Jamaica invited WMW to lead several workshops for Young Agents of Change. Janice Rose of WROC (above) analyses power in relation to gender and development for fellow workshop participants.



Young Women Leaders in western Jamaica are challenged by a ‘recruiter’ (left, WMW’s Afolashade) in a role-play exercise at a workshop on Gender Violence & Human Trafficking. Training was hosted by FES-Jamaica & facilitated by Women’s Media Watch.

Gender in the News Room

President of the Press Association of Jamaica Jennifer Campbell at Launch of Global Media Monitoring Project 2010.



On International Women’s Day, we share Ms Campbell’s presentation, as a tribute to Jamaica’s women journalists.

“The Press Association of Jamaica recognizes the need for a deeper understanding of local media operations and how and why particular choices are made. In fact, the **Jamaica Press Institute**, the training and research arm of the PAJ was established for that very purpose.

Of particular interest is the research recently released under the **Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)**. In the Caribbean, fieldwork was done in eleven territories, and the findings raise serious questions about media in the region.

Is the media fair? Fair in its internal staffing arrangements, fair in the focus of its coverage, and fair in how it treats the question of gender? I would point out that media houses in Jamaica and elsewhere have their own dynamics driven by forces other than gender, outside forces over which the media may have little control.

Who delivers the news?

The GMMP research shows that more stories are covered by male than female reporters (55% male, 45% female). This may result from the fact that media in the region is ‘manned’ by more males than females. Media bosses work with what they have: experience, talent, integrity and willingness to go beyond the call of duty will push one reporter ahead of another, regardless of gender.

Male dominance in the media is a factor of history. However, our current realities suggest that this will not continue. Women (in media) have been holding their own and do exceptionally well in all areas of media.

Women in the News Room

There’s been a jump in the number of women opting for a career in media. Women such as **Sylvia Lee** in Agricultural reporting,

Barbara Gayle the Court reporting expert, **Wyvolyn Gager**, the first female editor-in-chief of the Gleaner Company, have made their mark. **Janette Mowatt**, **Jennifer Grant** and **Moya Thomas** have all headed the RJR news room.

As news anchors, hosts of major shows, and providers of commentary, a host of ladies do excellently - Kerlyn Brown, Helen Coley-Nicholson, Kerri-Ann Lee, Dionne Jackson-Miller, Carol Francis, Emily Crooks and Naomi Francis. We lift our hats to trend setters such as Hon. **Barbara Gloudon**, **Fae Ellington**, **Erica Allen**, **Norma Brown Bell**, among others.

The PAJ is very interested in the findings about hard news coverage and gender: both male and female reporters are blessed with a nose for hard news, and Erica Virtue at the Observer must come in for mention.

We saw female reporters crawling through tunnels... getting down in the trenches with the people who were hurting.

During coverage of the Tivoli incursion, female reporters were very much in step with their male counterparts. We saw TVJ’s **Nadine McLeod** crawling through passages that were labeled tunnels, while CVM’s excellent female reporters such as **Dara Smith** and **Jenella Precieux**, braved shootouts and got down in the trenches with the people who were hurting.

We have seen TVJ’s **Latoya Spence** riding rough seas with the Coast Guard, covering news that in the past was reserved for male reporters.



MC Blakka Ellis and journalist Patrina Pink

Some findings from the Global Media Monitoring Project

- Reporters rely on males as spokespersons (80% male) or for expert opinions even as Caribbean societies boast the advancement of women in many sectors.
- Females are outnumbered in the Caribbean news by 1 female to 3 males (25:75). In Jamaica the ratio is 3 females to 7 males.
- Male politicians dominate Jamaican news; they make up one-third (1/3) of all males and vastly outnumber any other types of men in the news.
- In the news women are 3 times more likely than men to be identified in terms of family relationships.
- In the Caribbean, 86% of voices on radio are male—as reporters, presenters or interviewees.

The **Global Media Monitoring Project** is an initiative of the World Association for Christian Communication. The Caribbean research for **GMMP** was coordinated by Women’s Media Watch.

For more information call WMW or visit www.whomakesthenews.org

As managers of newsrooms, we make no exception for gender when we assign – nor would female reporters accept anything else. We too enjoy the thrill of ferreting out information and being first with the news. We run shoulder to shoulder with our male colleagues during fire, storm or shootout.

We too stay up all night waiting for hurricanes when they threaten and we too stand with families as they grieve for loved ones as much as we jump with them when they celebrate achievement.

Who makes it into the news?

The finding that 75% of those who appear in the news are male compared to 25% female (GMMP Caribbean) may not necessarily reflect a media bias. It could be a reflection of the male-dominated civic structure of Caribbean societies. Even in the public sector where there is (cont. p.4)

WMW PROFILE

Kameela Abdul-Maajid



Meet **WMW's** Programme Coordinator, **Kameela Abdul-Maajid**.

Kameela has been an aspiring member of **WMW** since 2008 and joined the Staff in March 2010.

Kameela is the mother of three bright and energetic children. You may wonder how she balances being a mom of three along with being a part-time lecturer at UCC and part-time at **WMW**.

She would tell you "it's hectic but I enjoy every minute spent with my children." She is very passionate about her children and making decisions that will have a positive impact on their lives.

If you still have time to keep up, **Kameela** makes jewelry and is also a trained massage therapist. A woman of many talents and a 'supermom' – as we often call her.

Kameela's goal is to ... "create positive change through my approach to life, in trying to be the change I want to see. Since having children I have become more aware of many things around that affect them, hence the urgency to be a part of the change going forward.

What does **Kameela** like most about being at **WMW**?
 "The focus on empowering women. I have always appreciated the work the organization does, and now that I am a part of the staff I have a new appreciation and love for what the 'foundation women' have given us, the younger generation, in creating this organization.



Look out for Upcoming WMW Events:

- March 1: presentation at Violence Prevention Alliance 'Peace Forum'
- March 6 & 8: **WMW** display booths at International Women's day events
- March 1, 15, 29 & April 5, 19: 'All a Wi Togedda', 9am on Roots 96.1 FM
- March 5: **Euphoria** event to celebrate International Women's Day
- March 12 & May 7: **Participatory Training Techniques** for Trainers
- March to May: **Youth, Media & Advocacy**, training course for Young Leaders
- March 23: Workshop on **Human Rights, Gender** and HIV-AIDS
- April 2: **Gender-awareness** training for Women Leaders (Hanover)
- May 14: **WMW** Annual General Meeting.



Above, Trainee Social Workers in **WMW's** module on **Gender and Development** offered at the Social Welfare Training Centre, University of the West Indies

Below, some communications students in the course "**Media Gender & Development**", taught by **WMW** for the Caribbean Institute of Media and Development (CARIMAC)



L-R: Jean Lowrie-Chin, Blakka, Ellis, Judith Wedderburn, Taitu Heron at **GMMP** Launch

Gender in the News Room *(cont from p.3)*

female dominance, many spokespersons on critical issues are male. Women often shy away from commenting, leaving the microphones to their male counterparts.

In the media, undeclared bias is a counter-productive force— and the editor who focuses on covering male subjects will soon be out of a job. Editors look through the eyes of professionalism – covering whatever and whoever is newsworthy without any consideration of gender.

Shifts in Roles of Women and Men

There has been a tremendous shift in the traditional roles of women and men both in Jamaica and globally. Much of this has to do with sheer economic realities. Many of our women have embraced education as a tool of advancement and have taken the welfare of their families in their hands. We also recognize that some of our men have abandoned the traditional role of provider and protector.

Shifts in who covers what will necessarily reflect the local and global trends. In media we speak of balance and fairness in our coverage. Balance and fairness, for us, relate to presenting all sides of a story and how we make them relevant to our existing contexts.

*Jenni Campbell, President
 Press Association of Jamaica*



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