



WOMEN'S MEDIA WATCH

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14 South Avenue, Kingston 10, Jamaica, West Indies
Tel: (876) 926-0882 Fax: (876) 929-7079 Email: wmwam@hotmail.com

Child Pornography in Jamaica

According to the United Nations, “**child pornography**” includes, but is not limited to, “any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes,” as well as the use of a child to create such a representation.

Two years ago Jamaica took the step to implement legislation prohibiting child pornography: the **Child Pornography Act (2009)**.

Until then, there was no separate law prohibiting child pornography; which came under the Obscene Publication Act of 1927 and carried a maximum fine of \$40 or three months' imprisonment

Living in a globalised world where there is increased access to information including internet,



cable, illegal DVDs, has opened up pornography to a wider Jamaican public, in particular to child pornography. While technology offers unparalleled opportunities for

children and adults to learn about the world in which we live, it has also had an immeasurable impact on the sexual exploitation of children, specifically through the distribution of sexually exploitive images of children.

For Jamaica, which comprises 38% children, this poses a significant threat and opens up the society's existing vulnerabilities. These include high rates of child poverty (22% of all children in Jamaica live in households classified as poor); Jamaica's poor record in guaranteeing child rights as evidenced by rates of parental abuse, neglect, wounding, child murder (98 in 2010) and treatment of children under the care of the State. *(continued on p. 3)*

WMW Launches Training Manual

WMW's Hilary Nicholson presents a copy of *“Whose Perspective?”* to the University of the West Indies Librarian. The Launch was co-hosted by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung & Women's World Day of Prayer. WMW produced the Manual with support from UN Women, UN Trust Fund, World Association for Christian Communication and the Canadian Gender Equality Programme.



“Whose Perspective?”

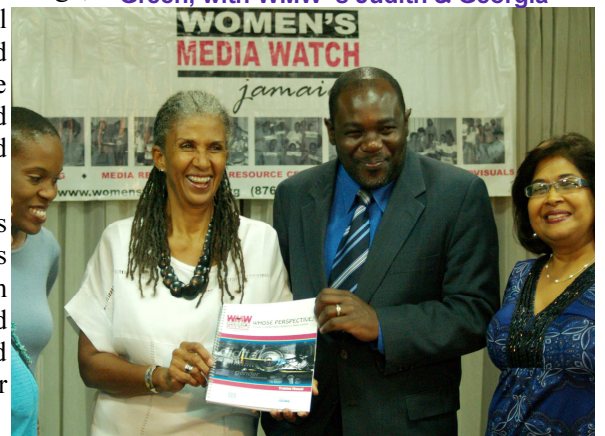
Women's Media Watch launched its new Training Manual *“Whose Perspective? A Guide to Gender-Aware Analysis of Media Content* in November, 2011.

Whose Perspective? boasts a high quality eye-catching, full-colour design, accessible language and practical exercises, grounded in solid research.. These features combine to show how the media work and how they construct our gendered reality.

The **Manual** encourages media professionals and citizens to create media messages which counter gender stereotypes and challenge the use of sexism and violence. It show to use a ‘gender lens’ to interact with media.

Whose Perspective? is a bold push towards enhancing media literacy and gender-responsive communications. It is available from WMW for \$2500.00.

Below, PROCOMM's Jean Lowrie Chin (R), Broadcasting Commission's CEO Cordel Green, with WMW's Judith & Georgia



Sexual Harassment - *still no legislation?*

Janet heads a single parent family with two children, working as an assistant supervisor in a telephone company for the past year. During that time her boss, Mr. Gordon has been overly friendly and has made it painfully clear that he finds her attractive. "Working your assets today Janet...." he smirks and winks as he strolls by her desk.

Though his comments make Janet uncomfortable, finding another job that offers similar benefits is difficult. As a single parent medical coverage for her two children is critical.

Mr. Gordon calls her into his office and offers her a raise and a promotion, if she is willing to have a drink with him later tonight. "I love your drive and energy....let's take it outside the office" he says. "The promotion would be a step in the right direction for you." Is Mr. Gordon abusing his power as employer to try to make Janet pay a "price" for something she is clearly qualified for and deserves?

Even with the common occurrence of incidents like this and the international and local outcry Jamaica still has no law to specifically address sexual harassment.

It is now several years since the Bureau of Women's Affairs (BWA) spearheaded the drafting of a **National Policy on Sexual Harassment**.

In April 2009 a national consultation on the issue was hosted jointly by **Women's Media Watch** and the **BWA**. At that time both the former Minister of National Security Dwight Nelson and former Minister with responsibility for Gender Affairs Hon. Olivia 'Babsy' Grange committed to ensuring the implementation of legislation based on the National Policy. Today it remains policy.

Recently, **WMW** was informed that the policy is being reworked based on suggestions made by the Ministry of National Security and is to be re-submitted to parliament. No time line was given.

The National Policy defines Sexual Harassment as:

Unwelcome and unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal sexual conduct which is deemed to be offensive or humiliating to the recipient. It is also considered sexual harassment where the rejection of, or submission to such a conduct is used, implicitly or explicitly, as a basis for a decision which affects that person's job and which creates an intimidating, hostile, humiliating working environment for the recipient.

Though clearly defined, in Jamaica the issue of sexual harassment is unfortunately often misunderstood. It is the coconut vendor who jokes about you being 'wet' when coconut water splashes on you. It is the woman who jokes about the bulge in the front of a man's pants.

How do you differentiate between



sexual harassment and flirting?

Within the cultural context there is sometimes an unspoken acknowledgement that sexually suggestive comments are part of everyday language, a practice that shapes the music we listen to and the jokes we deem to be funny. This, coupled with norms that privilege men's sexual prowess, help to

create an environment in which sexual harassment is an ever-present feature that shapes the lives of women - and sometimes men - in Jamaica.

In fact sexual harassment at the workplace affects both genders. However, research has shown that female employees are more likely to be affected.

What is the impact of harassment? It devastates the person's self-esteem and confidence. It is a degrading and career limiting experience that affects the person

psychologically, professionally, financially, and socially.

Sexual harassment not only affects the employee but the company or organization in which it takes place. There is decreased productivity, increased team conflict, decreased job satisfaction and loss of staff.

WMW has learnt that **Staff Orders** which refer to the code of ethics that govern the conduct of public sector

'zero tolerance' approach to sexual harassment

workers, do not speak specifically to the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace even though there is a National Policy. A senior official at the Ministry of Tourism did concede that something needed to be done about this oversight and gave the assurance that a committee would be put in place to address this matter.

On the other hand, in the private sector there are examples of work place policies that speak specifically to sexual harassment. **Capital and Credit Merchant Bank Ltd** is one such forward-thinking organization. Senior Vice President of Human Resource and Administration, Ms Jennifer Anderson in a telephone interview with **WMW** said that the bank has always maintained a 'zero tolerance' approach to sexual harassment. This is made clear to employees upon joining the company. She added with pride that to date the bank has not experienced any such incident.

Mr. Michael Thompson, General Manager of **Source Industrial Sales and Service** maintained a similar position and pointed out that should an employee be found guilty, that would be met with immediate dismissal.

The impact of sexual harassment particularly in the workplace is far reaching and long lasting.

Despite years of advocating for legislation **WMW** will continue to call for the National Sexual Harassment Policy to become law.

WMW

Child Pornography in Jamaica...

Jamaica also has a high incidence of incest, rape, early sexual exposure, teenage pregnancy and sexual violence against children

An estimated 7,500 children live and/or work on the street and child prostitution exists especially among children between the ages of 10 and 18 years.

There has been an increase in the circulation of pornographic recordings - whether by cell phone or email - showing persons, including schoolchildren, having sex. The *Gleaner* first reported the seriousness of the problem in 2006 after a video, featuring a group of boys sexually assaulting a young schoolgirl under the eye of a church deacon, was brought to the newspaper's attention.

Jamaica's Child Pornography Act 2009 provides for prison sentences of up to 20 years and fines up to \$500,000

In 2008, a video surfaced depicting two students at a Jamaican high school engaged in a sexual act. The amateur video, which appears to have been recorded with a cell phone by another student, had been circulating via the Internet for several weeks.

The current patterns in dancehall tend towards sexual explicitness and hardcore sex (and concurrent influence on youth) and normalize the greater possibilities of pornography, including child pornography.

Jamaica's **2009 Child Pornography Act** provides for sentences of up to 20 years' imprisonment, as well as fines of as much as \$500,000. Crimes include visual presentations with children engaged in sexual activities; audio

recordings or written material that has, as its dominant characteristic, the description, presentation or representation, for a sexual purpose, sexual activity with a child; and any audiovisual or written material that advocates sexual activity with a child.

The legislation makes commercial sexual exploitation of children a criminal offence and will apply to the production, possession, importation, exportation and distribution of child pornography.

Jamaica's **Child Pornography Act 2009** derives from international conventions which Jamaica has ratified, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocol on the sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (which Jamaica has signed, but not ratified).

The Jamaican law defines sexual activities as actual or simulated sexual intercourse; activity other than sexual intercourse involving the penetration of the anus, vagina or mouth with any part of a person's body, or with another object; touching a sexual organ or anal region in a manner which is reasonably considered as sexual; bestiality; masturbation; or sadistic or masochistic abuse.

While it is clear that pornography exists in Jamaica, it is not clear how widely children are targeted, exploited and used in the production and dissemination of pornography.

However, given the number of children participating in prostitution



Young leaders debate sexism & violence in media, in WMW training funded by Women's World Day of Prayer (Germany)



and the reasons why, as reported in an ILO 2000 study, there is a direct connection between children living in troubled households, and/or in poverty, and their participation in prostitution and living or working on the streets.

It is this pool of vulnerable children who are likely targets for exploitation.

Pornography is damaging and demeaning overall. Adult pornography is sexually explicit material that may *harm women and harm the portrayal of women*. Many feminist definitions go on to define "pornography" as sexually explicit material that depicts women's subordination in such a way as to *endorse* that subordination

Pornography also harms men in gender stereotypical ways and promotes hyper-domination and false authority. Objectification of both women and men occurs.

Pornographic objectification may affect sexual violence in society: it typically involves the depiction of violence, women tied up, stretched, hanged, f...d, gang-banged, whipped, beaten and begging for more, while portraying men as having the strength and stamina to do it.

Add children to this and the damage can be tremendous. It violates their human



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WMW PROFILE

Dorothy Purge



WMW sat down recently with member **Dorothy Purge...**

WMW What keeps you busy?

At this point in my life I am no longer busy with family. After age twenty-seven (youngest child) I think 'dem lot' are all grown up... but even with children all grown my days are full!

I juggle my professional work as part of the management team of a medical equipment and supplies distribution company, with finding time to indulge my creative side in writing articles, stories, and editing photos.

WMW: What are you passionate about?

Photography and writing! I was born with a camera—though my mother thought that I was born with a pen!

WMW: What are your hopes for the future?

As far as career goes, it's time for me to change from the hustle and bustle of a business office to being a full-fledged writer, mainly of children's stories. I find writing for children quite soothing and I walk around with lots of stories in my head.

My goal is to get these stories published. They are mainly about cultural life in Jamaica, past and present. I would also like to publish one or two books on Customer Service.

WMW: What do you like about being a member of WMW?

I like the respect that group members have for one another. More so, I admire the group's on-going thrust for change in areas of media which impact negatively on women and children in the society.

Whoops! I almost forgot - since being a member of WMW, I have learned to wear skates and grow wings!



"What's Hot...What's Not"

Young leaders demystify sex, gender and violence in media messages



In **WMW's** project on Media Literacy Training young Leaders (left & below) use role play to explore sex and gender in media portrayals. Participants learned how to critically analyze adverts, news and entertainment media. They suggested some alternative positive portrayals of youth. The Project was supported by Women's World Day of Prayer, Germany.



At left CARIMAC students of Journalism in the **WMW** course on *Media, Gender and Development* come together to celebrate with WMW member Georgia Love (centre).



Child Pornography in Jamaica *(cont. from p.3)*

rights, exposes them to high-risk and life-threatening behaviour—and disrupts their education.

Jamaica's 2009 legislation helped to raise awareness and attach new urgency to child pornography. However, much greater awareness is needed to expose Jamaican children's vulnerability—and to protect them. Additionally, mechanisms to treat children who have been exposed to child pornography are not readily available, leaving yet another area of child rights poorly attended to.

Ending child pornography begins at home in how we raise our children, ensuring that they are loved, cared for, well-supported and encouraged to do well.

If you observe or suspect child pornography in any area that you traverse, be sure to report it to the Children's Registry, or the Child Development Agency, the Centre for the Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse - or your nearest police station.



Are you interested in becoming involved with Women's Media Watch-Jamaica?

Contact us at:

14 South Avenue
Kingston 10, Jamaica

Tel: 876 926 0882

Fax: 876 929 7079

email : wmwjam@hotmail.com
www.womensmediawatch.org