



WOMEN'S MEDIA WATCH

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Legal strides bring new hope

The year 2007 began in a whirlwind for **Women's Media Watch**. First we launched our website, which is chock full of information and resources. See page 5 and check it out at www.womensmediawatch.org



Members of Faith United Youth Club prepare skit around Gender and Sexuality

Our project **Reclaiming Wi Self - Building Youth Potential** had us jetting off to Botany Bay, a community overlooking a beautiful coastline in St. Thomas. To get there, we took a dusty obstacle race around potholes, craters and some good ol' country hairpin bends. On Sunday afternoons for three months, determined members of Faith United Youth Club attended their **WMW** training. Do you know about **'gender flexing'**? Visit Botany Bay, and you'll hear that it means being flexible rather than fixed about gender and moving away from gender biases that limit young people's potential. It's also about respecting gender equity, and developing peaceful gender relations.

Beyond Botany Bay, many more young trainees are strengthening skills in critical thinking around gender and the media, with **WMW** - and learning the gendered underpinnings of HIV/AIDS. We traveled to St. James, Trelawny, St. Catherine and Manchester to train over 140 student leaders and 30 guidance counselors from high schools across Jamaica. This was a joint venture between **WMW** and the Ministry of Education.

As we plunge into April and May, still focusing on building youth potential, we are excited to receive invitations from RISE Life Management and the Lions Club of New Kingston, to provide gender-awareness training for Youth Facilitators. 'Nuff thanks to Dave Noel, Zara, Mbala, Michael, Ali and Solomon who are co-facilitating with **WMW**.

Rights a di plan, wid CEDAW in wi han

Have you ever thought of being a Rights Promoter? Recently **WMW** proudly graduated twenty Women's Human Rights Promoters—energetic and determined women who completed the three-week course entitled **Rights a di plan, wid CEDAW in wi han**. What's **CEDAW** you

ask? The Rights Promoters will tell you that it is a United Nations treaty that can be used for women's human rights advocacy and to say **NO** to sexual and gender discrimination. **CEDAW** is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This training was co-hosted by **WROC***, **FES***, **PANOS**, **JHWA*** and **WWP***.

So, what's next on the horizon for **WMW**? Look out for our Survey of Women's and Men's Participation in the News, our Gender and Leadership training programme, our useful and popular booklet **Gender Matters**—and more. And, as Parliament makes strides to revise legislation on sexual offences, we at **WMW** will join the Bureau of Women's Affairs and other bodies to continue lobbying for legislation on Sexual Harassment.

WMW's current programmes are kindly supported by the World Association of Christian Communication, Jamaica Women of Washington, **MATCH-Canada** and **FES*** **WMW**

***WROC**-Women's Resource & Outreach Centre, **FES**- Friederich Ebert Stiftung, **JHWA**-Jamaica Household Workers' Association, **WWP**-Women Working for Progress

Goodbyes and Hellos at Women's Media Watch

As 2007 dawned, **Women's Media Watch** felt both glad and sad... Glad that 2007 heralds the 3rd year of our newsmagazine **Looking Out**. But, sad that the creative designer, Erynn Lyster, returned to Canada. We miss Erynn's effervescence, but she remains a much loved, committed overseas member of **WMW**. She has stayed in the development sector, and currently works with **CUSO** in Canada.

We are also very glad to welcome the new members of our Board of Directors, though sad to say goodbye to the outgoing members. For a little suspense we will wait until next issue to introduce our new Board. For now, we extend our heartfelt thanks to outgoing Board Members for several years of service: Marjan de Bruin, Fae Ellington, Suzanne Francis-Brown, Sonia Mills and Grace Cameron. **WMW**



Prudence, Joy, Opal and Flava enjoy promoting women's human rights

Sshhh... Sexual Harassment

What's the fuss?

Talking to people, especially men, about 'gender work' or women's rights often brings out politely puzzled looks or subtle scoffing that suggest that I'm just one more woman who doesn't appreciate 'how good women have it'. After all, women are "taking over everything", which can only mean "wi set", an a "juss greedy wi greedy!"

Though Jamaica is a more equitable place for me than it was for my mother, **sexual discrimination** is one area with obvious differences between men's and women's experiences. Women are more likely to be subjected to sexual harassment such as unwanted, offensive sexist comments and advances, which usually occur on the street, in public transport, in classes, at sporting events... The more serious types of sexual harassment such as propositions and demands for 'sex' often include intimidation or threats. They generally occur behind closed doors.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence are like 9mm guns with silencers: they may be subtle but they are undeniably deadly

While writing this article I thought of a T-shirt design: 'Jamaica: Land of Impunity, no care how yu guilty'. On my way to work one generous young man offered to do various things to the parts of my body he liked. So you ask, what's the fuss? I shouldn't have to fear that the security guard who aggressively calls to me as I walk home at night, may one day over-step his mark and sexually violate me.

The fuss is because sexual harassment and sexual violence make victims constantly fearful of perpetrators and often ashamed of

Forced consent means that the person agrees—but under threat or coercion, and often when she or he feels overpowered

their own sexuality. As if there is something THEY do, or who they are, that causes the negative attention. With a culture of violence burgeoning in Jamaica we can't forget the other 'weapons' which strike terror in people's hearts and bodies. Sexual harassment and sexual violence are like 9 mm guns with silencers: they may be subtle but are undeniably deadly. Violence which stems from an abuse of power and seeks to undermine a person's human rights, *must* be taken seriously and be punished.

Debates about man and woman 'tings' are complicated because of the living, thinking, choosing human beings involved. In cases of sexual harassment where the victim consents to some kind of sexual interaction, they usually do so in a situation of **FORCED consent**. Forced consent means that the person agreed—but under threat or coercion. In this case, it is clear that there is a difference in power between victim and harasser. A woman may fear that unless she gives in to sexual requests she will lose her job. Or she may be told by her superior that sex is her only means to advancement, or worse that she may be killed. In this situation, it is understandable that she appears to 'accept' the harassment.

Many victims of continued sexual harassment feel that they have no choice.

The last time we wrote about sexual harassment in our

Newsletter (November 2005) the Bureau of Women's Affairs, FES* and **WMW** were hosting focus groups islandwide, to get feedback on the proposed National Sexual Harassment Policy. In all groups, both men and women agreed that a policy would be insufficient and that a **law was absolutely necessary**.

Many useful ideas and suggestions as to why we need legislation arose from the focus groups (see p.5). Without laws against sexual harassment, participants said the harassing will continue and incidents will go unreported, as is the case with other sexual crimes,— particularly if harassed persons fear there is no recourse for them, nor repercussions for the harassers.

We love to say "nutten no change a Jamaica" but thankfully that's not the case with the National Sexual Harassment Policy. It has progressed since 2005 and has started on a path to becoming legislation. The Sexual Harassment Working Committee has 'signed off' on the final draft of the policy. This document was submitted to Cabinet for approval and tabling in Parliament. The process should begin May 21, 2007. The draft policy must be fully

Continued on page 6



Youth and Sexual Violence *in Jamaica*

Gender based violence, particularly as it relates to women and children, is reaching crisis proportions. The wide gap between cases reported and cases cleared up has not reduced significantly over the last decade. Overall, more youth are participating in violent crimes and are increasingly victims of all major crimes of murder, shooting, rape, carnal abuse and robbery.

Youth constitute some 50% of the offenders and victims of gender-based violence. Of the 368 persons arrested in 2006 for rape, 47% were between 12-25 years, while for carnal abuse 56% of those arrested were in this age group. This high rate of youth offenders has continued since 2002 (ESSJ, 2002). In 2002, 52% of total offenders of rape were between 12-25 years, and 59% of the offenders of carnal abuse were in the same age category. Among victims, there has been a shift from children and youth (5-24 years) making up three-quarters of the cases of rape or carnal abuse in 2002, to half the victims by 2006 (ESSJ 2002, 2006). But the disturbing reality is that these figures only represent cases that are reported.

Young people are more vulnerable to sexual violence and more likely to become abusers or violators themselves due to contributing factors such as poor parenting, child abuse, sub-standard living conditions, low levels of education, and lack of social services.

Popular media images of super-aggressive men, alongside highly sexualized, compliant greasy female bodies—as in music videos - affect young people’s behaviours and attitudes towards self and the other sex. These factors all intersect, they contribute to damaging gender relations and fuel sexual violence.

The extent of sexual violence in Jamaica is revealed by data from the Victim Support Unit (VSU) of the Ministry of Justice. Since 1998 the Unit has been providing support in all 14 parishes to survivors of violence-related crimes, through counselling, referral, reintegration, technical and legal advice.

Between 2002 and 2006 the total cases increased from 1,441 to 2,804. Over 70% of these cases were violence against women. In 2002 the VSU handled 941 cases of rape and carnal abuse combined. By 2006 the intake increased to 1,261 of which 686 cases were carnal abuse and 575 were for rape (see

Violence Related Cases at Victim Support Unit

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Domestic Violence	209	314	580	677	711
Rape	478	492	379	469	575
Carnal Abuse	463	568	495	612	686
Shooting	47	64	109	145	120
Murder	244	267	248	434	712
Total Crimes	1,441	1,705	1,811	2,337	2 804
Gender-based violence as percentage of total	79.8	80.6	80.3	75.2	70.33

Source: Ministry of Justice, Victim Support Unit

chart). One third of all the Unit’s cases are for rape; another third are carnal abuse.

Murder during this period increased from 244 to 712. In 2006, VSU handled as many cases of domestic violence (711) as murder cases (712). See chart.

From 2002 to 2006 the number of cases at the VSU doubled... Over 70% involve violence against women such as rape and carnal abuse — half the victims are children under 16.

The survivors of gender-based violence and other violent crimes who go to the Victim Support Unit represent only the cases that have been reported. The wide gap that exists between the number of reported cases and the number that remain unresolved in the legal system urgently needs to be addressed.

In 2002, the police reported 1, 145 cases of rape and carnal abuse combined, of which only 570 were cleared up. In 2003, there were 1,308 cases with 738 cases cleared up. By 2006, of the 1,269 reported cases of rape and carnal abuse,

only half (636) were cleared up (ESSJ, 2002, 2003, 2006). With regards to the uncleared cases, where are the survivors and how they are coping? These are critical questions needing answers.

Gina Rey Forrest, poet-photographer and rape survivor, puts the impact of gender-based violence into context:

“... Rape is not about a sexual act but a demonstration of power by a predator.... It’s not a manifestation of desire except to demean and overpower, to destroy and victimize, to abuse and brutalize.... It is an act that murders, not just physically either, but a de-capitalization of the spirit, an unending fall into an abyss.”

The amendments now being made in Parliament to the Offences against the Persons Act and the Incest Punishment Act, are well-timed to give this scourge of sexual violence the attention it needs. We hope the result brings more justice and support for survivors, and will offer them the social love they need in order to recover. — Taitu Heron



Georgia & Keishagay (right) of WMW discuss gender-based violence and sexuality with St. Catherine students

10 things men can do...

1 Think of gender-based violence as a MEN'S issue not only a WOMEN'S problem.

2 If someone you know is abusing his female partner, or is disrespectful or abusive to women -- try to talk to him. Urge him to seek help. Consult a friend, relative, advisor or counsellor for assistance.

DON'T REMAIN SILENT

3 Have the courage to question your own attitudes. Don't be defensive when something you do or say hurts someone. Learn and understand how your own attitudes or actions may inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence, and work toward changing them.

4 If you suspect that a woman you know is being abused or has been sexually assaulted, gently ask if **you can help**.

5 If you are emotionally, psychologically, physically, or sexually abusive to women, or have been in the past, seek professional help NOW.

6 Be an ally to women who are working to end gender based violence. Support their efforts. Take initiatives yourself! Raise money for a crisis centre, counselling service or a battered women's shelter. Volunteer with gender violence prevention projects.

7 Attend programmes, take courses, watch films, read articles and books about different kinds of manship and masculinity, about gender inequality, and the root causes of gender-based violence.

8 Don't fund sexism. Don't support it. Refuse to purchase any magazine, rent any video, subscribe to any website, go to any movie, buy any music that portrays girls or women in a sexually degrading or abusive manner.

PROTEST SEXISM IN THE MEDIA

9 Mentor and show boys how to respect girls and women. Teach them how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Encourage other men to do likewise, support anti-sexist men's programs.

10 LEAD BY EXAMPLE .

Adapted from "The Delta Project", Jackson Katz, 1999. www.jacksonkatz.com

Men and women call for Laws

against Sexual Harassment

Women and men leaders from communities and organizations around the island are calling for laws against Sexual Harassment.

In focus groups hosted by WMW, FES and the Bureau of Women's Affairs, these leaders feel strongly that we must introduce legislation. A national policy cannot deal with the urgent problem of sexual harassment. A Law, they say, could provide the following:

Safety, Protection, Compensation

- Laws will show people that sexual harassment is serious!
- Laws offer protection for both victims *and* potential offenders, deter harassers, and thus prevent physical or sexual assault
- Victims will feel a sense of justice; they'll be compensated for the trauma and loss of income if the harassment forces them to leave the organization.

Human Rights

- Sexual harassment is a violation of our human rights - our rights must be protected by law.
- A Law will be empowering (especially for women and girls who are the main victims)

Sanctions, Deterrent, Accountability

- A law would deter potential predators and harassers, and ensure sanctions against anyone who violates the law
- We need a law that can be in both civil and criminal courts

Public Education

- New Laws must be accompanied by wide-scale public education so that society will be properly informed
- Persons in the justice system need to be sensitive and unbiased
- Documentation and annual reporting of cases will reveal the aggregate impact.

What's your opinion? Talk to your friends about the issue. Call us or send an email!



Better Laws Ahead

Do you remember the popular radio programme *Under the Law* that raised our awareness about our rights and responsibilities under Jamaica's laws. It was very effective for public education as it combined two Jamaican favourites: drama and radio.

Legal reform is needed but so often it's just downright **S...L...O...W...** and many times we simply don't understand the law or how it impacts our lives. It's a 'Catch 22' that makes us throw our hands in the air and think "what's the point?!"

Recently, **WMW** phones have been ringing from persons expressing shock at reports of sexual abuse of girls and women. One example is the recent case of a KLAS sports producer who sexually assaulted a 13 year old girl for **3 years**, and repeatedly threatened to kill her. He therefore committed a series of offences. We at WMW are not legal experts but the **SUSPENDED** sentence which Mr.KLAS now enjoys blew our minds! While there are many legal issues in this case we'll focus on one.

Since the child was over 12 and below 16 years the sexual offence is called carnal abuse. Currently the law treats carnal abuse as a **misdemeanour**—not as the more serious criminal offence of rape. In response to the sentencing of the radio producer, Margarette Macaulay, attorney-

at-law, said "one would hope and expect that an adult male convicted of carnal abuse of a child of 13 years, and who had threatened the child's life to ensure her silence [would] have had the book [of penalties] thrown at him rather than be given a slap on the wrist." Mrs. Macaulay is clearly saying that in this case the law had no teeth and facilitated a seemingly unjust decision by the judge.

This case shows us why **Camille, of Combined Disabilities Assoc. makes her point** and how the laws relating to sexual offences need to be changed. Last July, the **Offences Against the Person (Amendment) Bill** and the **Incest (Amendment) Bill** which have been wallowing in parliament since 1995 were finally retabled. Proposed amendments would modernize the laws, make them more applicable to complex cases and remove gender biases, particularly in relation to sexual offences. At last, in January 2007, deliberations began with the Joint Select Committee.

An encouraging part of this legal reform process is the public's involvement. For both Bills, submissions came from bodies such as the Office of the Children's Advocate, the Child Development Agency, Woman Inc, the



Camille, of Combined Disabilities Assoc. makes her point

Bureau of Women's Affairs, Victim Support Unit, Registrar Magistrate of the Children's Court, Combined Disabilities Association, and the Society for the Upliftment and Advancement of Women via Education. Submissions also came from a rape survivor, a brother of a woman who was sexually assaulted and killed, and an offender.

Some proposed amendments to the Bills are highlighted below:

Bill to Amend the Offences Against the Persons Act (OAP)

- Eliminate the category of carnal abuse and simply call it rape. This would make the rape of girls a more serious crime and eligible for harsher sentencing.

Continued on page 6

WMW hits the WWW

Women's Media Watch launches its website!

Jamaican women are known to *tun' dem han' mek fashion* so despite **WMW's** hectic schedule we have spread our wings further and launched our new website.

WMW has always advocated for healthy portrayals of women, men and children in the media, so this is what we aim to do on our website.

With the ever increasing changes in technology which significantly influence the face of media, **WMW's** website is as dynamic and resourceful as our members. Take some time to browse—you'll find all kinds of interesting information.

How can you make the best of

the website? Well, it provides a comprehensive look at **WMW** as well as downloadable versions of valuable resource materials. A click of the button is all you need to keep abreast of informative publications, statistics, summaries of research, press releases and **WMW's** newsletter *Looking Out*. You'll also see the exciting videos available for purchase on topical gender themes.

Is your workplace, school or community in need of creative ways to address sensitive issues? Let the website show you how **WMW** enables you to accomplish this through the use of **WMW's** multimedia presentations, interactive workshops, drama,

video and music. **WMW** will even script and perform short skits on any theme you identify in order to get your message across. Other services offered by **WMW** are design and facilitation of participatory training events, focus group facilitation and the provision of speakers and panelists.

So why not explore the website and take advantage of the materials provided or share the information with a friend. And as you do so, you may be motivated to volunteer and become a member of this vibrant organisation and guess what... on the website, you'll find out how to do just that! -Lecia-Gaye Gordon

WMW PROFILE

Joy Walcott-Francis



WMW sat down with Joy Walcott-Francis volunteer WMW member...

What keeps you busy?

I have a hectic schedule between work at the

University of the West Indies, church and school.

I recently started a one year Diploma in Education—I especially want to help students with their writing. I'm very active in my church, where I'm part of the Performing Arts Ministry. I also do volunteer teaching in the JAMAL remedial literacy programme. I got married in 2004, so family is also a priority.

What are you passionate about?

Gender inequity! Especially as it relates to extremely poor women who are voiceless and marginalised, and treated as if their lives mean nothing. My ultimate satisfaction would be to immerse myself totally in community work that would alleviate that situation. I am also passionate about teaching.

What are your future goals?

To begin a PhD that could enhance my contribution to the field of Social Sciences – and to do research on the social factors related to cardiovascular illnesses in women.

What is it like being a member of WMW?

Volunteering with WMW has been a great joy as it allows me to be involved with communities, plus interact with and learn from people with similar interests; this has been invaluable. I wish I had started earlier and had the time to do more! WMW

Better Laws Ahead

Continued from page 5

- Acknowledge abuse of power in the definition of rape. This would minimize the tendency to blame victims of sexual crimes eg. because of behaviour, dress or lifestyle.
- Include the disabled as a vulnerable group that are targeted.
- Broaden the scope of counselling options to victims, by law.
- Restrict the use of a complainant's sexual history in court.
- Require tertiary institutions to report crimes that occur on their campuses.
- Include acquaintance rape as a distinct category of rape. This is very important because of the cultural acceptance that spending money, for example on a date, means that the receiver 'owes' sex. This strong tradition of 'transactional sex' makes acquaintance rape seem justifiable, so this offence would often slip through the cracks.
- Include gender neutral language and add a new provision for '**grievous sexual assault**' that could protect boys and men and carry the same sentencing as rape. This new provision would cover penetration of *any part of a person's body by any part of another person's body or instrument without that person's permission.*

Bill to Amend the Incest Act (IP)

The amendments would recognize incest as an offence liable to a maximum sentence of life, by persons 16 years or over. Incest offenders might include *inter alia* (Latin for 'among other things') grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece, persons in *loco parentis* ('in place of a parent'), and 'step' relationships. New provisions will broaden the term 'incest' to include abuse of children by persons in 'positions of trust', such as health workers, medical doctors, educators, ministers of religion, etc.

We still have a way to go...

A legal team will make the amendments based on the Committee's agreements and A.J. Nicholson, Committee Chair, will also make a presentation to Parliament. Hopefully, priority will be given to wide public education around the amended laws.

So, it looks as if the changes we have been awaiting for over a decade will come to light in 2007 – where all missions may become possible! WMW



Youth in St. Thomas use drama-in-education techniques to seek solutions to gender conflict in a workshop with Women's Media Watch.

Sexual Harassment...

Continued from page 2

approved before it can be made public.

Activists against sexual discrimination have fought long and hard for women to enjoy the same freedom from fear of sexual violation that most men enjoy. And we have scored some victories. For instance, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) demands that State signatories, including Jamaica, must pull out all the stops to ensure that the human rights of women are protected.

For many a woman, education and determination may facilitate her path up the success ladder, but how easily that path is de-railed by 'Mr. Charming' who puts her in her place - or worse - when she isn't as friendly as she was the month before.

So, am I calling for a world without flirting and sexual fun? Of course not. But as a maturing nation we should be earnest about creating a society where men and women interact respectfully, knowing that disrespect or crossing the line brings serious consequences.

The human rights of the higgler, the office attendant, the manager – even the hustler – must all be affirmed in this Jamaica: Land we Love. - *Georgia Love*

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