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Monitoring the media since 1993

Coverage Worth Celebrating

Key Findings of the 16 Days Campaign: 24/11/2004 – 10/12/2004

Sources to celebrate

A comprehensive assessment of the media's coverage of the 16 Days campaign requires the analysis of a variety of factors, from who was accessed in stories and what they were about, to key messages conveyed and the news value of each item. The MMP is currently analysing and assessing the media's coverage of the campaign, but one particular finding has proved so exceptional that it needs to be highlighted.

The issue of sources, of who gets to speak, who is quoted and commonly asked for their opinion in news stories, is a common indicator of gender coverage in the media. International research, including the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) and the Southern African Gender Media Baseline Study (GMBS), showed that on average women comprise only 17% of all sources, while men account for 83% of sources. The MMP's numerous monitoring projects have shown that in South Africa, the best average achieved was during the 2004 national elections, where women accounted for 23% and men 77% of all news sources. The average breakdown of sources for the 16 Days campaign is 47% women to 53% men. This represents a more than double increase in female sources since earlier in the year. On the surface it seems fairly obvious to suggest that there will be more female sources during a campaign that is focused on no violence against women. The assumption is a fair one, but has not, until now, been supported by patterns of how men and women are sourced. The MMP's research in 1998, which focused specifically on violence against women, showed that men dominated as authors and as sources. The GMBS, conducted by Gender Links, the Media Institute of Southern Africa and the MMP, showed that male sources dominated female sources at 61% to 27%, even in items about gender-based violence (*GMBS South Africa Report, 2003, p. 11*).

To see, a year after the GMBS, that the level of sources in gender-based violence stories is almost equitable is a spectacular achievement for the media. Could it be better? Undoubtedly, yes. Clearly the assumption that there would be more women sources on issues that focused directly on women would mean that in the future, the breakdown might be 80% female sources to 20% male. A look at the table below shows that already some media are well on their way to achieving this ratio. The achievement is even more impressive when it is considered that these results have been achieved not over one day (as often happens with National Women's Day) but over 16 days.

How did it happen?

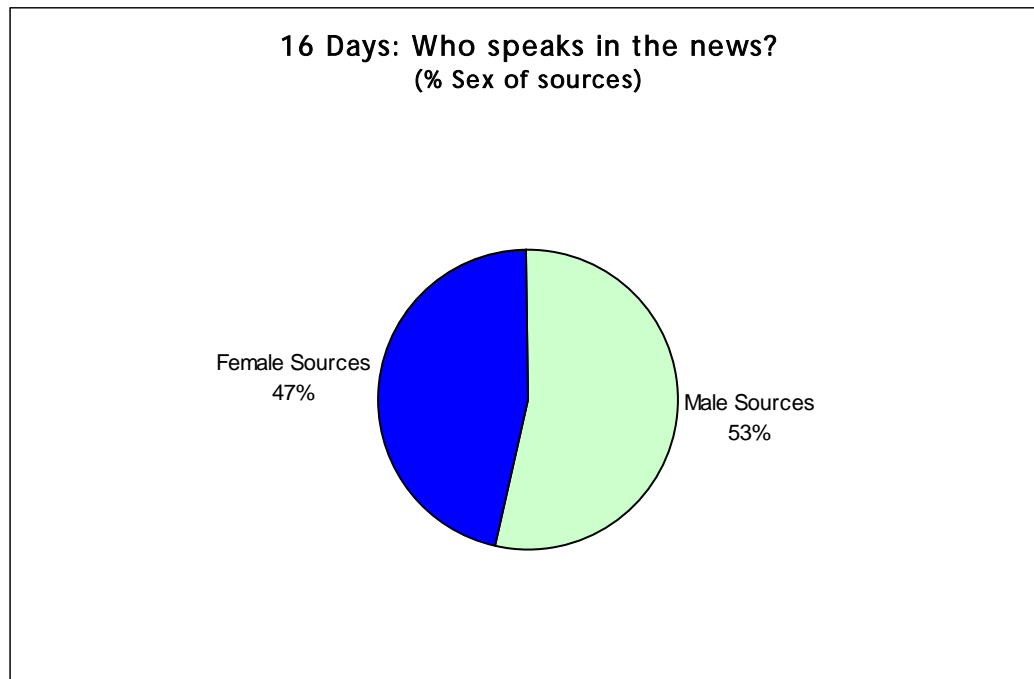
While there can be no question that the media should celebrate their achievement, it should be noted that one of the reasons for the success of the campaign has been the positive partnership between the media, government and civil society.

Government and civil society organisations in South Africa and the region are also to be commended for their efforts during the campaign.

Not all celebration

Those media that did not take up the campaign, as the majority did, have missed out on an important opportunity to address some of the key human rights challenges facing South Africa. In addition, they can only stand on the sidelines and applaud their competitors for having done such a good job.

Sources: Who speaks in the news?



During the MMP's monitoring of the media's coverage of the 16 Days campaign and the related issues, the findings show that the representation of male and female sources is still fairly equitable, with an overall average of 47% women and 53% men. These statistics have not changed since the preliminary results, released on 6/12/2004, despite the records captured into the database almost doubling in quantity as the second week came to a close. The media are to be commended for maintaining this high ratio between male and female sources during the second week of the campaign.

It will be interesting to see if this positive, almost equitable representation of sources will change dramatically after the campaign ends. Previous monitoring by the MMP

over the last 11 years has indicated a tendency for the breakdown in male and female sources to return to “normal” almost immediately after the period of activism ends. This “normal” figure tends to represent a stark imbalance in the numbers of sources accessed, with male sources dominating in almost every news story. If the media is able to maintain such an equitable representation of sources after the campaign has ended, it will be one of the indicators of the extent of the success of the campaign.

How do the media fare on sources?

The MMP’s monitoring results (up to and including 10/12/04) for the individual media reveal the following:

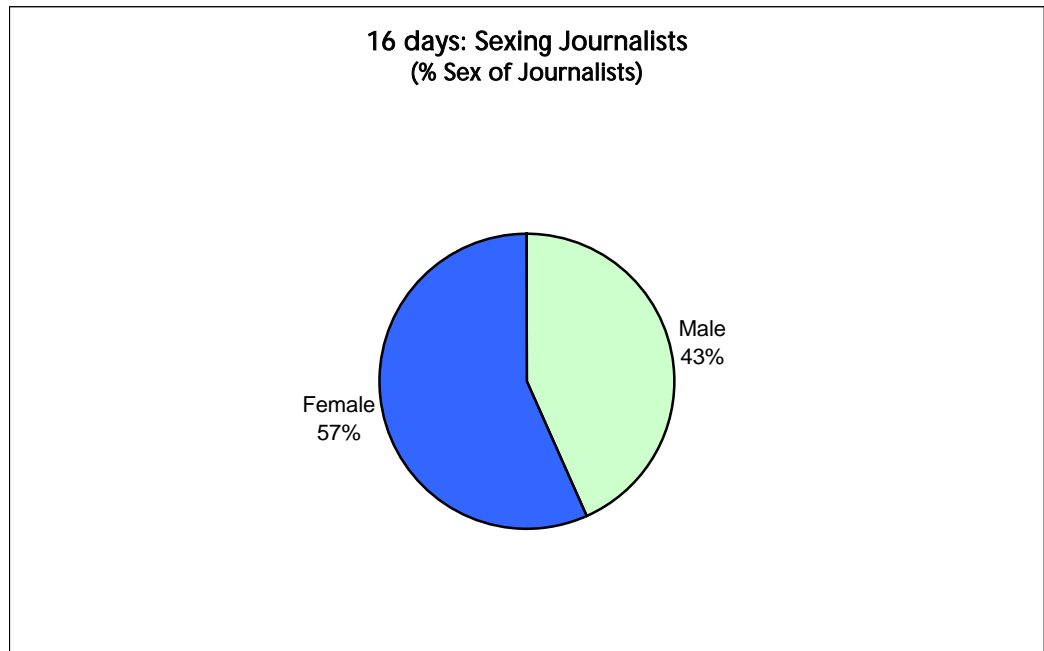
Medium	Female %	Male %
SABC 1	74	26
SABC 3	68	32
SABC 2	62	38
Umhlobo Wenene	60	40
Ukhozi FM	58	42
Business Day	57	43
Beeld	56	44
Sunday Sun	56	44
City Press	52	48
Sowetan	51	49
Mail & Guardian	50	50
Sunday Independent	50	50
Sunday Times	47	53
Daily News	47	53
Daily Sun	47	53
Weekend Argus	47	53
The Star	46	54
Saturday Star	44	56
Kaya FM	44	56
Rapport	44	56
SAFM	43	57
Die Burger	42	58
Bush Radio	42	58
Independent on Saturday	42	58
e-tv	40	60
The Mirror	38	63
Cape Times	36	64
The Citizen	34	66
Y-FM	33	67
Capricorn Voice	28	72
Radio Sonder Grense	25	75
Sowetan Sunday World	19	81
Radio 702	18	82

SABC 1, 2 and 3 are still in the top positions for the numbers of female sources, with SABC 1 above other media at 74% female sources. e-tv is below the other television stations, with only 40% female sources. Some media, such as Radio Sonder Grense and Radio 702, as well as the *Sowetan Sunday World* and the *Capricorn Voice* are at the bottom of the list with less than 30% female sources. Some media's source breakdowns have changed since last week's analysis, with the *Daily News*, the *Daily Sun*, Y-FM, RSG, the *Saturday Star*, Radio 702 and the *Mail & Guardian* some of the media that accessed fewer female sources during the second week of the campaign. Other media have made a concerted effort to access more female sources. Notably, SAfm and *The Citizen's* number of female sources have increased, as has that of Kaya FM and Umhlobo Wenene FM, each by more than 10 %. Impressively, Ukhozi FM has increased its number of female sources by 20% since the last data analysis, and the medium is currently rated fifth highest for the number of female sources. The media are to be commended for making such a positive effort in this regard.

What are the roles of the sources?

While the basic quantitative analysis revealed that the breakdown between male and female sources was fairly equitably distributed, it is interesting to assess the different roles attributed to men and women. Notably, and to be expected, given the focus of the campaign on woman abuse, the role of "victim" dominates the breakdown of female sources. Of the roles allocated to male sources, the role of "perpetrator" dominates more than any role.

Sexing journalists



The MMP's most recent data indicates a similar trend to that of sources. Where the sex of the journalist or author can be identified, women account for 57% of all items. This finding can be seen as incredibly positive, especially considering that the results have remained stable at a 57:43 ratio during both weeks of the campaign. Again, it will be interesting to see whether the media will maintain this high number of female journalists once the campaign has ended.

What are the items about?

An analysis of the central subjects of the items monitored revealed that gender-based violence, including femicide, domestic violence and sexual assault, comprises 24% of all items, slightly lower than the preliminary findings of 26%. Child abuse, including neglect, and physical and sexual abuse comprises 24% of all items, an increase of 4% from the preliminary findings. This increase in the number of stories on child abuse was especially noted in the coverage during the last week of the campaign, where items on child rape, abuse and child prostitution dominated the news. Notable incidents were the refusal of treatment to a child rape victim in the Eastern Cape (6/12/2004) and the police round up of a Nigerian child prostitute ring (8/12/2004).

Those gender-based violence items with murder as the central topic remain disconcertingly high at 15% of all items monitored, while on a more positive note, advocacy as the main topic of items was noted in 7% of all items monitored. The relatively high percentage of items devoted to advocacy would suggest that 7% of all media coverage monitored is aware of, promotes or acknowledges the campaign, the related consciousness-raising activities and the key figures or participants.

Covering the campaign

In an analysis of coverage up to and including the 10th of December, there is a clear distinction between those print media that took the campaign and its aims on board, and those that chose not to. The *Daily Sun* and the *Daily News* for example paid regular attention to the coverage of gender-based violence, women and child abuse, while other media such as *Business Day*, the *Beeld* and *Die Burger* appear not to have taken the campaign on board, with each of these media covering only a few of the key stories.

Similar patterns could be distinguished in weekly print media, with *The Mirror* and the *Capricorn Voice*, two community papers in Limpopo, providing 8% and 10% of their weekly coverage to woman and child abuse. Other media such as the *Sunday Times*, the *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian* continued to marginalise the campaign.

For broadcast media, television news, SABC 1 and SABC 3 devote more than double the amount of coverage to the campaign during their evening prime-time news bulletins than is featured on SABC 2 and e-tv. SABC 2 in particular should be at an



advantage, as the monitoring includes both the Afrikaans-and the SeSotho-news bulletins.

Radio media in general have tended to cover the campaign and raise issues of child and woman abuse, despite their disadvantage in terms of the amount of news airtime monitored. While the sample for news bulletin contain is representative of the news, much of the coverage afforded to the 16 Days campaign was in the course of normal programming. Despite this disadvantage, radio media still managed to devote far more of its total content to the campaign and the related issues than print media. Ukhozi FM displayed the lowest coverage, with 8%, a figure that represented the highest levels of coverage in some print media. Some radio stations, such as Kaya FM and Bush Radio performed outstandingly, devoting a respective 30% and 29% to coverage of the campaign, woman and child abuse. These stations are to be commended for such wide acknowledgement of the aims of the campaign and for broadly raising awareness of the relevant issues.

Comments, queries, or suggestions?

Contact William Bird or Gemma Harries on 082 887 1370, or the MMP at (011) 788 1278 and mmp@wn.apc.org

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