AWiM
African Women in Media

2024
Conference

THEME: MEDIA and SUSTAINABILITY

5 - 6 December 2024 Dakar, Senegal

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About African Women in Media

African Women in Media is an international NGO working towards gender equality in and through the media. Established in 2016, we do this through partnerships, research and advocacy, training and development and editorial productions. Our annual conference brings together media, academia, civil society and policy actors. Over the years, we have partnered with various organisations, including the African Union Commission, Article 19, MacArthur Foundation, Luminate, Fojo Media Institute, Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, WITS Centre for Journalism, UNESCO, UNEP, UN Women, ILO, GIZ, European Union, Google News Initiative, Free Press Unlimited and many more.

AWiM 2024 Conference

Our Partners

African Women in Media 2024 Conference was held in partnership with Article 19, and our Platinum Partners were Luminate. We are grateful for the support of SkyTeam, UNESCO, Media Development Investment Fund, Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, MacArthur Foundation, Wits Centre for Journalism, Fojo Media Institute African Women Development Fund, GIZ and UN Women. Our profound gratitude goes to our media partners, West Africa Democracy Radio, L' Association des Femmes de Medias du Senegal (AFMS), PressAfrik, Association of Media Women in Kenya and Women Radio WFM 917 Nigeria.

African Women in Media

The Theme

AWiM24 conference interpreted Media and Sustainability from the following key perspectives:

1. *The business and financial models of media businesses*
2. *The relationship between media and sustainable development goals, including those of human rights, gender equality and climate action*
3. *The changing media ecologies concerning emerging and new technologies, especially artificial intelligence and machine learning*

Media Business and Financial Models: Developing viable media business and financial models is among the challenges and opportunities for media in Africa, and a conversation we started in a plenary session at AWiM23 (Rwanda) in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation. Public service media, for example, must balance their mandate to provide public service with the realities of their economic capacity (Koomson & Ofori-Parku, 2024). Similarly, international players, including technology companies shaping journalism innovation and foreign government investment, are raising increased concerns regarding the autonomy of African news media (Hermida & Young, 2024; Gondwe, 2022). Therefore, this theme asks: What is the current state of media sustainability in Africa? What are emerging and alternative approaches employed by media businesses towards sustainability? What do audiences want, and how might we rethink our engagement and relationship with audiences, especially women? What impact might the balancing of economic realities have on the vision of the African narrative? And finally, what does economic resilience look like for women-led and women-owned media businesses?

Media and Sustainability: As we approach 2030, and with some progress made, key development markers are yet to be fully achieved. Addressing issues regarding gender equality in and through media is the guiding vision for organisations like African Women in Media, and instruments like the Kigali Declaration on the Elimination of Gender Violence in and through Media in Africa help to set critical agendas for media, academia, media development and policy actors. Secondly, organisations like the Sustainable Journalism Partnership task us to consider a holistic interpretation of sustainable journalism, including content and business models that consider environmental and social issues, and normative and gender-balanced newsrooms. Therefore, this theme asks how we might critically interrogate the media's role regarding sustainable development and what roles gender plays in this regard. How have media engaged with development instruments, policies and agendas and what challenges and opportunities are present? Finally, what does a holistic approach to media and sustainability look like? What models of best practices exist? And what can we learn from them as we approach 2030?

Media Ecologies: The increasing use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in news media has raised hopes and fears. Some see the opportunities for AI to enhance the newsroom workflow, content and audience engagement. Similarly, dystopian perspectives warn of the threats to jobs and professionalism of journalism (Makwambeni, Matsilele, & Bulani, 2023). This theme, therefore, asks what is the current state of AI adoption and use in African newsrooms? hat are the range of perspectives? What considerations must be given when developing strategies and policies for AI use in newsrooms? And critically, what impact, opportunities and challenges does it present for women in media?

We are pleased to share the Rapporteur Report for the **African Women in Media 2024 Conference** that had as theme *'Media and Sustainability'*. We hope the insights will help address the key issues highlighted in the themes and welcome the implementation of the key recommendations.

Did you take action as a result of attending the conference or reading this report? Email us and let us know what you did and the outcome:

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Introduction

Gender and the media in Africa are complex and interconnected fields, with specific challenges arising from each country's cultural, social and economic particularities. The treatment of gender in African media is influenced by cultural, historical, political and socio-economic factors and varies from country to country according to local realities.

Stereotypes often mark gender portrayal in African media. Traditionally, the media have emphasised gender roles that reflect patriarchal social structures. For example, women are often presented as mothers, wives or objects of desire while men are portrayed as leaders or authority figures. However, more and more voices are being raised to challenge this stereotypical representation.

Women are using social media, particularly platforms such as *Twitter, Instagram and Facebook,* to highlight the challenges they face. These platforms have created a space to discuss gender-based violence, women's rights and gender equality, which are often ignored in traditional media.

Though there is an upward trends in the number of female media entrepreneurs, the media landscape remains dominated by male entrepreneurs. The media business model in Africa is inextricable and diverse, influenced by many factors.

The emergence of community media is revealing itself as a mechanism for giving a voice to local communities, women and other groups sometimes marginalised in the mainstream media. These media are often found in rural areas, where they address issues related to women's access to land, sexual and reproductive health, education and women's rights.

Developing viable economic and financial models is both a challenge and an opportunity for media in Africa. As the 2030 Agenda approaches its target date, and despite some progress, key sustainable development indicators have yet to be achieved.

With all these considerations in mind, the *8th African Women in Media Conference* was held in Dakar, Senegal, with the theme '*Media and Sustainability*'. AWiM24 brought together players from the media landscape, members of civil society, academia and policymakers. The event addressed several issues, including the place of women in the media, the economic model of the media in Africa and the opportunities to ensure emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence are gender and socially-conscious.

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Opening ceremony and remarks

The Regional Director of Article 19, Mr. Alfred Bulakali received the AWiM community and delegates and commended them for their presence. He reminded them of the importance of the meeting, noting the serene quality of Dakar, Senegal, the land of Teranga as appropriate setting for the meeting.

He recalled that the goals of AWiM and the conference align with Article 19's feminist vision, as it came at the right time during the 16 Days of Activism. The importance of the media in the fight against violence against women was underlined in his speech, in which he referenced the African Union's Agenda 2063 and its aim of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

He also stressed the importance of the conference in finding answers to emerging digital issues, particularly those posed by artificial intelligence. He urged participants to consider global warming in their various reflections, and concluded by expressing his gratitude to the various organizations present and to all the technical and financial partners.

In her speech, Cofounder and CEO, African Women in Media (AWiM) Dr. Yemisi Akinbobola commended all partners, and AWiM team whose efforts made the conference possible. She addressed some of the difficulties and constraints faced by some journalists, whose salaries she said are akin to exploitation, and the budgetary problems media houses face, adding that it's even more acute for women journalists. She also stressed the importance of using AI wisely, so that it doesn't replace the journalist. She called for journalists to be creators of AI, not just consumers of it. She also recalled the various sub-themes that would be addressed during the conference, and the importance of the forum for robust exchange in spite of the possible points of agreement and disagreement.

While commending the organisers and participants, Head of Communications for African Union Commission, Wynne Musabayana stressed the importance of giving women a platform to express themselves, emphasising the importance the African Union attaches to gender equality and women's rights.

President of L' Association des Femmes de Medias du Senegal (AFMS), Marguerite Rosalie Ndiaye numerated the activities of AFMS in the fight against social problems, including gender-based violence. She said the organisation's aim is to promote inclusive media leadership, and expressed confidence that the conference would provide insight into the reality of sensitive geopolitical issues.

Ndiaye further stressed the importance of women journalists assuming their roles, and called for programmes to strengthen the skills and competencies of women journalists so that they could move up the career ladder.

Public service media, traditional media, regulation of media space, freedom of expression and disinformation.

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This section provides a combined analysis of key takeaways from various interventions that fall into the above-mentioned category. These interventions include but are not limited to the following sessions:

• *Digital Rights, Disinformation and Freedom of Expression in West Africa - panel by Article 19 with Diery Fatou Diagne, Valerie G. Traore, Moussa Fara Diop, as speakers, and David Diaz Jogeix as moderator.*

• *Balancing Act: Charting a Course for Media Sustainability through Regulation and Policy - panel with ITO Misako, Akharbach Latifa, Wynne Musabayana ,Musabayana, Albertina Piterbarg as speakers, and Dr.Dinesh Balliah as moderator.*

• *Kigali Declaration: Commitments for Sustainable Change - panel by Fojo Media Institute and AWIM with Dr.Yemisi Akinbobola, Agneta Soderberg Jacobson, Lindiwe Mugabe, Susan Makore, Mamadou Thior, Doreen Umutesi, and moderated by Gail Jammy*

• *The Importance of Addressing Sustainability of Public Service Media and Public Interest Content in South Africa, with Uyanda Siyotula, Phathiswa Magopeni as speakers, and Lister Namumba as moderator.*

• *Soundscapes: From Storytelling to Sustainability, Audio Media and Podcasts by Scheherazade Safia, Kim Fox, Bernice Gatere as speakers, and Juliana da Penha as moderator.*

Overview: Public service and traditional media have an essential role in the walk towards media sustainability (A). Their significant contributions help combat misinformation and regulate the media without restricting freedom of expression. (B)

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A. The Role of Public and Traditional Media in Sustainable Development

Public service media play an essential role in shaping public opinion by providing high-quality information that is supposed to accurately reflect the facts. (1) Similarly, in today's changing environment, traditional media must distinguish themselves by the quality and relevance of the information they provide (2).

1. Public Service Media and Sustainability

Public Service Media (PSM) are publicly funded. They provide their audiences with impartial, independent services such as radio and television. PSM's values include universality, independence, excellence, diversity, accountability and innovation.

To play their role in society, PSMs face several challenges, including monitoring the behaviour of the masses in order to meet their needs as an audience, adapting to the digital age by maintaining high editorial quality in a competitive market, maintaining independence and sustainability and receiving appropriate funding.

The sustainability of PSMs has been contextualised from different angles: *economic sustainability, political sustainability, social sustainability and institutional sustainability.*

Economic sustainability is based on adopting a sustainable business model that enables PSMs to fulfil their missions and meet society's expectations. In so doing, these media will be able to secure sustainable financial revenues.

Political sustainability is measured by a media's ability to provide reliable information while its journalists have freedom of opinion. Furthermore, journalists must have the freedom to inform and be informed. This freedom plays a vital role in democracy, as it enables citizens to control government action and express their opinions.

Social sustainability refers to the broadcaster's ability to have a positive relationship with its audience. To succeed in this mission, the media must contribute positively to society's development.

And finally, institutional sustainability is ensured by protection from media regulation. Improving the legal framework is also crucial for media legitimacy and an independent media ecosystem.

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2. Traditional Media and Sustainability

Traditional media, such as the press, radio and television, play significant roles in people's daily lives. These media provide reliable information, educate and entertain audiences with a wide range of programmes.

The digital era has had a significant impact on traditional media regarding information transmission. Because of their participative nature, misinformation is more frequent on digital platforms.

The main aim of traditional media is to inform, entertain and educate the public in a much more reliable way. Still, they are often confronted with manipulation by certain ill-intentioned actors. The latter push the media to disseminate false information for political, economic or other ends. These challenges must be met if the media are to be autonomous in their management.

The position of the media in the face of misinformation can be ambiguous because they sometimes carry out a critical mission to counteract misinformation. To this end, they verify the reliability of the information to be transmitted to the public. This role of guarantor of accurate and profound information can be fulfilled by the traditional media, as they have the means to verify information before publication.

The traditional media do a remarkable job of ensuring the smooth running of society as guarantors of reliable information. Their social mission must be based on the following key elements: contextualisation, relevance, transparency and admissibility. They must also adapt to the socio-economic environment, promote inclusion and representation, promote social justice, promote civic and democratic engagement and safeguard democracy.

To achieve their objectives, traditional media must cope with political pressure on press freedom, the duality between private and public media, the evolution of information technologies to save their business models, the influence of politics and the manipulation of information.

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A. Media Regulations on Misinformation and Freedom of Expression

The media, as pillars of democratic societies, are facing major challenges linked to digital transformation, the concentration of players and the rise of misinformation. The Kigali Declaration provides a solid basis for the media's commitment to sustainable change, with gender issues at its heart (1), as well as addressing the challenges of misinformation by considering digital rights as well as duties is essential (2).

1. Kigali Declaration: A Commitment to Sustainable Change

The Kigali Declaration on the Elimination of Gender Violence in and through Media in Africa by 2034 (Kigali Declaration) marks a collective commitment by key media stakeholders to address the types of violence experienced by women in media, and how media portray gender-based violence by 2034. It recognises the central role of the media in raising awareness, educating and transforming mentalities while aiming for a more egalitarian and inclusive society.

It is based on the recognition of the essential role of the media in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV). Indeed, through their ability to inform, educate and shape public opinion, the media can help deconstruct gender stereotypes and raise awareness of the consequences of GBV. They can also help promote stories that value the resilience of survivors and encourage collective action to adopt responsible practices that prevent GBV from becoming commonplace.

Therefore, reforms must be undertaken to promote responsible media practices, including building journalists' skills in gender, ethics and the treatment of GBV and promoting diversity in newsrooms to reflect inclusive perspectives.

2. Sustainable Media Facing the Challenges of Misinformation and Digital Rights

The pan-African organization Niyel, created in 2016, has set up a place to produce content, combat misinformation and propose narratives other than those often wrongly popularized. For example, it has launched a series entitled "in service of" to highlight the work of those who toil in the shadows, such as public sector workers whose efforts are masked by the received idea of inherently corrupt African leaders.

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The problems of misinformation linked to that of information thanks to social networks were highlighted. Indeed, the evolution is such that information no longer obeys "top-down" logic but is open to everyone's participation. This is helping to devalue professional journalism in favour of the emergence of "citizen journalism", opening the door to large-scale disinformation.

One worrying form of this scourge is gender-specific misinformation. It specifically targets women to discredit them and limit their civic and political participation. It often takes the form of spreading rumours about women's private lives or making sexist remarks about their appearance.

At the same time, many traditional media outlets are suffering from their late arrival on social networks particularly, and digital media, in general. Following a presentation by the pan-African network African Youth Commission (AYC), the panellistspanelists emphasised the digital rights inherent in freedom of expression, noting that this fundamental right cannot be altered. Like any other right, these rights come with duties that social network users tend to ignore. Proposals to combat misinformation must, therefore, take this aspect into account.

Some panellistspanelists explored how policies and regulations can ensure media sustainability by preserving plurality, fostering innovation and ensuring equitable access to information. It has been observed that media concentration threatens the diversity of viewpoints and the quality of information. It is therefore important to put in place regulations to limit the concentration of media groups and support local and independent media. The need to protect press freedom from political and economic pressure was also highlighted. Providing financial support for independent media is therefore essential to diversifying the voices in the media landscape.

The digital revolution has turned traditional business models on its head, it was observed. Digital platforms now dominate the production and distribution of information. To meet the challenges of the times, the panellistspanelists stressed the need to train journalists in technological tools and facilitate access to digital infrastructure. Regarding content creation, it is vital to regulate digital platforms to avoid their monopoly and guarantee fair remuneration for creators, and to adopt or strengthen copyright and data protection laws to protect creators and users.

The digital divide and social inequalities limit access to quality information for all. Efforts must be made to support local media and those serving marginalised communities. To this end, public media must be strengthened to offer impartial and diversified coverage.

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Economic Viability of Media in a Context of Crisis

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This section provides a combined analysis of key points noted in various interventions that fall into the above-mentioned category. These interventions include but are not limited to the following sessions:

- *KEYNOTE: Media Development Investment Fund Approaches to Media Sustainability by Oluwadara Ajala, Nolwazi Tusini, Lebogang Maphada, and Sebenzile Nkambule.*

- *Empowering Success: Case Studies in Implementing Effective Business Models for Media Organisations - panel by Shirley Nirmala Govender, Karen Thorne, Dorcas Taiwo and Angela Agowaike, and moderated by Dr Yemisi Akinbobola.*

- *The Media Marketplace: Models, Practices and Lessons Learned in Media Business and Management - panel moderated by Anita Eboigbe with Phathiswa Magopeni, Gaye Crossley, and Glenda Daniels and Juliana da Penha as speakers.*

- *Workshop: Developing a Business Model & Product Strategy – panel & workshop by Media Development Investment Fund. (Oluwadara Ajala, Lebogang Maphada Nolwazi Tusini).*

- *Mapping, Attracting and Retaining Audiences in a Changing Media Landscape - panel with Folaranmi Folayan, Dr Joyce Kirabo, and Rita Agha as speakers, and moderated by Dr. Nechama Brodie.*

- *Viable Media Business Models in Unviable Media Markets: Women Led Success Stories - Fishbowl Session by DW Akademie moderated by Rose Kimani with Imani Henrick, Ferial Haffajee, Obioma Okonkwo as speakers.*

Overwiew: Against a backdrop of crisis in media funding, the media must develop strategies to mobilise financing by taking advantage of established institutions (A). However, they must also develop their own business models to ensure viability (B).

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A. Media and Financial Sustainability

Funding bodies such as Media Development Investment Fund provide essential support on several levels (1). However, media companies must develop financial sustainability by implementing innovative strategies (2).

1. Media Investments and Approaches to Financial Sustainability

The Media Development Investment Fund (MDIF) is an organisation dedicated to strengthening the media ecosystem. Its missions include providing capital to support media independence, helping to build alignment for media development, promoting a vision of quality leadership, providing concessional capital to support media business, investing in multiple countries to promote sustainability and equipping new media organisations.

The media business concept has been established to define the pillars of successful media activity. Thus, to succeed in the media business, it is essential to stay focused on strategic leadership, capitalise on advertising revenues, critically evaluate work, contribute to growth through different propositions and import the ability to achieve significant results.

The media manager must be someone with a clear vision, follows that vision and takes others on that journey. They must have the ability to lead their team well. It's essential to diversify your sources of income (examples include: subscriptions, crowdfunding, partnerships) and not limit yourself to relying on funding and grants.

The financial system of media companies is highly unusual. A large proportion of media activities (television, radio, etc) are financed by advertising. Therefore, there is an interdependent relationship between the media and their partners. The partners need advertising to sell their goods and services, and the media need the partners to finance their media productions. The partners also sell media content to media consumers such as readers and viewers.

However, the media sector faces enormous obstacles in managing and establishing financial sustainability. Problems often encountered include staff pay, lack of leadership, political intervention by those in power, adapting to change, intense competition, difficulties in obtaining financing, inadequate financial management, operational inefficiency due to poor team alignment, limited performance, lack of talent gap analysis to identify training and hiring needs within a company.

The media rely heavily on events to maximise revenues. Event communication refers to the dissemination of information and dialogue with partners to clarify the details of a given event. The media also receive state subsidies. These provide funding to support the media in the financial management of their activities. Others form partnerships with organisations to cover their events. This collaboration is mutually beneficial for both parties.

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2. Financial Sustainability through Innovation

Digital transformation has turned the media industry upside down, rendering traditional models obsolete. The media must innovate to guarantee their economic viability while maintaining high editorial quality. One example of a model based on community participation is Cape Town TV. Its strategy consists of revenue diversification (public funding, partnerships, advertising), content geared to local needs and the use of digital platforms. The results achieved include financial resilience, a wider local and international audience and the production of relevant content. This teaches us that community roots and the adoption of digital technologies promote sustainability.

From a more innovative point of view, a business model must be based on value creation (value proposition, new product and service), value delivery (new distribution) and value capture (revenue model to make money).

We must add a revenue model to the business model, which is an approach to monetisation in which a company derives income from the sales of its products.

Revenue model innovation is seen as a system of activity whereby one revenue model is replaced by a new one or elements of an existing revenue model are radically or incrementally modified in order to extract economic value from new or existing value propositions, simultaneously taking into account interdependencies and moderators.

To combat any revenue crisis in media, it's important to remember that advertising isn't a business model - it's a revenue stream that, if used properly, can help achieve financial objectives. Similarly, a business model without a revenue model will be ineffective.

A business model should include the following elements:

- *Value proposition: the problem you want to solve*
- *Customer: the people you want to reach*
- *Customer relationship: what kind of relationship do your customers want to have with you, and how do you communicate with them?*
- *Distribution channel: how do your customers receive your product?*
- *Revenue stream: this is how your company earns money*
- *Cost: how much do you spend in total to get everything you need for your business?*
- *Key partners: who do you partner with?*
- *Key activities: what does your business do?*
- *Key resources (skills you need - IT, human resources, personnel, finance).*

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B. Models of Media Viability and Success Led by Women

There are different business models that media organisations can adopt to build on their existing activities or develop new ones (1). Real-life examples of women-led successes can inspire others to achieve financial exploits (2).

1. Examples of Viable Business Models for Media Organisations

Indeed, many media companies are on the verge of bankruptcy due to unviable business models in an evolving and transforming market. The challenges faced by news media are commonly linked to financial resources, the changing media landscape and technological advances.

To meet these challenges, it's essential to think strategically. An effective strategy begins with identifying the needs of the target community or population. To do this, it's essential to communicate with audiences, interact with them to act on their responses and adapt the information offer to demand.

Another essential element in implementing a viable business model is revenue diversification. To ensure its viability, it is imperative to have at least 10 means of generating income. These may include sponsorship, membership, events, promotion, etc.

Next, we need to find new audiences by offering content on different platforms and formats adapted to each audience. We need to explore new areas while continuing with old practices. However, it's important to remember that expectations differ from reality. The path is strewn with pitfalls, but the most important thing is to stay focused.

A practical example is Kings FM, a local radio station in Tanzania that has risen to the challenge by implementing a viable strategy. It began by identifying the assets and problems of the local community and producing information on these subjects. The denunciation of these local realities, particularly violence, has earned this radio station collaborations with several partners.

Programmes aimed at educating women on how to behave with their husbands to avoid domestic and gender-based violence, as well as "success storytelling" by successful women were broadcast. The radio station's strategy also involved engaging the community through entertaining activities and games to get closer to its audience. Sharing statistics with the audience and a good brand image helped attract several advertising clients. This multi-faceted strategy has enabled the radio station to revitalise its business and increase revenues.

2. Women and the Financial Sustainability of the Media

Migrant Women Press is an independent media organisation run by migrant women. It connects women from diverse backgrounds living in a new place to amplify their voices through journalism. It aims for a world where migrant women are at the forefront of leading fair and humanised discussions on migration and bringing diversity to the media. Their mission is to provide a sustainable media platform, publish original journalistic content produced by migrant women, offer media training and opportunities and build a community to foster a sense of belonging within them.

From 2020 to 2024, they went from an informal group of volunteers to a social organisation. The major challenge was achieving sustainability and revenue growth in a competitive, volatile and tense media environment. To ensure sustainability, the company has focused on three pillars: financial health, operational resilience and journalistic impact.

Balancing editorial strategy and business development is essential, as media with at least one employee, responsible for revenue generation, reported an average annual income six times higher than those with no staff in this area, according to Sembra Media's Project Oasis Report in 2023.

An important issue discussed was the need for paywalls. They exist everywhere and can be frustrating because they prevent access to the news. But the question is, are they useful? Opinions vary on this subject.

Websites allow us to access information wherever we are, but there's no revenue flow. In the past, circulation figures were in the millions, unlike today when people don't want to pay for online information. What's more, there are no subsidised funds in some countries, such as South Africa. As a result, independent news organisations can't rely on either government or subsidies. A study was carried out on three media, two of which applied the subsidy and paywall models, while the third adopted a membership model. The study found that media with paywalls had a higher success rate with their revenue model. In addition, paywalls are necessary and more sustainable than membership models.

The question of taking on the big tech companies for fair remuneration was raised.

Concerns about copyright on social networks were addressed. Strategies need to be developed to hold large technology companies accountable for using content produced by traditional media for profit without giving credit or financial consideration to the real authors. However, a survey of the media in the room revealed that few are equipped to deal with the "Big Tech".

The talk was about unfair competition because there's an obvious crisis of financial sustainability, which has resulted in huge losses in local media, manifested in job losses, closures, online harassment and false information. Cyber-misogyny, transparency and AI are also on the agenda.

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In South Africa, an investigation into the digital media platforms market has been initiated under the Competition Act 89 of 1998. There is reason to believe that there are digital platforms distributing news media content that hinder, distort or restrict competition or compromise the objectives of the Act and have material implications for the South African news media sector.

An October 2024 investigation by "the Competition Commission" revealed the following information:

As far as the use of online platforms is concerned, social media is the main source of information consumption for South African media consumers: Facebook, TikTok, X, etc. 77% of respondents say they access information via social media, and 18% access it via Google or Bing.

Information consumption for South African media consumers

Social Media	**77%**
Seach Engines	**18%**
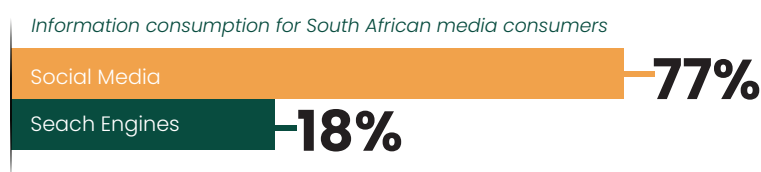
84% of people accessing information via social networks ranked Facebook at the top of the platforms used, followed by TikTok (47%), WhatsApp (46%), YouTube (45%) and X (30%). 77% justified their use of social networks based on the platform's ease of access and convenience. While 42% said they did so because it gave them easy access to the latest news. News is a significant draw for many platform users, with 70% saying they would spend less time on the platform and 10% saying they would stop using the platform altogether if news was removed. 95% of the users used Google, which is the largest search engine.

Media organisations therefore need to adapt to the needs of their audience. One way of boosting media credibility is through local-language productions.

People accessing information via social networks ranked

46%   47%   84%

45%

30%

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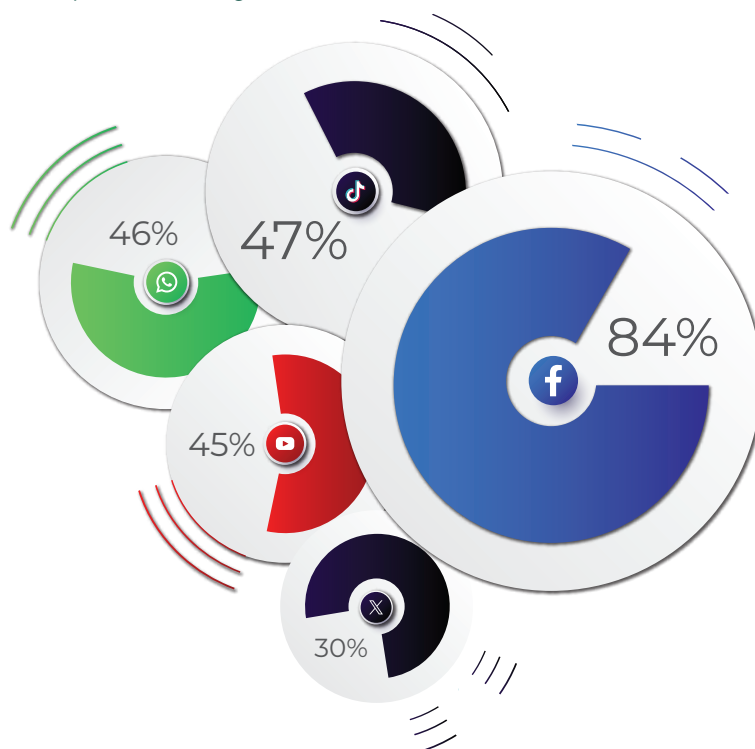
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This section provides a combined analysis of key points noted in various interventions that may fall into the above-mentioned category. These interventions include but are not limited to the following sessions:

- *Gender and the Media in Senegal - panel by Inter-African Network for Women, Media, Gender and Development (FAMEDEV), and moderated by Mame Woury Thoubou with Bator Fall, Sokhna Dandio, Bigué Bob and Aissatou Ginette Badji as speakers.*

- *Theory in Practice: How Feminist and Decolonization Movements Shape Media Ecologies and Representation - panel moderated by Ireti Bakare-Yusuf with Marquita Smith, Omega Douglas, Leyla Burcu Dündar as speakers.*

- *Representation and Media: Sustainable Development through Media Narratives - panel moderated by Adeng' Mayik with Doris Olumoko, Gloria Edukere, Christine Sayo, Nkemngong Efuetji Mary as speakers.*

- *Setting the Agenda for a Holistic Approach to Media Sustainability - panel by WITS University and Africa Journalism Educators Network (AJEN), and moderated by Dr. Dinesh Balliah with Prof. Nancy Booker, Christina Chan-Meetoo, Elva Nziza, Dr. Theodora Dame Adjin-Tettey and Prof. Margaret Jjuuko, as speakers.*

- *Engaging Media as Partners and Generation Equality Commitment Makers to Advance Gender Equality in East and Southern Africa - panel by UNWOMEN, and moderated by Queenter Mbori with Aijamal Duishebaeva, Molline Marume, Dr. Yemisi Akinbobola and Misako Ito, as Speakers.*

- *African Media Sustainability: The Gender Equity Fix - workshop by Big Cabal with Anita Eboigbe and Temitayo Ishola as facilitators.*

- *Practices in Media Coverage and Framing of Gender-Based Violence - panel moderated by Christine Sayo with Bethlehem Negash Woldeyohannes, Blessing Udeobasi, and Ifeyinwa Awagu as speakers.*

Overview: Media sustainability cannot be effective without including the gender dimension at levels (A). The fight against GBV must therefore occupy a central place in the models promoted by the media (B).

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A. Research Activities and Gender Issues in a Sustainability Context

The research activities will enable us to learn about the evolution of women's inclusion in the media and assess the sustainability progress. (1) It is also essential to address the issue of literature and review the influence of colonisation on journalism and information production in Africa (2).

1. Gender, Journalism Training and Sustainable Media

The study Exploring the Gender Dimensions of Media Development through the Voices of Women Journalists in Mauritius examined the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on women journalists in Mauritius.

There has been an increase in pressure on women at work. One woman interviewed testified to having endured more pressure to show her abilities at work. Added to this is differential treatment compared to men in the recognition of efforts and a deterioration in leadership, as women are much more present in media houses but occupy fewer positions of influence or power. There is also a persistent imbalance between the sexes. Sometimes, the presence of women seems forced, especially where a certain gender balance is required. Female stereotypes are also a hindrance to the development of women in the media.

Despite this, some women have overcome challenges to rise to high ranks in the media.
Investigating the question of: How is the notion of sustainable journalism integrated into journalism education and training in three African countries: South Africa, Ghana and Kenya?

Sustainable journalism has been a topic of study for some time, andtime and is seen as a tool for decolonising African curricula in journalism training. It enables viable journalism strategies to be developed so that journalism can be practised as a profession. Sustainable journalism is also unique in that it analyses the root causes and impacts of social phenomena, rather than simply describing them. It also aims to find solutions. Research has shown that in Ghana, journalism is part of communication studies, which also involves other specialities such as public relations. The case is similar in South Africa, where journalism is part of art or humanities studies. In Kenya, it is noted that journalism is a widespread field of study in universities. As a result, their journalism programmes accommodate more modules.

Research has shown that traditional journalism is central to journalism training at the universities studied. Moreover, sustainability is addressed as a theme in these curricula in various ways. Nevertheless, there is a lack of specific studies addressing Sustainable Journalism as a concept.

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A presentation on Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Gender Policies in the Rwandan Media revealed that the Rwandan media context has evolved since 1995 to become a diversified ecosystem comprising both public and private media. Policies to promote diversity and prevent divisive content have been implemented. Rwanda also stands out for its policies in favour of gender equality and its commitment to empowering women, including those in the media. However, a factor such as press freedom influences media content. Moreover, not everything is perfect, and there is room for improvement. Indeed, the study on gender policies in the media showed that most of them had them, but several members were unaware of their existence. Challenges to implementing gender policies include resistance to change, lack of understanding and slow progress.

To this end, the solutions proposed to promote gender equality in the media involve an inclusive working environment without discrimination, equal treatment for all categories of journalists and specific mentoring for women to empower them to succeed in the media industry. Effective gender policies could help promote women journalists and create gender-sensitive journalists in all aspects of their work.

Another intervention on visual portrayal of refugee women in Rwandan print media provided lessons. Namely, the positive or negative way in which refugees are portrayed in the media impacts social cohesion. Visuals, in particular, provoke emotional and cognitive responses.

When the media show refugees in distress, this arouses compassion and influences human rights narratives. Conversely, when positive images of refugee women are promoted, the result is the promotion of strength and adaptability, thus contributing to the advancement of gender equality. Ultimately, inclusive narratives and visuals contribute to sustainable development. They challenge stereotypes, build trust, loyalty and commitment.

To promote gender equality in the media and civil society in East Africa, some have decided to go one step further than research by setting up gender desks. Gender desks help build understanding and relationships. They contribute to strengthening gender equity as a key element of development.
Implementing these desks requires, among other things, training and support in drawing up budgets and work plans, mentoring and coaching by gender desks already established in newsrooms, and peer learning forums that have already been set up.

Balancing academic and gender office activities was a challenge. The other challenge has been reporting. Working with other structures, reporting is stricter. There have also been difficulties in implementing policies due to delays.

As a result, community approaches differ, and it is important to work with community leaders to promote equality between women and men. Thanks to gender desks, many have secured partnerships and financial support.

2. The Role of Feminist and Decolonisation Movements in the Conception of Media Ecologies and Representation

The presentation on "African Women in Translation: Gender and Equality in African Literature in Turkish" highlighted elements of the gender issue in the field of information.

Indeed, many works produced between 1960 and 2020 were for men. From 1980 onwards, women's books came second only to men's, and it was not until 2020 that the first transgender books were produced. Today, more and more works by women writers are being translated.

Books are communication tools in the same way as the media, and many people have used them to live out their freedom of expression. For others, it's a tool for denouncing the injustices and abuses experienced in our societies. Books also remain an excellent means of preserving history. Translation into Turkish is often motivated by political and religious reasons, which doesn't necessarily mean that Turks read the publications.

A presentation on The Decolonial Theory of the Journalistic Field: A Toolbox for Analyzing Colonial and Decolonial Practices in Journalism also drew lessons. To this day, the African continent continues to be described by five dominant themes that can best be described as stereotypes: poverty, corruption, conflict, bad governance and disease. All are fueled by colonization and decolonization movements.

By definition, "Coloniality" refers to forms of colonial domination after the end of colonial administration, produced by colonial culture while "decoloniality" refers to subaltern knowledge in knowledge production processes. Without this, there can be no decolonisation of knowledge.

In the dominant global journalistic field, a perpetual colonial dynamic manifests itself in various forms. For example, white journalists and editors dominate the highest echelons of journalism (Spilsbury, 2022). Western approaches to journalism are also considered "ideal" by some countries in the South. The colonial dynamic is perpetuated as white saviour journalism continues and remains a problem in Western coverage of humanitarian news in the South. Decolonising the media and journalism means abandoning the ways of doing and seeing that stem from colonialism. The field of journalism is organised around two forms of power: cultural and economic capital. Authors have shown that in studies of journalism, non-white perspectives are largely neglected.

Decolonial journalistic field theory is designed to unravel racialised relations in any journalistic context where colonial histories influence contemporary realities.

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The study Transnational Media, Globalisation and Gender in Ghana: A Feminist Perspective examined the influence of transnational media and globalisation on gender roles and identities in Ghana.

The rise of transnational media and its significance for gender norms can be summarised as follows: The global reach of transnational media exposes audiences to diverse cultures and perspectives. This perception of gender roles, beauty standards and consumer behaviour often contribute to the homogenisation of gender norms. The influence of social values often leads to the adoption of new gender norms or the reinforcement of existing ones. This can have an impact on both individuals and the community.

The intersection of class and gender influences women's experiences with the media. Access to technology and media literacy are often linked to socio-economic factors. Transnational media flows often perpetuate stereotypes of African women. Media representation must be authentic and reflect the diverse realities of Ghanaian women.

Regarding empowerment and resistance, we see that challenging the dominant narrative requires intersectional approaches to media education and activism. Empowerment through media education fosters critical engagement with representations of women.

Community media platforms empower marginalised groups by amplifying their voices and stories. Local initiatives encourage citizen journalism, fostering critical engagement and participation in media production. These platforms offer a space to challenge mainstream media narratives that perpetuate harmful stereotypes.

Community radio stations, online platforms and mobile media initiatives offer alternative media to reach the public.

Feminist media can connect women across borders and foster a shared vision of gender equality. Media platforms should reflect the diversity of voices and experiences and ensure the representation of all women. Sustainability depends on building resilient platforms and promoting a culture of social justice.

By shaping public discourse, social media enable nuanced discussions about feminism in Ghana, challenging traditional norms. They enable women to express themselves, fostering a sense of collective solidarity and pride in challenging the status quo. They also foster online and offline activism, encouraging users to engage in discussions and events related to gender equality.

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B. Representation and Media: Combating Gender-Based Violence

The media play a decisive role in perpetuating gender-based violence, depending on the narratives they put forward (1). They must be strategic tools in the fight against GBV (2).

1. Practices in Media Coverage of Gender-Based Violence

Presentations demonstrated the crucial role of the media in promoting sustainable development, highlighting two main areas: combating gender-based violence (GBV) and integrating sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for adolescents and young people in Kenya.

In Ethiopia, GBV remains a significant problem, mainly where women and girls are the primary victims. The media play a dual role: they can either perpetuate sexist stereotypes or catalyse positive change. Furthermore, adolescents and young people face taboos in terms of sexual and reproductive health, limiting their access to sexual and reproductive health. Educational content on the subject needs to be created via series, podcasts and digital campaigns.

As vectors of stereotypes, traditional media often present women in subordinate roles, trivialise domestic violence and perpetuate patriarchal norms.

2. The Role of Media in the Fight Against GBV

As a means of combating the problem, the media broadcast campaigns to raise awareness of early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). They highlight survivors' stories through documentaries and testimonials, raising collective awareness.

Challenges include: lack of training for journalists on gender issues, weak online regulation to combat cyber harassment and hate speech, cultural barriers due to patriarchal norms limiting the impact of anti-GBV messages, prioritisation of sensational content over balanced reporting and censorship and self-censorship in some countries on women's rights issues.

Gender-sensitive reporting promotes equitable and inclusive gender representation in the media. This approach is still unevenly adopted in Africa, with advances in some countries such as Kenya and South Africa, but challenges persist elsewhere. It is based on equitable representation, i.e. balanced visibility of men, women and gender minorities, combating stereotypes by avoiding sexist clichés in media stories and inclusive terminology, i.e. using respectful language and representative of gender identities.

GBV remains a global challenge, amplified by cultural and socio-economic inequalities, particularly in Africa. Therefore reports, documentaries and campaigns are essential to breaking the silence and raising awareness.
We need to contribute to deconstructing patriarchal norms through inclusive broadcasts and the use of social platforms.

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This section provides a combined analysis of key points noted in various interventions that may fall into the above-mentioned category. These interventions include but are not limited to the following sessions:

• *Lights, Camera, AI: Current Trends and the Future of Artificial Intelligence in Media Business - panel moderated by Scheherazade Safla, with Rebecca Mutiso, Keziah Githinji, and Ibrahima Diagne as speakers.*

• *TRAKD: AI and Technology Facilitated Gender-Based Violence - workshop by AWiM and facilitated by Queenter Mbori.*

• *The Metaverse Product and Sustainable Journalism - workshop by Center for Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CCIJ), facilitated by Nelly Kalu.*

• *AI and Technology-Facilitated GGende-Based Violence - workshop by the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK), facilitated by Dr. Robi Koki Ochieng.*

Overview: The sustainability of today's media also depends on their ability to meet the challenges posed by new technologies, the misuse of which poses numerous problems (A). Journalism profession must adapt to changing times, using the technological tools available to its advantage (B).

A. Gender and the Evolution of Artificial Intelligence and Technology in the Context of Sustainability

Artificial intelligence and digital technologies, while promising remarkable advances (1), also exacerbate gender-based violence (2). This phenomenon, which is increasing, underlines the need for greater awareness to ensure the ethical and safe use of these tools.

1. The Role of Social Networks and Artificial Intelligence in Media Sustainability

Artificial intelligence and social networks have long been delicate subjects. These new inventions have many confused, because they give everyone a voice to do as they please without worrying about the perception of the masses.

The advantage is that they generate information for users, particularly researchers. So, to carry out a research activity, technology provides us with tools to quickly collect information. Moreover, there's the possibility of making money with specific platforms through content creation since these platforms allow users to earn financial revenue through views and subscribers. They also create jobs. Indeed, with the emergence of engineering and science, companies often need specialists to develop their systems.

Finally, these two tools make life easier through applications like Google Maps, which make it easier for people to get from one place to another without the risk of getting lost. ChatGPT also helps users with their research work, which means less effort for the researcher.

Aside from all these advantages generated by AI and technology, there are parallel disadvantages. The arrival of these tools has led to an increase in misinformation, as unreliable information is widely noticed. Users spread a great deal of false information, and a significant number of the public cannot discern true from false information.

Cyber harassment is also gaining ground with technology. It's a practice that involves mockery and violence towards targeted individuals. It's very common and leads to suicide for some victims. Likewise, scams have become commonplace. Using voice and video cloning, criminals can usurp identities to blackmail their victims for money.

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2. Social Media, Artificial Intelligence and the Exacerbation of Gender-Based Violence

The issue of gender-based violence fostered by AI was extensively discussed, because it has a substantial impact on gender-based violence. Many malefactors use technology to carry out unhealthy acts. The prevalence of these incidents is much more noticeable in urban areas as opposed to rural areas where people are conservators of traditional values. Women involved in political activities are often stigmatized and denigrated. They are the victims of hate speech and attack messages designed to discredit them. People with disabilities are also victims of mockery and insults.

The platforms that record the most sexist violence were revealed. In fact, Facebook came out on top with a percentage of 66%, according to one study. Through the use of fake profiles, individuals take advantage of the opportunity to spread false news and rumorsrumours, and share hate speech that may strike a chord with a particular audience.

WhatsApp follows with 30%. Here, many users are threatened by their intimate partners. This is because the latter sometimes hold photos or videos whose publication would jeopardize the victim's image. Groups of malicious people also create toxic environments for scams and harassment.

And Twitter came in third at around 2%. The protection of anonymity on this platform gives some people the opportunity to write anything about a person with a view to harming them. What emerged from the discussions were strategies for limiting the problems caused by AI and technology.

Platforms That Record The Most Sexist Violence

30% 66% 2%
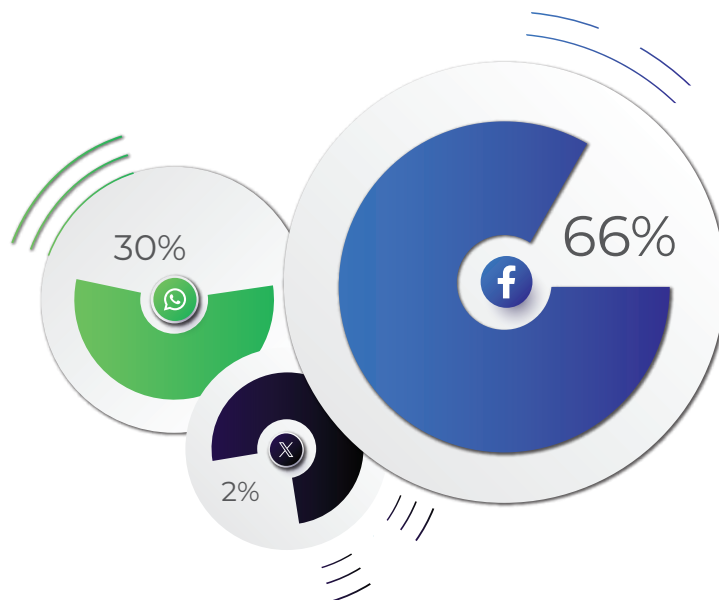
The question of how gender-based violence can be explained was developed. It revealed multiple factors that lead to violence in the technological field. Cultural factors include gender stereotypes and prejudices, such as the belief that men should have authority over women.

B. Media and the Use of Artificial Intelligence: Future Insights

The mastery of artificial intelligence can transform this tool into a defensive weapon for journalists on social media, especially women (1). The future heralds a close collaboration between the profession of journalism and artificial intelligence (2).

1. Prospects for Collaboration between Media and Artificial Intelligence in Favour of Women

An analysis of female journalists harassed online in South Africa and Kenya has provided lessons for strengthening journalists' safety using AI tools.

Journalists around the world face significant risks including harassment, threats and physical violence. According to UNESCO, 178 journalists were murdered worldwide between 2013 and 2014. In Kenya, journalists face similar challenges despite constitutional protections under Articles 33 and 34 of the 2010 Constitution, which guarantee freedom of expression and media freedom. Journalists often encounter threats, harassment and prosecution. The Media Council of Kenya and other stakeholders have set up national mechanisms to improve the safety and protection of journalists. In the course of the analysisanalysis, it was discovered that despite the various measures taken, there is no real follow-up for those harassed.

To argue that AI is an ally, examples of scenarios where, thanks to AI tools, language barriers have been overcome. To combat the challenges of security threats and harassment, there are AI threat detectors where algorithms can scan social networks and other online platforms. BBC Africa, for example, uses AI to detect coordinated harassment campaigns and quickly warn journalists.

There are also tools such as Signal Messenger, which use AI data encryption to protect conversations between journalists and their sources. Concerning the use of AI by journalists in Senegal, local studies have shown that 69% of journalists admit to using AI. The reasons behind this use include text summarization and data transcription. One of the most widely used AIs is Chat GPT.

The difference between automated AI, which follows predefined rules and models, and generative AI, which relies on complex algorithms and neural networks to create something entirely new, was highlighted.
Talking about the advantages of AI, it was noted that it helps to save time, track certain tools used and help in terms of creativity and editorial. Nevertheless, AI also has its drawbacks, including limited information and misinformation.

Research has shown that women have a phobia of technology, which leads to a classification of activities in society. We hear terms like this is not for women. Women seem less enthusiastic than men when it comes to embracing technology, and they have a very high cognitive function compared to men when it comes to chasing after great technological projections.

The women were encouraged not to be content with their journalism training, as more and more of today's jobs are technology-oriented and require them to upgrade their skills or risk being sidelined.

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2. Current Trends and the Future of Artificial Intelligence in the Media Sector

On the one hand, there are those who believe that AI is here to take jobs away from humans, driving many journalists out of work. On the other hand, others have confessed to using AI to make their jobs easier.

Many are pessimistic about AI, but the truth is that it has become part of our present day reality and will be part of our future. So, rather than waging war on AI we need to try and learn to live with it.

The Center for Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CCIJ) presented its metaverse product, which combines journalism and technology.

Based on Redactions, Visuals and Data model, the CCIJ includes its little-known metaverse in its information distribution strategy. This is a series of interactive spaces that present investigative data in an immersive way. It also allows users to immerse themselves in the places where investigations take place, giving them real-life experience.

The aim is to enable people to experience journalistic investigation as a player would on its platform. In other words, it is to present a journalistic investigation in the form of a game.

This strategy may not immediately appeal to the masses, but it does target individuals who are not interested in traditional journalism. So, it's an innovation that reaches a more specific audience, increasing the reach of journalism.

Despite the threats posed by artificial intelligence, the benefits are significant. The CCIJ believes that artificial intelligence and the metaverse are the future of media, and that we need to adapt to them and make use of them if we are not to be left behind.

Aware that not everyone possesses gamer's tools, the CCIJ offers a mobile version of its metaverse, which workshop participants had the opportunity to test. This enabled them to immerse themselves in the Nigerian presidential election and interact with the platform.

Discussions highlighted the obsolescence of certain journalistic methods, which are unable to adapt to the changing times, and the unethical behaviour of certain media organisations and journalists. The latter, often not respecting the ethics of the profession, serves as echoes for the false information that exists on the web. It was recommended that extended internships be offered female journalism students to reduce the gap between theory and practice.

During the discussions, the question of AI source verification for research work was raised. The solution proposed was that, although it's tempting to use this quick method, it's better to do the source verification yourself.

Another reaction was that paying platforms are a good thing, but added that in Senegal, people don't have this culture of paying for information, despite the great work done by journalists in the background.
The lack of a decent wage for the work done by journalists means that many of them live in miserable conditions that are in no way commensurate with their work. In the same vein, the issue of advertising was raised, which is dominated for the most part by the public sector, which snatches up the market and benefits from state subsidies while the private sector picks up the crumbs.

Also, regarding journalists working in foreign territories on specific subjects, discussions revealed that the work is mainly supported by local collaborators. In fact, it's more than important to be aware of the safety of journalists and interviewees, and this means understanding the environment, the atmosphere and the leaders of the territory you want to work in.

During discussions, the place of AI in journalistic work was raised. It was stressed that AI's mission should be to assist journalists in their work, not to do it for them.
During discussions, it was pointed out that community platforms are marginalised, whereas there's need to work on really strengthening them, as communities are more inclined to tell their own stories and talk about their challenges.

During the interactions, the observation was made that politicians do not want the media to be independent. Politicians use the media to win and/or maintain political power. Some of them have their own press groups. They are very influential when it comes to drafting media legislation because they don't want the media to be independent. It has therefore been recommended that a confederation of African countries be set up to fight together for media independence.

Discussions also provided an opportunity to compare radio and podcasting, two media that share a common objective: communication through listening. However, whereas radio, a traditional medium, offers real-time programming, podcasts are more flexible and offer on-demand listening, making it easy to store and share content. This storage and sharing of information is a major advantage of podcasts over radio.
Radio is governed by strict rules and policies that regulate the production and broadcasting of content, guaranteeing a certain reliability of information. On the other hand, podcasting, which is freer and not subject to centralised regulations, exposes listeners to the risk of misinformation, as anyone can create a podcast without complying with any verification or quality standards. This lack of regulation makes it difficult to assess the reliability of content.

The issue of podcast regulation could be an important area of research to fill the existing void in this field.

Finally, the responsibility of major technology companies for the bad behaviour of certain users was highlighted in the debates. For example, participants suggested that social networks should be regulated appropriately to substantially reduce violence and harassment against women. Policies dealing with these issues of violence need to be developed. All companies should be required to have a harassment policy.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, recommendations were made to promote gender equality in the media involving an inclusive working environment without discrimination, equal treatment and specific mentoring for women to empower them to succeed in the media industry. Effective gender policies could help promote women journalists and create gender-sensitive journalists in the processing and dissemination of information.

Economic governance of media should combine several sources of financing to reduce dependence on a single model:

- *Establish transparent governance and evaluation mechanisms.*
- *Paid subscriptions: Premium content accessible via paywalls.*
- *Sponsored content: Advertising partnerships integrated into engaging formats.*
- *Donations and crowdfunding: Direct support from the public, particularly effective for niche platforms.*
- *Organization of events, training courses and sales of merchandising products.*

Promoting ethical and responsible editorial practices:

- *Invest in editorial quality: Prioritise credible, engaging content.*
- *Diversify revenue sources: subscriptions, donations, advertising and other initiatives.*
- *Use data intelligently to target advertising better and personalise content.*
- *Embrace transparency: Build trust through clear communications on finances and objectives.*
- *Innovative formats: Explore podcasts, interactive videos and events to attract new audiences.*

Quality and innovation in the workplace:

- *Adapt to consumer expectations: Offer interactive, personalised content in line with new digital uses.*
- *Invest in innovation: test and adopt new technologies to enrich the user experience.*
- *Build audience loyalty: maintain trust by offering quality, relevant and engaging content.*
- *Support the evolution of the media landscape while respecting the fundamental principles of freedom, plurality and ethics.*
- *Protect the diversity of media offerings.*
- *Encourage innovation and adaptation to new technologies.*
- *Ensure equitable access to quality information.*
- *Effectively combat misinformation while preserving freedom of expression.*
- *Regulate media practices to punish harmful content.*
- *Invest in digital technologies to extend the reach of initiatives.*
- *Adopt internal charters on media responsibility.*
- *Empower technology companies.*
- *Reduce gender bias in algorithms.*
- *Improve moderation to quickly detect and remove violent content.*
- *Demand reports on the impact of technology on gender issues.*

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Gender-Based Violence: a global challenge amplified by cultural and socio-economic inequalities, particularly in Africa.

- *Use reports, documentaries and campaigns to break the silence and raise awareness.*
- *Deconstructing patriarchal norms via inclusive broadcasts and social platforms (#HeForShe, #16DaysOfActivism).*
- *Use platforms like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube to reach young people with dynamic content.*
- *Mobilise funds to support gender equality media programmes.*
- *Promoting women's entrepreneurship through incubators and mentoring programmes.*
- *Produce inclusive content that promotes diverse female role models.*
- *Increase the presence of women in strategic media positions.*
- *Launch viral campaigns to mobilise people around concrete actions (women's rights, recycling).*

Role of local and community media in communicating with rural populations in local languages:

- *Build the capacity of media professionals.*
- *Train journalists on sustainable development issues (gender, sexual and reproductive health, environment)*
- *Promote ethics and responsible coverage of sensitive issues.*
- *Evaluate the impact of actions by publishing periodic reports and soliciting feedback from communities.*
- *Support community media to produce content adapted to societal and cultural realities.*
- *Produce content (documentaries, podcasts, interactive series) in local languages for greater accessibility.*
- *Popularise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 to inspire community action.*

Building strategic partnerships and adopting an inclusive approach:

- *Collaborate with NGOs, educational institutions and governments to produce relevant content.*
- *Encourage public-private funding to support sustainable media initiatives.*
- *Include and encourage the voices of women, youth and marginalized groups.*
- *Increase public-private partnerships to support gender equality initiatives.*
- *Engage influencers and opinion leaders to amplify emancipation messages.*

Promoting awareness and advocacy:

- *Organise campaigns around international sustainable development days.*
- *Highlight gaps in public policy to influence decision-makers.*
- *Promote the representation of women and minorities in the media.*
- *Amplify the voices of marginalized groups.*

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Assessing the impact of media initiatives and encouraging professional and collaborative journalism:

- *Regularly measure the impact of campaigns on the behaviour and attitudes of target audiences.*
- *Establish partnerships between national and international media to share ideas and resources.*
- *Create open databases on sustainable initiatives to produce factual content.*
- *Build journalists' capacity in ethics and gender issues.*
- *Integrate awareness-raising against gender-based violence into educational programmes.*
- *Broadcast high-impact media campaigns.*
- *Work with influencers and artists to break taboos.*

Strengthening legislative and legal frameworks and raising awareness of the harms of digital Media:

- *Adopt specific laws against deepfake pornography, cyber harassment and data breaches.*
- *Set up legal protection adapted to online violence (digital prescriptions, legal support).*
- *Implement laws to guarantee equal pay.*
- *Integrate digital education into schools to prevent technology-related risks.*
- *Launch campaigns to promote the ethical use of digital tools.*
- *Train women and girls to recognise the signs of online surveillance or manipulation.*

Support for victims of digital violence:

- *Create platforms and hotlines dedicated to helping victims.*
- *Provide practical guides and applications for securing devices and personal data.*
- *Offer appropriate psychological support.*

The roles of stakeholders

- *Governments: Legislate to ensure equitable access to economic opportunities and combat discrimination.*
- *Companies: Adopt inclusive policies and invest in gender equality projects.*
- *Civil society: Mobilising citizens and demanding structural change.*
- *International organisations: Provide technical and financial support for sustainable initiatives.*

Conclusion

Africa's media landscape is evolving, with women playing a critical role in the sector and gender representation gradually changing. However, persistent challenges such as unequal access, stereotypes and social and political restrictions continue to hinder the achievement of true gender equality in the media and sustainability. The media play a central role in shaping social perceptions of gender and can be a powerful lever for social change in Africa.

The media business model in Africa is constantly evolving, shaped by the continent's socio-economic and technological challenges. While advertising and public funding still largely dominate, new models such as digital subscriptions, community funding and independent investigative journalism initiatives are beginning to emerge. However, obstacles such as low purchasing power, limited Internet access and political pressure continue to pose major challenges to a sustainable media business model in Africa.

Women in Africa are playing an increasingly important role on social networks, but this participation takes place in a context that can be both liberating and constraining.

African women are increasingly present on social networks, but they navigate a complex environment where they face challenges while using these platforms as tools for change, empowerment and opportunity creation. They are often victims of online harassment, misogyny and verbal abuse. Cyber harassment, threats and digital exploitation are recurring problems.

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African Women in Media

African Women in Media (AWiM) aims to contribute to the creation of enabling environments for African women who work in media industries, and to change the way African women are represented in media content.