

# Change Catalysts

Meet AWiM cofounders,  
Dr Yemisi Akinbobola and  
Bamidele Ogunleye. See page 4  
and 5 for Our Journey

## Dare to Belong

AWiM launches premium membership.  
See page 25

### Opportunities Corner

Check our list of available opportunities with exciting prizes  
See page 39-41

### AWiM2023 CONFERENCE

Theme: Media and Gender Violence.  
Date: November 30 - December 1, 2023.  
Location: Kigali Marriott, Rwanda.

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Meet the AWiM team

### Credits

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# The Publisher's Perspective



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Over the last few years, African Women in Media has engaged in various work that led us to focus the AWiM23 conference theme on 'Media and Gender Violence'.

Firstly, a joint Fojo Media Institute/AWiM research into the barriers women journalists face in sub-Saharan Africa found sexual harassment to be the second-most shared experience. Perpetrators ranged from bosses to male colleagues, recruitment interviewers, intermediaries between interviewees and interviewers, and news sources.

The forms of sexual harassment included everything from suggestive propositions for a sexual relationship in exchange for work to online sexual harassment and physical assault. And here again, experiences of sex for pay came up, namely the opportunity for those in decision-making positions to use sexual exploitation as a weapon against low-paid women journalists who are desperate to make ends meet. This practice is commonly known as sextortion! This, in turn, led Fojo to work with AWiM to produce a second research focused on the lived experiences of Rwandan women in media. This time, sexual harassment was the most prevalent issue.

Sexual harassment is a significant and multifaceted issue that must be addressed in the industry, and it is not the only form of violence experienced by women journalists. For example, the 2020 UNESCO and International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) global study on online violence against women journalists found that 73% of its respondents have experienced online violence. In our three-year project, Reporting Violence Against Women and Girls, supported by the MacArthur Foundation and the Wole Soyinka Centre

for Investigative Journalism, we have found significant gaps in how media report cases of violence against women and girls, and for journalists, the psychosocial impact of reporting such stories, whilst themselves experiencing gender-based violence, many times non-physical violence. We have trained 75 Nigerian women journalists in reporting VAWG, doing further capacity building around mental health, organisational support in developing gender policies to improve VAWG reporting, and commissioned an investigative story on the under-reported issue of non-physical forms of GBV (see page 18)

These activities and those of our partners and national women in media associations across the continent, with examples from colleagues in Asia, guided our thinking around the theme of 'Media and Gender Violence'. Recognising the need for much-improved policy and practice around media coverage of GBV and much-needed intervention where gender-related violence experiences of media workers are concerned. We have taken additional steps to work with colleagues across the continent in co-designing the Kigali Declaration on the Elimination of Gender Violence in and through Media in Africa. The Declaration will acknowledge the strides made so far whilst setting the agenda for what needs to happen next.

Together, we can change the narrative where media and gender violence is concerned.

**Dr Yemisi Akinbobola, Co-founder and CEO, AWiM**  
**Bamidele Ogunleye, Co-founder and COO, AWiM**

# Our Journey

**2023**

AWiM2023 Rwanda.

AWiMagazine is launched.

Kigali Declaration on the Elimination of Gender Violence in and through Media in Africa is co-designed and launched at AWiM23

Media and Young Women in Politics programme commences in partnership with LUMINATE.

Violence Against Women and Girls Programme continues, and AWiMNews produces the first long-form investigative project.

**2022**

AWiM22, Morocco, 364 Delegates

AWiM/UNEP Africa Environment Reporting training and fellowship programme launched (100 trained)

Reporting Violence Against Women and Girls project commences with support of MacArthur Foundation and WSCIJ (75 trained).

AWiM Media Graduate Programme commences with four trainees

**2021**

AWiM21, Virtual, 500 attendees. Agenda2063 Photojournalism Awards, 6 winners. Labour Migration Reporting Awards, 9 winners

Barriers for Rwandan Women Journalists report published (in partnership with Fojo Media Institute).

AWiMNews launched.

SourceHer launched

175 women in media trained: Agenda 2063 Photojournalism Training- 75 trainees; Gender and Digital Reporting Training- 100 trainees

**2019**

AWiM19 at University of Nairobi, 255 attendees, 3 days,

African Union become official partner of AWiM conferences and pitch zone.

Her Media Diary podcast launched

**2020**

AWiM2020 Virtual

Launch of AWiMLearning with first training on Risk Communication and Community Engagement, through support of UNESCO via the IPDC framework. 200 East African women journalists trained.

AWiM conducts first research projects: Impact of COVID19 on East African Women journalists (supported by UNESCO, IPDC); Barriers for women journalists in sub-saharan Africa (in partnership with Fojo Media Institute)

**2017**

First AWiM conference #AWiM17 and pitch zone held at Birmingham City University  
55 attendees, 1 day

**2018**

Second AWiM conference AWiM18 and pitch zone held at University of Ibadan.  
250 attendees, 2 days.

AWiM Newsletter launched

**2016**

AWiM Facebook group was created



# AWiM23 CONFERENCE AGENDA

## Day 1 – November 30, 2023

Time	Activity	Panel
7.30-8.30	Registration	
8.30-9.00	Welcome	MC- Amandine Ndikumasabo
9.15-10.00	Opening Remarks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dr Yemisi Akinbobola</li> <li>2. Dr Amina Salihu (MacArthur Foundation)</li> <li>3. Arthur Asimwe (RBA)</li> <li>4. Johanna Teague (Swedish Ambassador to Rwanda)</li> <li>5. Agneta Soderberg Jacobson</li> </ol>
10.00-10.45	Keynote on Media and Gender Violence Type: Fireside Chat Room: Kilimanjaro	<p>Moderator- Dr Yemisi Akinbobola</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agneta Soderberg Jacobson</li> <li>2. Dr Sarah Macharia.</li> <li>3. Arthur Asimwe</li> <li>4. Misako Ito</li> </ol>
<b>B R E A K</b>		
11.00-1.00pm	From Headlines to Action: Accountability and collective action in media coverage of Gender-based violence. Type: Panel Room: Isaro	<p>Moderator- Regine AKALIKUMUTIMA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carolyn Thompson</li> <li>2. Mame Diarra Diop</li> <li>3. Latifa Akharbach</li> <li>4. Fitih Alemu</li> </ol>
	Violence & other barriers against women in the media Type: Panel Room: Muhazi	<p>Moderator- Susan Makore</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mamaponya Motsai</li> <li>2. Uwamahoro Nadine</li> <li>3. Maulline Gragau</li> <li>4. Eden Sahle</li> </ol>
	Sexual Harassment in the media: From awareness to action. Type: Fishbowl Room: Kilimanjaro	<p>Moderator- Honnette Isimbi</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peace TUMWESIGIRE</li> <li>2. Bibio INGABIRE</li> <li>3. Meseret Kebede</li> <li>4. Najma Abdullahi Ahmed</li> </ol>
	Tools and Resources: Proposal Writing & Reporting, Online & Field Safety. Type: Workshop Room: Rubavu	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bongive Tutu</li> <li>2. Thomas Lethoba</li> </ol>
<b>L U N C H</b>		

2.00-4.00pm	What is to be done? Tackling digital violence against women in and beyond media. Type: Panel Room: Isaro	<p>Moderator: Uwera Astrida</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professor Glenda Daniels</li> <li>2. Dr Omega Douglas</li> <li>3. Nancy Marangu</li> <li>4. Nokuthaba Mathema</li> <li>5. Ochanya Lamai</li> </ol>
	Visual Vignettes: Gender Based Violence in film, TV and other visual media. Type: Panel Room: Muhazi	<p>Moderator: Christine Ingabire</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chika Nnabuike</li> <li>2. Mwape Kumwenda</li> <li>3. Aidah Munzatsi</li> </ol>
	A look inward: Protecting Women in media and our role as female media leaders. Type: Panel Room: Kilimanjaro	<p>Moderator - Oluwadara Ajala</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Catherine Gicheru</li> <li>2. Adenike Aloba</li> <li>3. Angela Agoawike</li> <li>4. Toun Okewale Sonaiya</li> </ol>
	Future of reporting Gender-Based Violence in the media. Type: Workshop Room: Rubavu	Lister Namumba
<b>B R E A K</b>		
4.30-6.30pm	Tackling the Trolls: Exploring the Effects of Online Harassment and Misogyny on Women in Media. Type: Panel Room: Isaro	<p>Moderator- Brigitte UWAMARIYA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joan Letting</li> <li>2. Theola Ehinomhen Amiokhaibhor</li> <li>3. Nyarai Sabeka</li> <li>4. Nonhlanhla Ngwenya</li> </ol>
	The role of the media in countering misinformation and disinformation on gender-based violence. Type: Panel Room: Kilimanjaro	<p>Moderator- Rachel Ombaka</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carolyn Ashaba</li> <li>2. Dr Ke Cai</li> <li>3. Dr Jingwei Zhang</li> <li>4. Omogolo Taunyane</li> </ol>
	The role of gender clubs in journalism teaching universities in fighting against gender-based violence. Experiences from The Quote This Woman+ Type: Ignite Talk Room: Muhazi	<p>Moderator: Diane MUSHIMIYIMANA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Charlene Furaha</li> <li>2. Kathleen Magrobi</li> </ol>

# Day 2 - December 1, 2023

Time	Activity	Panel
8.30-9.00am	Registration	
9.00- 11.00am	Media Business and Financial Models Plenary and Workshop by MacArthur Foundation  Type: Panel Room: Kilimanjaro	Moderator- Dr Yemisi Akinbobola 1. Oluwadara Ajala 2. Qaanitah Hunter 3. Kathryn Kotze 4. Lars Tallert 5. Christine Nguku
<b>B R E A K</b>		
11.15-1.00pm	Challenges and opportunities in the media's role, representation and coverage of gender-based violence.  Type: Panel Room: Kilimanjaro	Moderator- Queenter Mbori 1. Enatnesh Muluken Fetene 2. Agaredech Jemaneh Gemeda 3. Sarah Mawerere 4. Nomshado Nkosinkulu
	Policies and strategies against gender-based violence in media organizations..  Type: Panel Room: Isaro	Moderator: Amandine NDIKUMASABO 1. Gladness Munuo 2. Jan Ajwang 3. Rebecca Ekpe 4. Sharon Kimachu
	FOJO fact checking workshop  Type: Workshop Room: Rubavu	Annelie Frank
	Exploring The Ethical and Gender-Sensitive Reporting of Gender-Based Violence in the African Media Space  Type: Fireside Chat Room: Muhazi	1. Folaranmi Folayan 2. Nelly Kalu
<b>L U N C H</b>		
2.00-3.15pm	Declaration Roundtables in Plenary	All
3.15-4.00pm	Roundtables Feedback	All
<b>B R E A K</b>		
4.30-5.30pm	Declaration Announcement & Closing	Declaration Announcement  Closing Remarks

# Conference Dinner

7.00pm	Welcome drinks and entertainment
7.15pm	Welcome Speeches from Dr Yemisi Akinbobola and AWIM23 partners
7.30pm	UN Women film premiere and brief discussion
8.15- late	Dinner and entertainment



A platform that showcase African women experts across various industries so that media organisations can improve and increase their use of African women as expert sources in their content.



SCAN ME

sourceher.com

# AWiM Projects

## AWiMLearning: Promoting Lifelong Learning and Empowering Women in Media

[awimlearning.com](http://awimlearning.com)

### What is AWiMLearning?

AWiMLearning is African Women in Media's flagship learning and knowledge hub, serving media practitioners across Africa and beyond. Since its inception in 2020, our primary focus has been creating learning content that places women's perspectives at the core of news production and consumption, thus addressing the often-overlooked gender angle in news reporting. Through dynamic, personalised, and indispensable learning resources, we have successfully implemented programs that delve into the gender angle in various critical areas, including Labour Migration, Risk Communication and Community Engagement, Photojournalism, Gender and Digital Reporting, Environmental Reporting, Reporting on Young Women in Politics, and Reporting Violence against Women and Girls.

### What Sets Us Apart?

At AWiMLearning, we aim to provide equal opportunities for professional growth to women in media industries, regardless of their career stage. Continuous retooling and upskilling are essential components of career advancement, and our unique learning model takes it a step further by ensuring that the acquired knowledge is readily applicable to reporting skills. In our cohort training programmes, trainees and editorial fellows consistently report enhanced proficiency.



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### The Future of AWiMLearning

AWiMLearning finds itself at the intersection of rapid technological advancement and a revolution in learning and education. Online short courses have demonstrated their ability to offer extraordinary opportunities for professional development. Through strategic partnerships and an expanding library of courses and content, our vision is to create an extensive online repository of enriching and pertinent media education. Our core values centre on continuous e-learning content and delivery innovation, ensuring effectiveness, extensive reach, and easy accessibility.

To enrol in free or paid courses, visit [awimlearning.com](http://awimlearning.com) or consider becoming an AWiM member for site-wide free access. Join us on this transformative journey, where learning knows no bounds, and together, we can shape the future of media excellence.

Irene Odera, Programmes Officer

## SourceHer! Championing Women's Expertise, One Quote at a Time

[sourceher.com](http://sourceher.com)

SourceHer! was conceived in 2021 in partnership with Fojo Media Institute, with the primary aim of showcasing African women experts across various industries so that media organisations can improve and increase their use of African women as expert sources in their content.

### Why is this important?

According to UNESCO's 2018 Women Make News study, only 20% of all news sources are women. To address this, we encourage all media to be steadfast in their commitment to enhancing the visibility of women as experts. SourceHer! It makes that easier.

Over the past three years, we have diligently transformed this concept into a fully operational website accessible at [sourceher.com](http://sourceher.com). The platform helps journalists and editors identify experts and facilitates interaction through an integrated messaging feature.

Since starting the journey with Fojo, we have partnered with Luminate and Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) to expand the range of expertise on the platform. We invite editors, reporters, and researchers to pledge to increase their representation of African women as expert sources by subscribing to SourceHer! Champion women's expertise, one quote at a time!

Joy A. Adigwe  
Lead, SourceHer!

## AWiM News

[awimnews.com](http://awimnews.com)

AWiMNews is our niche news platform, producing the gender angle of global issues. We have over 35 media partners globally, which co-publish our content, as we work towards our vision of being the world's gender desk. Journalists who have participated in our editorial fellowships have produced impactful stories for AWiMNews that have won several awards, including:

- Two awards for 2023 Best Online Blog-Climate Change Reporting Award- Environmental and Climate Change Media Awards (ECCMA) won by Annie Zulu and Cynthia Nkhata
- Two awards for 2022 Best Online Media Reporting Climate Change Policy Award- Policy Monitoring and Research Centre (PMRC) Media Awards. Won by Cynthia Nkhata and Annie Zulu
- Two awards for 2022 Best Energy Reporting Second Prize Award- Energy Regulation Board (ERB) Media Awards. Won by Cynthia Nkhata
- One Best Online Reporting on National Resources and Land Management award- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia Chapter. Won by Cynthia Nkhata
- One award for BIOCOOR Environmental Award 2022. Won by Annonciata Byukusenge
- One award for West African Broadcast and Media Academy 2023 Won by Buna Juliet

Janet Otieno  
Editor AWiM News

## HerMediaDiary Podcast

Her Media Diary Podcast is a series of interviews with leading voices in media industries. Hosted by Dr Yemisi Akinbobola, our interviewees, who are predominantly African women, offer actionable advice and inspiration for media professionals worldwide.

Subscribe via your favourite podcasting platform [linktr.ee/hermediadiary](https://linktr.ee/hermediadiary)

# Q&A: Keeping it real in the media after covid-19 media sustainability

**Editor's Note :** The COVID-19 pandemic brought about unprecedented economic challenges globally across several sectors, including the media. Janet Otieno interviews Oluwadara Ajala about the effects of the pandemic in business models and sustainability strategies

## Covid-19 hit all sectors, and the media was not left behind. What do you foresee in the future or hope for regarding media sustainability after the pandemic?

COVID-19 accelerated the media crisis of unsustainable business models, and inequitable access to, and diversity of reliable news and information sources. Thus, sustainable media businesses post-pandemic era will generally have to be built around innovation, experimentation, research-based testing of assumptions, adaptation, and new levels of accountability.

**Innovation:** For media, the first steps to innovation are a routine system that studies and identifies various problems limiting the efficient delivery of the independent media organisation's mission at a micro and macro level. Innovation for the future would mean identifying present and future problems and creating a continuous problem-solving system to address these challenges as they rise.

**Experimentation:** How to go from innovative ideas to action? Media businesses need to develop a habit of experimentation, which is an experience carried out to achieve a result.

**Testing assumptions:** A good number of journalistic business assumptions in practice are untested and so might not stand the pressure of implementation across varied user environments. An indicator is a Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly report that shows only 9-13% of studies in journalism and mass communication use experimental approaches. This suggests that we might be basing a lot of our operations as media organisations on assumptions that do not ring true for our specific climate.

**Adaptation:** Media of the present and for future need to be flexible enough to adapt to change while building a business that creates and retains value, fulfils mission, and is fit for the future.

**Accountability:** It is no news that public trust in media is greatly eroded globally. Independent media businesses that will thrive have the double responsibility of holding themselves to new and higher levels of accountability while holding external power holders accountable as well.

It is a strong hope that media will grow beyond recent changes to its well-established way of operations and learn to innovate, adapt, experiment, and solve problems again.

In the earliest history of news of the 1600s, news organisations were created by businessmen who had a passion for truth but also simply saw a problem, invented a solution to fix it and continued the cycle of passion, problem identification and creating collaborative solutions.

I hope media can be inspired by this fact that they basically invented or adapted a well-oiled design, production, and delivery system for news products (newspapers and magazines as it were), a system that birthed many other added revenue sources and innovations. This system has been greatly disrupted but I hope that media can rise above the challenges and learn to innovate again, armed with changed consumer habits but still fuelled by the desire to serve the users that they produce content for.

## All businesses drive for growth; how do you think the media sector can strike the right balance between people and technology to generate growth?

In many ways, the media landscape is unique, but at the same time, is not completely unlike many other sectors of global operations. The past few decades have seen high consumer migration to digital consumption of journalistic and other content. This has posed a challenge for journalism and societies but also presents very real opportunities for news media and the public. Sectors and businesses that grow, do so by, among others, building adaptability or flexibility into their core functions and values. These sectors will need to imbibe a broader habit of assessing trends, analysing risks and benefits against the organisation's mission and vision (this assumes that media organisations need to be super clear on their visions and how it translates to operational goals), designing strategies to implement relevant trends and test, test, test.

With higher transition to digital, the media sector needs combined people skills and technology tools to achieve its mission and be financially sustainable.

Some form of a balance between technology and people for media business growth will continue to require strategic, goal-oriented resource planning and utilisation because ideas grow organisations, people produce ideas and technology delivers ideas.

## What emerging changes do you anticipate over the next few years in media business and financial models?

News skills and tools, same values

Over the next few years, we might see more demand placed on media businesses to run as just that; businesses. So far, journalism and media largely seem to have coasted on the idea that journalism is a public good and so should be funded no-strings or result-based expectations attached. And while it certainly is a public good, independent media that will survive and thrive must learn to compete equally for their own fair share of the market. Thus, while upholding the same and even stronger journalistic values, media businesses will need to develop and perfect new product and sales skills to harness value from all the ways media can generate revenue. We summarise these into 4 ways:

You sell access to your users.

You sell directly to your users.

You sell your skills, expertise, and other resources.

You sell ideas (shaping narratives)

This is even more important as we may start to see more investment capital flow in to support and build the rising instances of media start-ups that are leveraging on technology and critical product thinking to achieve growth. It is clear that investment capital is a 'show results, no-excuses' type of capital, very different than the 'charitable funding' that many media businesses are used to currently. Ultimately, understanding that journalism is public good but the idea that the 'what, where and when' of content delivered should be determined by a continuous measuring of user data will be the game changer. Thus, companies that can harness all these new skills and use data to personalise and customise their content and delivery to best serve users will win the hearts, minds, and money of users. This might then be the key to diversifying revenue streams and strengthening media sustainability.

Closely related to content delivery of the future, there is of course AI which, among others, can take content recommendations for users to the next level, with features like mood-matched recommendations that are not just right for you, they're right for you right now.

Nicole Magoon, James Wright and Andre James of Bain and Consulting sum up emerging changes to media business models quite nicely with this summary: Investment data show that shifts in these six trends are underway; omnipresent delivery of content, personalised media, consumer producers, the emerging metaverse, Beyond Reality and Global aperture. Those who understand how these shifts could reshape markets and open new opportunities will gain a competitive edge, while those who sit comfortably on traditional business rhythms will scramble to catch up.

## What are the common mistakes media owners make when choosing business models?

Not having a model at all, or at least some strategic plan for revenue generation.

Not clearly defining the revenue-generating plan to staff and relevant stakeholders.

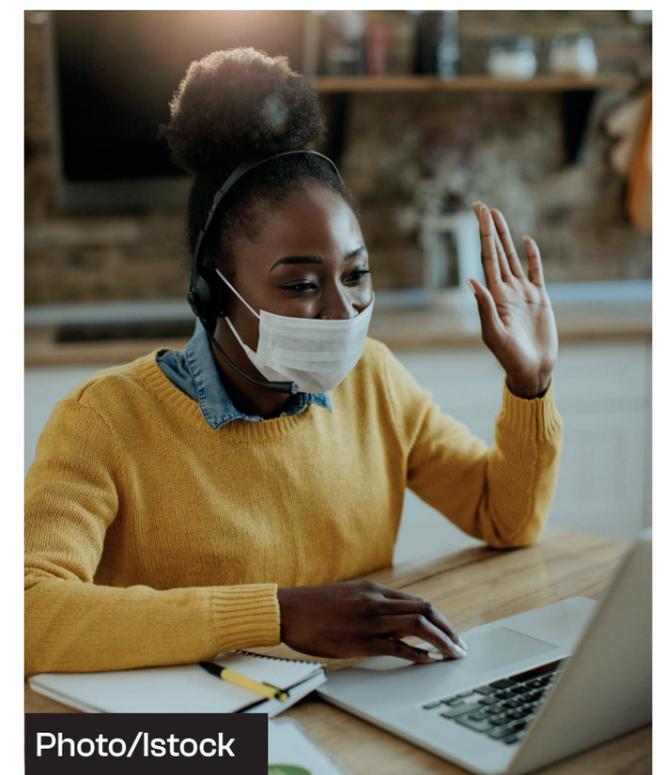
Choosing a business model because it worked in another instance without utilising data to tailor a business model to your company's vision or niche. There is no one-size-fits-all business model, particularly for media. Often, models that will work are those that use a design thinking approach that is heavily dependent on mission, values, and user data.

Failing to understand the difference between a business model and a business strategy (a business model is the way in which a business creates and delivers value to customers, while a business strategy is the way in which a business competes in the marketplace.)

Designing a business model based on untested market assumptions, no matter how plausible those assumptions seem.

Not fully understanding the costs associated with the model.

Choosing an overcomplicated business model: A business model simply needs to be a system that documents your thinking process around refining an organisation's product, understanding what value looks like for users, crafting your product to create that value for your user, and benefiting from the value you create. Financially and impact-wise.



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Photo/Istock

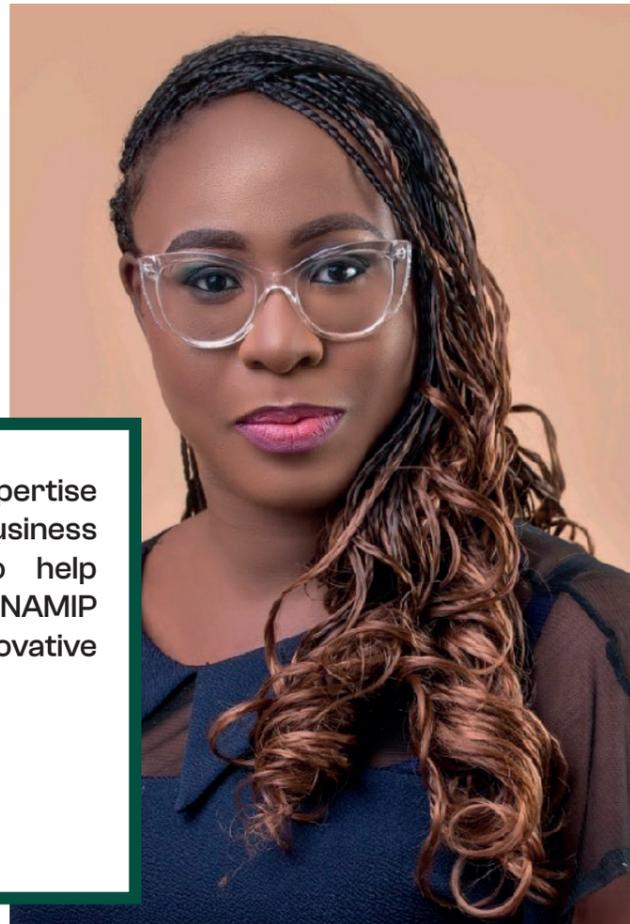
### In your opinion, what can be done to support quality media in this evolving age?

Quite a lot is being done to support quality media, at the same time, not enough is being done. Beyond supporting journalism products or stories, there is increasingly a need to wholistically support the organisations that produce and these products. MDIF's experience supporting independent media organisations across the globe for 25 years show that helping a media organisation become more financially viable is key to preserving its editorial independence and quality. Such organisation-focused support also helps to expand the company's audience and reach of its information and thereby its impact.

Media and the people who support media organisations need to continue to find innovative ways to track and report impact that matters. Users and investors alike want to know that their commitments are making a difference to the organisation's operations and the society as whole. For example, MDIF's impact dashboard, published since 2005, which publicly presents the findings of our annual analysis provides critical context for impact of our work on

businesses of independent media organisations we work with as well their impact on the societies they serve. The impact dashboard also helps to inform MDIF's work.

Summarily, support local news, support diversity in media, support more media organisations wholistically as opposed to media product-only funding, track and report impact for media and media support organisations.



**Interviewee Bio:** Oluwadara Ajala uses her expertise in programme management, strategic business development, and audience research to help independent media organisations in the NAMIP cohort identify and experiment with innovative growth strategies.

Check [namip.mdif.org](http://namip.mdif.org) for more information

# The Importance of capacity building in Africa's global-local media space

By Bongiwe Tutu



The African continent is growing more robust within its engagements in the global economy. This is while numerous reports in the media are pre-empting Africa is the future, more specifically how the continent will be at the centre of the world's urban future. Projections hold that by 2050 Africa's population of 1.4 billion will have doubled, noting further the youth bulge that will be seen vastly in the continent (World Bank, 2018). As the future of the world is African, this calls for a conscientious adoption of Africa's agency in its developmental objectives within the global economy.

Though some critics acknowledge the opportunities coming with this boom, others hold concerns that Africa's boom will be burdensome and mounting to its existing challenges of poverty, unemployment, governance issues, violent conflict and crimes, outdated infrastructure and socio-economic systems. This requires an intentional approach to steer mechanisms supporting the youth, women and vulnerable groups in the continent. The media plays a crucial role in identifying the areas for extensive support and monitoring, through ground breaking investigations shedding light on impacts community by community, enhancing its voices, and driving Africa's growth and opportunities.

The continent still experiences cases of economies, which are merely extracted, and are consumers of the globe. Too often, the media mimics some of these realities rather than reshaping them by holding public and private entities to account. This requires an informed and sustained media framework, which can contribute to sustainable lives and economies on the continent, particularly as it interacts with the rest of the world.

The concept of sustainable journalism, unlocks several advancements journalism and media can make in contributing to sustainable societies. This paper extends to considerations of building and sustaining global African perspectives in the media, as it continues to engage with the world, to present the ground-level perspectives of how lives are affected.

Narratives that dominate the global media platforms built outside of the continent are too often given influence to African news governance. Several media in Africa still relies on secondary sources to inform of their own realities, placed as first-hand primary sources. This infiltration is a crippling factor to a media that can be sustaining of itself, and to its society, particularly that of African communities.

There is a need to build and develop African perspectives to ensure nuance in reporting of Africa's global engagements. Global media reporting of the continent in turn reflects on

the socio-economics, politics and governance, and the local communities in African countries. Particularly as we live in an interconnected and interrelated global community, where fierce competition from the global dominant media companies influence the sustainability of more concentrated media establishments in local communities. In addition, as Africa continues to position itself as transforming into the global powerhouse of the future, as provided in the AU Agenda 2063, it is crucial to build the capacity of journalists and media professionals in the continent.



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### Global journalism and sustainability in practice

Global journalism is the concept of sustainable journalism that acknowledges issues that confront other nations have cross-border implications, recognizes the interdependence of countries and calls for the inclusion of global perspectives in news reportage, this according to the 2021 Policy Brief, titled Towards Sustainable Journalism in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Policy Brief further finds that journalism practice and societal expectations of journalists have evolved over the years. It is evidenced that journalists are expected not only to inform, educate and entertain societies, but that journalists need to ensure that issues that adversely affect societal development are addressed effectively.

Considering the required effective referencing of global policy frameworks and their translation into the daily lives of communities is one example. In the case of the global United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the media often places a narrow focus in the reporting of the sustainable development goals. The Policy Brief finds that too often, the media solely captures SDG 16 target 10 on the guarantee of public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms, whereas there is a need to broaden journalistic links to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

This places us at a time where it is most important to rethink and establish a new kind of "action-oriented shaping of our media space" (Tallert, 2023).

Further of opportune, is how we can ensure African perspectives are upheld within media reports on Africa's relations with the rest of the world, and how we can ensure the sustainability of media establishments, their re-skilling, re-training, and capacity building initiatives in order to be effective.

Research presents six main concepts that attribute to sustainable journalism, namely: content, business, environment, representation, research and education. For the purposes of this paper, focus is drawn to the concepts of content and representation.

The concept of content and representation discusses the importance of African perspectives within media reporting of Africa's engagements in the world, in order to contribute to more sustainable societies. Much aligned to the concept of content is that of representation. Representation refers to the innovative, gender balanced and inclusive newsrooms and organisations, while content refers to the producing and publishing of information that contributes to sustainable societies and generates revenues for the media.

### Content and Representation: Building African perspectives

The Wits Centre for Journalism (WCJ), founded over 22 years ago, has established international profile as one of the leading centres for journalism in Africa. The WCJ is based at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in South Africa, which is ranked highly within the best global universities across a wide set of indicators of excellence. The Centre combines high-level professional coursework with a theoretical and research focus and has played an important role in providing postgraduate education to working journalists. The Centre also boasts several professional journalism projects including the Africa-China Reporting Project.

The Africa-China Reporting (ACRP or the Project) has played a crucial role within the sustainability concept of content and representation in journalism, as well as in building African perspectives in Africa's global engagements.

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The Africa-China Reporting Project was established in 2009, a unique year when China surpassed the United States as Africa's largest trading partner. This presented both an opportunity as well as a challenge for media reporting in the African continent. Firstly, the challenge to not rely solely on the dominating Western narratives when it comes to the impact of China's engagements in African communities, but also the opportunity to be able to unpack, assemble and empower African voices for its developments in its engagements with global players, and in that way impact on the agency of local communities.

The Project aims to improve the quality of reporting on Africa and Africa-China issues by providing facilitation and capacity building for journalists, media professionals and researchers. This is accorded through the provision of reporting grants, skills training workshops, reporting resources, networking, and other opportunities.

Over the years as an Africa based institution, the Project has grown to amplify African perspectives, recognizing the importance of influencing sustainability of the media and society. Further, the Project has grown to supporting representations for and of women in Africa, as well as of young people.

As a result, the Project has shaped into a solid resourceful networking hub for policy-makers, businesses, media, academia and other stakeholders. The Project has awarded reporting grants and has trained over 200 journalists through training workshops, held in South Africa, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, and Tunisia, as well as those held virtually. The Project has further facilitated media impact and engagement in Anglophone and Francophone communities, and dissemination through the mediums of English, French, Mandarin, and Arabic.



### Sustainability Crises in Journalism and Society

The SJIP identified two sustainability crises, one facing society and the other, which faces journalism. The first sustainability crisis facing society relates to issues such as climate change, poverty, inequality, and crumbling democracies. The second sustainability crisis facing journalism relates to issues or stems from an erosion of revenue streams, fierce competition from the global social media companies, restrictions of freedoms of expression, media capture, disinformation and deteriorating public trust in the media.

In addressing the sustainability crisis facing society, the Africa-China Reporting Project has collaborated with several stakeholders in advancing against issues such as climate change, public health system fractures due to the COVID-19, and the inequalities that arise. In its impactful collaborations with China Dialogue, the Project awarded nine reporting grants, and later awarded another eight grants during a second round of selections, to journalists in Africa. Journalists were encouraged to investigate issues on climate impacts, adaptation, mitigation, energy access, energy transitions, just transitions and the social aspects of development, critical mineral mining, low carbon transportation and electrification. The collaboration also brought about a training workshop on Africa-China Relations and the Climate Crisis, to enable journalists, media professionals and researchers to understand and effectively investigate the climate crisis.

Several publications are a result of this initiative, including a report on the impact of the Komati coal power plant. The report highlights how women in the community were not included in the decision making even though they were the most vulnerable group. A more recent publication assess strengthening Malawi's disaster preparedness after Cyclone Freddy.

During the critical outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 the ACRP awarded 31 reporting grants to journalists from across Africa to investigate how African countries were affected by pandemic and its impact on Africa's public and private health systems, innovations and Africa-China relations. The resulting investigations include various reports on Africa's responses and experiences. Including, a report of Ghanaian engineers who built the country's first low-cost ventilators; further from Kenya, we saw reports on how Mombasa County lead the way in fight against COVID-19 in Kenya and the role of youth in Kenya at the forefront of COVID-19 prevention. From Sierra Leone we saw the key role played by the media in shaping public perception on COVID-19; and from Cameroon, of how China's COVID-19 medical aid mitigated a health tragedy in Cameroon's overcrowded prisons; and how years of underfunding the health sector affected Nigeria's response to COVID-19 – a report which was awarded the Prevent Epidemics Naija Journalism Award. These are African perspectives on how African governments were responding to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, their engagements with global actors such as China, and the impacts on local communities and the role of the media. Therefore, this is a response to the sustainability crisis facing society, as well as journalism.



The Project has facilitated several other initiatives towards mitigating the sustainability crises facing society. This includes initiatives on cross-border poaching and trafficking of wildlife, environmental journalism and training workshops, furthermore held in collaboration with NGO China House, and stakeholders including the WWF, Vuka Now, and the Southern Africa Wildlife College.

The Project has further facilitated initiatives within both the sustainability crisis facing society and the sustainability crisis facing journalism. An impactful example is of two training workshops held on digital identity, data and technology in Africa where issues around data privacy, surveillance, digital inclusion, online safety, freedom of expression were explored. The result of the initiative was 17 publications compiled in a Book Publication on two Pan-African journalism workshops, publications from various countries in Africa, as well as the two workshop reports and resources.

The Africa-China Reporting Project enables and supports journalists to tell the stories of how the lives and experiences of people and communities of Africa are impacted by the comprehensive phenomenon of its engagement and interaction with China and other world actors. And in advancing against the sustainability crisis facing journalism which stems from diminishing revenue streams, fierce competition, restrictions of freedom of expression and diminishing public trust in the media, the Project has collaborated with several organisations including Paradigm Initiative, USAID, Africa-Check, the CAAC (Chinese in Africa-Africans in China) research Network. The Project has also supported local investigative units in Africa to conduct in-depth investigations, and these include the IDT in Zimbabwe, CIJM in Malawi, New Narratives in Liberia, Museba Project in Cameroon, iWatch Africa in Ghana, MNN in Lesotho, Ikweli in Mozambique.

The role of the media as the Fourth Estate is crucial in sustaining society. Part of playing a crucial role requires capacity-building initiatives, which empower African voices and perspectives, and media establishments, to enable countries to influence growth and development and sustain their communities, as they engage in the vast and competitive global economy.

This paper has been extended from:  
<https://journalism.co.za/building-african-perspectives-sustainable-journalism-in-africas-global-engagements/>

## THE WITS AFRICA-CHINA REPORTING PROJECT (ACRP)

The Africa-China Reporting Project (ACRP), hosted by the Wits Centre for Journalism at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, aims to improve the quality of reporting on African and Africa-China relations by providing facilitation and capacity building for journalists and researchers via reporting grants, skills training workshops, tools and resources.

### HOW TO APPLY FOR REPORTING GRANT

- Submit a succinct reporting proposal outlining the idea and a detailed budget to [africa-china@journalism.co.za](mailto:africa-china@journalism.co.za)
- Reporting proposals should be clearly structured outlining what the story idea is, where, when and how the story will be investigated and what knowledge it aims to contribute to Africa, and its relations with China.



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO SUBMIT A REPORTING GRANT PROPOSAL

## GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

Since its establishment in 2009, the ACRP has grown into a solid networking hub for policy makers, business people, journalists, academics and other stakeholders in Africa and abroad.



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# Non-physical violence: Suicidal and capable of murder

The project, is part of the African Women in Media Reporting Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) program.

**Editor's Note: In this narrative, the journalists commissioned to investigate non-physical gender-based violence in Nigeria, share how they carried out the investigation**

Too little is being said about violence against women and girls that does not involve physical injury or death. Some abusers believe their activities are only a result of their failure to conform to society's expectations of docility in females, and are unaware of the severity of their actions. In addition to serving as a deterrent in situations like these, this underreported story will help in reorienting all parties involved in non-physical violence and highlight the need for increased awareness of the Nigeria's Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015

replace VAPP Act with the above written in full and its enforcement. Ultimately, sharing their stories might help survivors heal, find closure, or be motivated to seek professional help so they can heal fully.

Borrowing from the experiences shared by interviewees in previous VAWG projects, we got an inkling into just how far-reaching the effects of non-physical violence like verbal, emotional and economic abuse can be.

With some foreknowledge of society's response to women who complain of such abuses, we determined to investigate the prevalence of non physical abuse and the response as well as resources available to victims in relationships like marriage, courtship, schools and media workspaces.

In the course of our investigation, we found out that verbal, emotional, economic, harassment in academic institutions, harassment in the media etc. are among the most common form of non-physical violence experienced by survivors.

Surprisingly, we found that it is the most prevalent form of abuse especially in the south-west Nigeria. Government agencies and civil society organizations are partnering to provide support and seek justice for survivors but two things stand in the way:

1. Inadequate funding
2. Lack of support for victims to see them through to the end of the prosecution process

We came to the conclusion that the government should go beyond mere talk and adequately fund those saddled with the responsibility of handling cases of VAWG. Secondly, one-stop centers should as a matter of urgency be established nationwide to support survivors.

The project was handled by five female Nigerian journalists who are Melony Ishola, Francisca Ogar, Anibe Idajili, Nchetachi Chukwuajah and Juliet Buna with Francisca Ogar as the Team Lead.

## PROJECT SYNOPSIS

**TITLE:** Non-physical violence: Suicidal and capable of murder.

**FORMAT:** Two parts Print and Multimedia story.

**Part 1:** Non-physical violence: Suicidal and capable of murder.

**AIM:** To establish the spate of non physical violence and the growing trend in Nigeria.

**Part 2:** How the fight against non physical violence is being hindered.

**Aim:** To measure the changes or stasis in prosecution of non physical violence prosecution achieved through current efforts by stakeholders.



Scan to read and watch the investigation here or visit [awimnews.com](http://awimnews.com)

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#NoExcuse

# TESTIMONIALS: AWiM Graduate Trainees

**Editor's Notes:** In 2022, through the support of Fojo Media Institute, AWiM recruited the first cohort of its Graduate Programme. Here are their testimonies. We hope it helps organisations understand the needs of media graduates.



**Maka Mutamiri** 

Being an AWiM graduate trainee for eight months taught me so much about being a journalist—one with a mission and a heart to empower people. Working for an organisation that cares about gender equality motivated me to do the same in my storytelling. We received training on how to tell gender-sensitive news stories, and this is now a practice that I continue to use in all of my stories.

Among the many writing skills and best practices we learned, we also got to dive into multimedia storytelling. I edited and produced Her Media Diary and grew my interest in podcasting. Each monthly rotation of the different departments in AWiM was an exciting experience that further developed my skills. As I wasn't the only graduate trainee, I made industry friends and went through this journey with them. We challenged and motivated each other to achieve our best.

Working with the AWiM team and the CEO will also be an unforgettable part of my journey, as everyone on the team was supportive. They wanted us to succeed just as much as we did and gave us the room to share ideas, implement ideas and take ownership of projects that we liked. I would recommend this programme to anyone looking for an all-rounder opportunity to learn, grow and become a purpose-driven journalist who seeks solutions and represents what good journalism is.



**Lara Reffat** 

The AWiM Graduate Programme is one of the most well-rounded media programmes I've ever participated in. I continue to reap the benefits today. Its traditional and newer media balance sets it apart from many other programmes. Along with producing feature and news stories, we also learned about podcast production, audience engagement, partner outreach, newsletter management, and more. It's also promising that a female-led media organisation is making waves across the diaspora. The experience solidified my desire to work primarily with outlets that platform stories from the global south.

The programme was part work experience but also part mentorship. Every mentor gave us their full attention, acknowledging and encouraging our input. They were also always eager to lend a helping hand and even take us aside to advise us on the power of networking and forming long-lasting connections.

One valuable resource I quickly began to appreciate was the AWiM Learning database, where we all had access to modules ranging from environmental-focused writing to a deep dive into solutions journalism.

The programme has opened doors to me that would have remained shut otherwise. It has also opened my eyes to the need for more African women and minorities in newsrooms and media organisations. Young female journalists deserve guidance from those who can truly understand them. AWiM promised that and delivered from the start.



**Blessing Udeobasi** 

The AWiM graduate trainee programme is much more than training; it's a life changer. Selecting fresh female graduates and empowering them to take charge of their lives and careers in unique ways

The training opened my eyes to issues affecting women and girls in Africa. It helped me develop the right toolkit to contribute towards the eradication of such problems through the media.

Being on the AWiM graduate trainee program exposed me to a wide range of learning opportunities ranging from newsletter management, podcast production, Long-form story writing, sub-editing, and social media management, among other things offered by the AWiM indefatigable team. Also, getting free access to the numerous courses on AWiM Learning is something I'm ever grateful to AWiM for. The courses helped set me on the path of reporting on women and girls using gender-cognizant angles and strategies for effective communication.

Many thanks to the AWiM team for taking us by the hand and going on this capacity development journey without reservations. I also want to thank the FoJo Media Institute, whose partnership with AWiM made this training possible.



**Fadhila Sadala** 

It was a great experience rotating in various sections of the organisation. I started at AWiMNews, where I learned how to identify gendered cognizant pitches and impact stories and how news is generated from a cycle besides writing stories to inspire change.

I also learnt how to plan for ideas, content structure for AWiMLearning, and how to target each group's message.

As an assistant producer of Her Media Diary podcast, I have learnt and gained new knowledge in podcasts using different online platforms such as Zencast, Canva, Headliner, Adobe Audition and lybsin. I also learned how to schedule interviews via Zencast and Calendar. I used audio edited from Adobe Audition and posters designed by Canva to make audiograms by using the Headliner. I learnt how to use Libsyn to upload podcasts and distribute them to different podcast platforms simultaneously. I also learned how to create titles, blurbs and scripts for full episodes and trailers. I also learned how to engage the audience through different social media. During the AWiM 2022 annual conference, I learnt how media experts, academia and policymakers unite to ensure proper representation of women in all sectors towards achieving gender equality.

# Breaking Barriers: Women Journalists Rising Above Gender-Based Violence in Cameroon Newsrooms

By Akalambi Clare Enjoh

This story was produced as part of our Reporting Violence Against Women and Girls project supported by MacArthur Foundation and the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism

"When I was anchoring the radio talk show, 'Woman to Woman' on CRTV National Station, I received calls from women and men who complained about sexual harassment. Especially during the annual campaign #16daysofactivism to #EndGBV, I would receive about three cases in one week from female journalists against 1 in 3 months from male journalists." says Tchonko Becky Bissong, a senior journalist, National Coordinator of the Cameroon Association of Women in Media (AFMEC) and Chapter President of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) Cameroon.

Like many countries, Cameroon has seen significant progress in gender equality in recent years, and women have found their place in various sectors, including the media. While newsrooms are often seen as the upholders of truth and justice, they are not immune to a pervasive problem that haunts societies worldwide – Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

GBV knows no boundaries and infiltrates even these sanctuaries of truth. Be it in public or private media, print, broadcast, or online media, the story remains the same. In a country at the crossroads of western and central Africa, like in most parts of the world, GBV is fueled by deeply entrenched patriarchy. Traditional gender norms and expectations in patriarchal societies like Cameroon often reinforce male dominance and female subordination, perpetuating harmful behaviours and attitudes that normalise men exerting power and control over women. This can manifest in various forms of GBV, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and emotional abuse.

"The most common form of GBV faced by journalists, especially female journalists, is sexual harassment by male colleagues and bosses. To a limited extent, rape. There's also bullying and discrimination in attributing assignments as often, male bosses continue to assign female staff to cover social stories in education, health and culture, and reserve politics, economy and sports to male journalists," Ms Bissong says.



Photo/Istock

## The Unspoken Struggle

In the bustling heart of Yaoundé, the capital city of Cameroon, a story unfolds that goes beyond the headlines and into the very offices responsible for crafting the news. Rose Obah, President of the Young African Women Congress Network (YAWC) Cameroon chapter, National Coordinator for Cameroon Community Media Network (CCMN), and Founder of the Centre for Strategic Communication, Peace Building and Sustainable Development, narrates her encounter in the early days in the profession.

"I have always dreamt of being a journalist, and I was passionate about uncovering truth and being the voice of the voiceless. After years of hard work, I landed a job at a prestigious news organisation and was eager to make a difference through my reporting.

"However, I soon discovered that the newsroom environment was not as welcoming as I had hoped. I encountered persistent harassment from my male

colleagues and my boss, who held a senior position in the organisation. At first, it was subtle regarding comments and unwelcome advances that left me feeling uncomfortable. As time went on, the harassment escalated, and my boss began sending me explicit messages and inappropriate jokes about my appearance in front of other coworkers and started undermining my work, claiming that he only got my stories because of my looks and implying that I was trading sexual favours for scopes.

"I was torn between my dedication to the career and the emotional tone of the harassment. So, I hesitated to report my boss's behaviour, fearing retaliation, dismissal, and damage to my professional reputation. However, the situation became unbearable when my boss started spreading false rumours about me, tarnishing my credibility within the organisation and the media industry. One day, I decided that I couldn't endure it any longer, so I documented the harassing messages, collected evidence of my boss's behaviour, and reached out to my human resources department in the news organisation. I confided in a trustworthy coworker who noticed the harassment and was willing to support me.

**"News organisations have an ethical responsibility to create a safe space and an inclusive working environment for all employees, and GBV undermines this responsibility. Perpetrating such actions is a crime against oneself and undermines the mission of journalism"**

"With the help of this coworker and the evidence we provided, the HR department investigated my boss's actions and discovered that I was not the only victim; several other female colleagues had experienced harassment from the same person. So, the organisation took swift action, suspending my boss pending a thorough query. The organisation went further to implement mandatory harassment prevention training for all employees and reaffirmed their commitment to provide a safe and inclusive workplace.

Like Ms Obah, many female journalists in Cameroon work under similar circumstances. While she was brave enough to speak out and seek help, many others endured silently or left the profession.

## The Quiet Suffering

Cameroon's newsrooms often suppress the stories of women who endure GBV. Fear of retaliation, job loss, and a culture of silence prevent many from speaking out. Sah Terence Animbon is the Founder/CEO of Community Solutions Media and Country representative for Médias et Démocratie, a European-African platform of journalists working in 12 African countries, France, Italy and Germany. He had this to say from research carried out with another journalist in 2022 on the media situation in Cameroon, published by Unbais the News.

"The fact that many journalists in Cameroon, especially private media journalists, do not have regular salaries, employment contracts, or social insurance registrations, makes predominantly female journalists more vulnerable. Statistics have shown that 80 per cent of private media journalists in Cameroon do not have employment contracts or social insurance registration and are either owed 6 to 20 months of unpaid salaries."

"Now, considering female reporters caught in the web of such a situation, they are vulnerable and susceptible to yield to some of these sexual pressure and advances that come from either bosses in newsrooms, senior colleagues, or event organisers who have proven to be the main funders of newsrooms in Cameroon," he says.

"There is a need for organisations to take proactive measures to create a work environment where all journalists, regardless of their gender, can thrive without fear of discrimination, violence, and harm assessment," says Muma Jude, President of the Cameroon Association of English-Speaking Journalists (CAMASEJ) Northwest and Station Manager, Radio Hot Coco.

"News organisations have an ethical responsibility to create a safe space and an inclusive working environment for all employees, and GBV undermines this responsibility. Perpetrating such actions is a crime against oneself and undermines the mission of journalism."

## The Unsung Heroes

Despite these challenges, there are courageous women within Cameroon's newsrooms like Rose Obah who refused to be silenced by GBV and have risen above harassment from her boss to become the first female station manager of the Cameroon Broadcasting Service (CBS) Bamenda, President of the Cameroon Association of English Speaking Journalist (CAMASEJ) North West, and now the President of the Young African Women Congress Network (YAWC) Cameroon chapter, National Coordinator for Cameroon Community Media Network (CCMN) and Founder of Centre for Strategic Communication, Peace Building and Sustainable Development. She has been working in synergy with other organisations tirelessly for change, using her story to serve as an inspirational tale of perseverance, leadership and the ability to overcome gender biases to achieve career goals.

Several other women journalists have chosen to use their platforms to highlight the issue of GBV, sharing personal experiences and holding perpetrators accountable.

Ms Bissong is one such woman.

"In 2018 and 2019, IAWRT International embarked on a gender mainstreaming project to counter and reduce the rate of violence media women are exposed to in the course of exercising their duties. IAWRT Cameroon submitted a proposal to eliminate sexual harassment in media houses. We conducted a pilot study in 10 media organisations in Yaounde to measure the impact of the phenomenon on both victims and the output of the media enterprise.

"The pilot study results were very revealing, and we had intended to pursue our sensitisation campaign by coming up with a referral pathway to prevent, report, and sanction sexual harassment within media and on media women," she says.

Government institutions like the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) have equally been stepping up to assist victims seeking justice against their abusers. Tekuh nee Miranda Ngochhn, a Chief at the Regional Delegation of Social Affairs, Northwest, says when it comes to issues of GBV, MINAS intervenes in diverse ways, including sensitisation, psychosocial support counselling, material and financial assistance, orientation and legal assistance.

"When a case is referred to MINAS, like other ministries working on issues related to GBV, Social Affairs handles it to the best of their ability and then refers to other partners either in the medical field or legal field, who are always ready to assist, depending on the condition and need of the victim. It is worth noting that social workers are not lawyers. They are the voices of the oppressed. They do follow-up to ensure the culprit is being sanctioned legally," she says.

Human Rights Lawyer/Solicitor Tifuh Linus Njeck highlights the legal consequences for perpetrators of GBV, emphasising that sanctions await those who harass others in positions of authority.



"As per the Cameroon penal code, GBV falls under sexual harassment punishable under section 302 provision 1, which states that whosoever takes advantage of the authority conferred on him by his position to harass another using orders, treats, constraints or pressure to obtain sexual favour shall be punished with imprisonment for from 6months to 1 year and with a fine from 100,000frs (\$162) to 1,000,000frs. Sub-section 2 of 302 provision 1 states that the penalty shall be imprisonment for three years where the victim is a minor. Sub-section 3 states that the punishment will be imprisonment for three to 5 years where the offender is in charge of the victim's education."

### The Road to Change



Efforts to combat GBV in Cameroon newsrooms are far from complete, but they are gaining momentum. To break the silence, Ms Obah advised journalists scared of reporting their perpetrators consistently to secure evidence.

"Beginning from Cameroon to the world, wherever you find yourself as a female journalist, familiarising yourself with the labour laws and regulations related to workplace harassment and discrimination is the first step of addressing any form of GBV. Of course, if you experience GBV in your newsroom, never remain silent. Report to appropriate channels within your organisation. Keep a record of any harassing or discriminatory incidences," she points out.

"This includes saving emails, text messages and any other evidence supporting your case if you decide to report such behaviour. Build a network of mentors and allies within and outside your organisation. Having mentors who can offer guidance and support can be invaluable in navigating challenges in our careers as female journalists."

"And, of course, remember that if your newsroom lacks policies and training programs to address GBV, consider advocating for their implementation. This will help a whole lot. Join and support organisations and initiatives that work to combat GBV in our media industry; this will help amplify our voices and carry the advocacy further. Collective action can bring about change more effectively than an individual effort. Remember that you are not alone in facing these challenges; stay resilient." Ms Obah concludes.

# Dare to Belong:



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# Media and Young Women in Politics

## Post-election support for political amazons in Nigeria and Kenya

By Juliana Francis and Linah Mwamachi

**Editor's Note:** AWiM/ Luminare Young Women in Politics Programme. The programme is underpinned by the need for the visibility of young women in politics, and aims to intervene in the current state of reporting on young women in politics and participation in civic life.

In most African countries, it is widespread ahead of elections to see groups and political parties supporting women in politics, but getting help after the election is non-existent. However, post-election is when women need support the most, with many battling mental health, depression, bankruptcy and another election on the horizon. Lina Mwamachi and Juliana Francis examine the situations in Nigeria and Kenya.

**Getting Mrs. Jennifer Bina Efdi to speak with reporters was like trying to sell ice to Eskimos. She put the reporters through a third degree.**

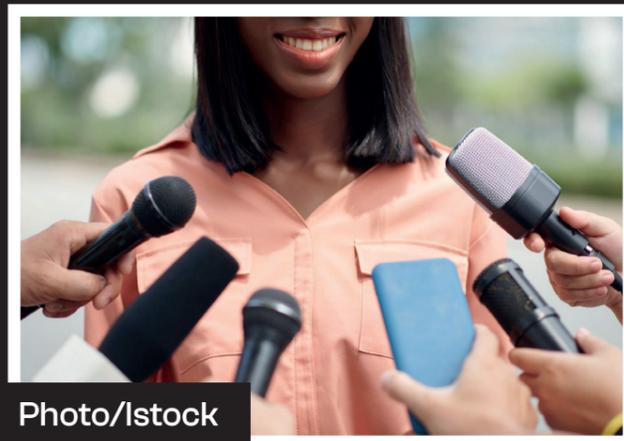
She was full of suspicion, and who can blame her after going through hell and back just because she wanted to exercise her democratic rights during the February 25th presidential and National Assembly elections in the Surulere area of Lagos, Nigeria.

She was attacked at the polling station on that fateful day and almost lost an eye. She would return to cast her vote after her injury had been stitched. The move earned her the name "Democracy Hero."

Ms Efdi's sitting room is adorned with a painting of her casting vote and her bloodied face, sutured.

The wound has healed, but the scar will always remind her and other women of the horrendous situations African women continue to battle to participate in politics. Ms Efdi, a first-time voter, said the attack traumatised her, her husband, and her children. For days, she was plagued by nightmares, suffered anxiety and became afraid of every shadow, and her blood pressure spiked.

She said: "The trauma I suffered after the election is what I do not wish on anybody—especially the first and preceding weeks. I hardly sleep. Nightmares after nightmares and then headaches. It was traumatising for my family and me. Recalling the terrifying day as if it were yesterday, Efdi said: "I was just going through my phone when someone beside me made me look up. I saw a group of strange-looking, fierce



Photo/Istock

guys. They were about 20 in number. We were watching, and after some time, they started leaving. After about 20 minutes or more, I felt an impact on my face, boom! I also heard gunshots. I thought a bullet had hit me. People were running helter-skelter. I put my hand on my face, which was bloodied and dripping to my elbow."

Ms Efdi feared for her life as blood continued to gush, and she started crying for help, screaming that she was dying. Even in her pain and fear, she noticed other electorates looked scared, and nearby residents locked their doors. Amid the chaos and panic, a woman stepped forward and tried to stem the blood on Ms Efdi's face but failed.

"She said we should look for safety, and we started trying to push doors open because we didn't know where the shooters or attackers were," narrated Ms Efdi.

Ms Efdi's wound was finally stitched, and just as her husband was driving her home, she noticed voting had resumed at her unit.

She recalled: "As we were driving past, I felt a rage inside me, after everything I had done, ensuring I registered for my PVC and all so that I wouldn't vote. But my husband encouraged me; I went again and cast my vote."

Ms Cate Mashame, a young female and a first-time aspirant in the 2022 general elections in Kenya, recalled how she threw herself into the polls and contested for the County Women's Representative seat. She did her best as a first-time young female aspirant. Until the end of her campaigns, she stood firm, even at the ballot box.

But politics is a win-lose game; she did not clinch the seat.

When Ms Mashame was asked if she got any help from the party she was vying under, the Orange Democratic Party, she said she got nothing. She said: "I got nothing at all, no psychological help nor financial help. I am on my own, but the network I created during campaigns and my engagements during the political period helped me a lot because some of the connections I made and networks I built, altogether, the social capital I generated, have held my hand ever since. Still, nothing has come from the political party I was vying under and advocating for its ideologies."

She noted that it was good for any young female candidate to establish reasons for going into politics. According to her, any female candidate, despite age and class, should prepare well in terms of finances and investing in social capital to avert disappointment, specifying that political parties cannot be depended upon.

Many of these women had been dragged on social media, got polarised with friends and families over political party affiliations, and suffered abuse and attacks. For those who vied, some had become bankrupt. These situations could lead to mental health breakdown and clinical depression.

Post-election is when women need support from different groups, especially political parties, family members, women-focused groups, religious bodies and international communities. The support is also to prepare and equip them for the next elections.

In November 2022, ahead of the 2023 general election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) called for support to enhance women's participation in the forthcoming election. INEC made the call during a sensitisation visit with a theme, "Women and their participation under the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NwTF) campaign tagged #Balance4her Campaign in the 2023 General Election."

During that sensitisation, the women were told the importance of voting and warned against vote selling.

PremiumTimes also reported how Nigerian women mobilised those at the grassroots for the 2023 general election, educating them about the Gender Equality Bill.

Many preparations go into readying women in politics for elections, especially by political parties and local and international groups, but post-election support should be more common and frequently offered.

According to Betterhelp.com, people suffer from post-election stress disorder. This can include, among other things, "a higher incidence of physical and mental health symptoms, including anxiety, depression, headaches, and overwhelm." This stress can be "coped with using unique coping mechanisms and support systems."

A non-governmental organisation, the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NwTF), is grooming women in politics after elections to be resilient, while others are demanding more inclusivity and appointment of women to nonelective positions. Ms Efdi's case is unique because not everyone gets attacked at the polling station, but many are stressed. Ms Efdi thinks that the nature of her attack got her overwhelming support.

She said: "I got calls and I was called a hero. Nigerians were amazing. Representatives of different political parties came to see me. But really, nothing from the government. But nobody has been arrested for attacking me, and I know the person is still out there. Right now, I want my family's safety and peace of mind."

According to her, after the elections, a group, UN Women, invited her to a programme on post-election.

She stated: "I benefited from it because I spoke about the incident. Truly, postelection support is critical; it will be more so if it's coming from a place of authority, the government. For instance, after what happened to me, the government has not said anything, and no measure has been put in place to prevent such trauma from recurring."

She argues that such nonchalance from the government could lead to women not participating in politics in Nigeria. "When they remember what happened to a fellow woman, sister, or colleague at the polling unit, they will not want to participate. This will continue to drop the number of women in politics. The government should support women by ensuring a reduction in such traumatic experiences. The government should be interested in what happens to women after elections, especially those who are victims of violence.

"The government should ask what has become of them, what is the person facing medically? What is their mental health like, and follow up with psychological and other supports. My case is my eye; what about families of those who lost people and women who lost property? Where is the safety net for women? My attack happened in this neighbourhood, and I am still there. Do you know what it does to someone's mind?"

Ms Gertrude Shuwe, a first-time aspirant in Kenya, said: "I did not get anything from my party, not even a handkerchief, yet I vied and campaigned on the party's ticket."

According to her, she lost the election but received no support from her political party.

She said optimistically that it was a good start; at least through the race, she has learned many lessons and challenges, which she believed will help her leadership skills and political tactics in other forthcoming elections.

She also believes she failed to win the election because she started her campaign late. She said: "I started my campaign six months before the election."

She mentioned logistics, lack of funds and a vast area to cover in the county as other factors that led to her losing the election.



Scan to Read more of the story here or visit [awimnews.com](http://awimnews.com)

# AWiM/UNEP Africa Environmental Reporting Programme

This feature story was part of our award-winning stories for the AwiM/UNEP Environmental journalism programme

**Editor's Notes:** In 2022, AwiM partnered with the United Nations Environment Programme (Africa) to train and commission 100 female journalists to produce stories highlighting the gender angle of environmental issues in Africa and the Africa Green Stimulus Plan. Five of the stories won awards. Below is a list of the awards and a sample of one of the stories.

1. 2023 Best Online Blog-Climate Change Reporting Award- Environmental and Climate Change Media Awards (ECCMA)
2. 2022 Best Online Media Reporting Climate Change Policy Award- Policy Monitoring and Research Centre (PMRC) Media Awards.
3. 2022 Best Energy Reporting Second Prize Award- Energy Regulation Board (ERB) Media Awards.
4. 2023 Best Online Agroecology Reporting Award- Agroecology, Social Accountability and Climate Change (ASACCA) Media Awards.
5. Best Online Reporting on National Resources and Land Management- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia Chapter.

Below is one of the award-winning stories, you can find others at [awimnews.com/category/environment/](http://awimnews.com/category/environment/)

**The author Cynthia Nkhata is a multi-award-winning journalist based in Lusaka, Zambia with an interest in gender, children's rights, business, health and politics.**

As the ravages of COVID-19 swept across the globe like wildfire, the killer virus did not only claim millions of human lives but also ended people's jobs.

Before the onset of the pandemic, 34-year-old Hamilambo Abriella had a well-paying job in the national park from which she fed her two children.

But when the first Covid-19 case was confirmed in Zambia in March 2020, it changed Ms Hamilambo's status from employed to unemployed.

During the official opening of the Zambia Tourism Board workshop, Minister of Tourism Rhodine Sikumba indicated how the COVID-19 pandemic was and remains a threat to biodiversity conservation resulting in tourism revenue loss.

Mr Sikaumba said COVID-19 became the real threat to Zambia's tourism sector and there is still a high risk that it will take time for the industry to see its glory. He stated that resources allocated to conservation have remained low in Zambia.

He explained that on average, between 2010 and 2018, 0.6 per cent of Zambia's national budget was allocated to environmental and wildlife conservation.

"Government will engage with the tourism sector in view of addressing some of the longstanding challenges and more recent pressing challenges," he said.

Unpredictable weather patterns are having a profound impact on the lives of the most vulnerable in Zambia. On top of last year's

drought that plunged 2.3 million people into food insecurity; recent flash floods have left an estimated 1.1 million in need of food assistance.

"The COVID-19 pandemic hit Zambia as people affected by drought and flash floods were just starting to recover and rebuild their livelihood," Jennifer Bitonde World Food Programme (WFP) Representative in Zambia shares.

"This is the risk undermining resilience gains and further aggravating food insecurity for the most vulnerable," she points out.

And in the case of Ms Hamilambo who is also a single mother, her quality of living and her family were affected due to losing her job at the national park. Women at large are losing daily wages because of COVID-19 health measures that severely threaten their ability to feed their families.

"Losing my job was one of the most devastating and difficult events in my life, most of the time now, I fail to provide food to my two children and pay rentals," Ms Hamilambo said. the national park.

She said due to the financial challenge she had to have a small garden for a vegetable plantation to make a living and support the family.

"I had to start growing vegetables in small plastics because the land is difficult to acquire as a woman, especially in rural areas so it's tough to survive as a single woman," she stated.

Climate change also contributed to the effect of COVID -19 in her case. In terms of the plantation of vegetables coupled with not having enough land, she had to find ways to make sure that her vegetables could survive the effects of climate change.

"Changes in climate are transforming our planet to think and plan for the future of the plantation, the weather here is a lot hotter these days," she said.

According to The African Union Agenda 2063 Framework, the future prosperity of Africa will be based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. Concerning the environmental aspirations of Agenda 2063, Africa by 2063 will: 'Be transformed such that natural resources will be sustainably managed, and Forest and vegetation cover would be restored to 1963 levels; land degradation and desertification would have been stopped and then reversed.' All agricultural land will be managed in a manner that is environmentally and socially sustainable.

African countries would have reduced and conserved at least 90 per cent loss of biodiversity and all-natural habitats. By 2030, Africa will be a fully water-secure continent.

According to the Gender Global on Climate Change Report of 2021. "Recognising the important contributions of women as decision-makers, stakeholders, educators, caregivers and experts across sectors and at all levels can lead to successful, long-term solutions to climate change."

Women have proven to be leading the way toward more equitable and sustainable solutions to climate change. Across sectors, women's innovations and expertise have transformed lives and livelihoods and increased climate resilience and overall well-being.

Global negotiations have increasingly reflected the growing understanding of gender considerations in climate decision making over the last eight years. Continued progress towards gender equality at COP21 can help achieve successful climate action.

Zambian women continue to face barriers to land ownership and with climate change, it has become more difficult, especially for those living in rural areas, like Rebecca Namukonda who has struggled to acquire land for herself and her family.

At 37-years-old, Ms Namukonda Rebecca has faced barriers such as lack of finances, low level of education, and social-cultural and patriarchal norms.

"I have been trying to get a plot for years, but I always have to put that on hold because I am a single mother and a divorcee who gets no support from my ex-husband. I need to take care of my



Photo / Cynthia Nkhata/AwiM

children's education and needs," she laments.

Ms Namukonda who is a single mother of five explains that the process to acquire land is difficult right from the onset, which leaves many women vulnerable to being duped by unscrupulous people who prey on their desperation.

"I was once duped by cadres who said they had land going for K2000 (\$118). It was difficult for me, but I managed to save K1500 and pay for that land, I have not seen or heard anything from them since."

To improve these statistics and ensure that women like Ms Namukonda and Ms Hamilambo have access to land ownership, a holistic approach is needed.

"Women and young people are supposed to have more access to land for agricultural activities," Action Aid, Country Director, Nalucha Ziba once said.

Ms Ziba explained women and young people are inhibited by several factors for them to fully venture into agriculture.

Speaking in an interview, Ms Ziba, said access to land and land ownership are some of the challenges that women and young

people face when it comes to agriculture. Ms Ziba also called for adequate use of agricultural research data and more research in agriculture given climate change.

"Poverty in rural areas is high and economic opportunities for women, in particular, are severely limited," she added.

A woman admiring her maize plantation. Land access still remains a pipe dream for women in Zambia.

The government needs to engage the rural areas and women through traditional leaders who can help women to access land.

This will achieve the Vision 2030 which talks about women's equality to have an equal share of national developments such as land.

Zambia Land Alliance Executive Director Patrick Musole argues that affirmative action needs to be taken to address the underlying barriers women face in land ownership to increase the number of women with access to and control over land in Zambia.



Photo / Cynthia Nkhata/AwiM

He argues that land tenure is foundational to social and economic development. Secure land and property rights must be accessible to both women and men, to increase their assets and enable them to reach their full potential.

The question remains: Is enough being done to ensure that Zambian women – and vulnerable women like Ms Namukonda and Ms Hamilambo are not left behind and are helped to overcome climate change especially since they are based in rural areas?

# Press freedom in Zimbabwe: Female journalists bear the brunt



Photo/Istock

Media is integral to any country's development, hence the need for a vibrant fourth estate. Press freedom is the ability of journalists and news outlets to report on issues without censorship, intimidation or interference from government authorities or other sources. Although the 2nd Republic has opened the airwaves to provide plurality-press freedom is another tale. Such are the chronicles of Online Television- Heart and Soul duo of Chengeto Chidi and Blessing Mhlanga- among the many media personnel who have been denied the right to execute their duties as journalists.

On 7 May 2022, the two arrested for violating the Electoral Act had to spend two nights in the police cells. Their offence was taking photos at a polling station where police arrested opposition politician Job Sikhala.

A year down the lane, a visibly shaken Chengeto has difficulty explaining what transpired during a by-election at a polling station in Seke, Chitungwiza.

"I'm traumatised; people manhandled me; I thought they should be protecting me. The two nights I spent in jail were the most horrible in my life; I didn't know what would happen to me," says Ms Chengeto.

The police confiscated their phones and cameras, and they were made to pay Zimbabwean dollars 20,000 (equivalent to \$63) bail. Such is the brutal nature of the operating landscape for female journalists that Chengeto's mental health has been affected for a year. She now shies away from covering politics.

According to the State of Media Report released in 2022 by The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe, although Zimbabwe is not among the African countries with journalists serving prison terms, the country witnessed an upsurge in the number of cases involving assaults of journalists at political gatherings.

The World Press Freedom Index ranks Zimbabwe 128 out of 136, with the amended penal code Official Secrets Act and the new Cyber Security and Data Protection Act continuing to hamstring journalism.

According to the International Press Institute (IPI) Africa Advocacy and Partnerships Lead, Ms Nompilo Simanje, says, "Although the media landscape is evolving in Zimbabwe, especially as a result of the 2013 Constitution which was introduced under the 1st Republic which expressly provides for freedom of expression, we note that press freedom threats and violations have continued to occur in the form of unlawful arrest and detention of journalists, restricted access to information, online threats and harassment as well as physical assault".

Every month, IPI produces factsheets detailing recorded press freedom threats and violations. Zimbabwe was one of the countries with the highest number of identified breaches in October 2022, December 2022, January 2023, and August 2023.

In the most recent cases, the Zimbabwean authorities have relied on the Criminal Law Codification and Reform Act, especially the cyber-related offences, which saw the arrest of Desmond Chingarande, Wisdom Mdzungairi, and Hope Chizuzu, including female journalists Chengeto Chidi, Rumbidzai Chizarura, Ruvimbo Muchenje, Nunurai Jena among others.

"Women journalists who experience harassment, intimidation or physical violence like Chengeto, may be deterred from reporting on sensitive issues or holding those in power accountable. This limits the diversity of voices within the media industry and undermines democracy by restricting access to information and suppressing critical voices," says Ms Nonhlahla Ngwenya, MISA Project officer and media mentor.

Ms Ngwenya said the current media landscape in Zimbabwe is not a conducive working environment for female journalists. "We are currently witnessing the unfolding of the ZBC sexual harassment scandal case, which is just the tip of the iceberg. Female journalists also risk violence and intimidation from security forces and other powerful

groups." Ms Ngwenya further highlighted how this forces many female journalists to practice self-censorship or avoid specific topics to avoid being targeted.

Such can be said about freelance female journalist Rumbidzai Chizarura, who, on 18 September 2021, decided to give up her media career following brutal harassment and intimidation. Student politics in Zimbabwe attracts the interest of enormous political party players and law enforcement agents. Ms Rumbidzai went to cover a ZINASU students meeting and felt safe when she saw a heavy police presence. "I was filming ZINASU president Takudzwa Ngadziore's speech when I noticed two trucks full of men arriving at the venue. I sensed that something bad was about to happen, so I packed my camera and ran to my car. "Before I could start the car, a man opened my door, forced me out and started slapping me; my specs got broken while he dragged me out".

"I feel my rights were infringed as a journalist, for there was no explanation why the still-to-be-identified assailants beat me up."

Rumbidzai's car was ransacked- losing her camera, specs and handbag.

"I am so disappointed at the police force because, as a journalist, I was harassed and beaten, but they all just stood there watching and declined to provide the much-needed eye-witness accounts I needed to make a complete police report of my beating and theft of the stuff," narrates a disappointed Ms Rumbidzai.

Ms Rumbidzai says she had to go to three police stations, which all declined to book her case, saying it was out of their jurisdiction. The incident forced her to leave her vocation for close to one and a half years, but she had to brave it out for the sake of her children by taking up the pen and camera again.

Veteran journalist Violet Gonda is one of the many journalists who have had a brush with the law. Ms Gonda spent nearly two decades as a stranger to her own country as the government of the late President Robert Mugabe crafted draconian media laws which saw human-rights journalists like her being forced to seek refuge in the UK.

So what is the way forward for the young female journalists who fear to carry on due to the state grip on the press? Ms Ngwenya believes mentorship, especially for young female journalists, is a step in the right direction, "I truly believe the concept of mentorship is still evolving in the media landscape in Zimbabwe; there are a few female journalists that can stand up and say they have mentors, young female journalists need to be prepared for the challenges they may face in their careers. This includes being prepared to be arrested, harassed, or attacked."

The Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUU) Secretary General Perfect Hlongwane says as a body that represents the interests of journalists, they condemn all forms of media oppression as media freedom translates to a free nation. Therefore, it is essential to safeguard media freedom. "Society should be tolerant to divergent views for which the media is a vehicle. We

have received reports of journalists whom law agents have violated, including an incident in Chinhoyi last year where online female journalists Ruvimbo Muchenje and Nunurai Jena were assaulted by Citizen Coalition for Change security officers and prevented from executing their duties," he says.

"As ZUU, we were not happy with such behaviours from political players, but let me hasten to say that I commend the then Minister of Information Monica Mutsvangwa, who said as a government, they do not condone such brutal acts on journalists."

"As ZUU, we are training journalists on safety and security, and I implore journalists to be alert and recognise potentially violent situations- there is no story worth dying for; if you feel it's not safe, better leave the venue," stressed Ms Hlongwane.

IPI Africa Advocacy and Partnerships Lead Nompilo Simanje say to protect female journalists and the whole media institution; the government should repeal or reform repressive laws such as the Criminal Law Codification and Reform Act.

"As part of the Africa project, IPI intends to build on its experience and resources under the On The Line programme implemented in other regions to engage editors and newsrooms to create a safety culture, implement risk assessment and safety protocols, and create peer support mechanisms. This can be part of a broader approach by media organisations to provide training on safety and security.

"As an international organisation, we also think there is value in the international community raising awareness on such issues, providing legal or psychosocial support in the case of harassment and arrest, and putting pressure on the Zimbabwean Government to respect the rights of journalists," notes Ms Simanje.

In August 2023, IPI published an on press freedom frameworks in Zimbabwe that paved the way for establishing an environment free and conducive for the media to operate.

The lack of press freedom can profoundly impact women's rights and access to information. For women to receive accurate reporting or profoundly affect their lives, female journalists should feel safe to carry out their duties. Safeguarding press freedom is essential in promoting women's rights globally. A vibrant Press can only oversee when the environment is conducive.

## Links to Zimbabwe press freedom factsheet:

[bit.ly/47hLV78](https://bit.ly/47hLV78)

[bit.ly/3SouVbb](https://bit.ly/3SouVbb)

[bit.ly/45VvtZa](https://bit.ly/45VvtZa)

[bit.ly/3ua8rAr](https://bit.ly/3ua8rAr)

# Fathi Mohamed Ahmed: The trail blazing woman in Somalia's media

## Tell us about your childhood and education journey

I am the firstborn granddaughter of my grandmother who raised me. I used to help her with domestic chores and occasionally spent time with her especially when she was listening to the radio—BBC Somali Service to be exact—which used to go on air at 7:00 AM, 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM daily. My grandmother stayed informed on current affairs and global events through the BBC Somali Service. On Fridays and Thursdays, I would have time to listen to the BBC with her because, on weekdays, I would go to Madrasa to learn the Quran. When I was at home, my grandmother used to ask me to grab the radio for her or buy batteries for her—something that always fueled my passion for radio. My tender age and learning engagements kept my dreams at bay, but I have always harboured the belief that one day, I would love to become a fully-fledged journalist. New wave clashes erupted in Mogadishu and people started fleeing to other relatively more peaceful regions of Somalia. Our grandmother took me and my younger sister to Middle Shabelle Region where my grandmother hails from. After a while, we returned to Mogadishu as clashes subsided and I resumed my studies. I thought now was an opportune time to enrol myself on a journalism course in Mogadishu. I convinced my financially struggling grandmother to approach my father who owned a small business in South Africa to pay for my monthly tuition which was \$10. I had told her that I would be studying computer basics because I stood no chance of securing 10 dollars had they known I would be spending on journalism. In Somalia, journalism is considered to be a male-dominated field and not the “right place” for a girl from a deeply conservative Somali society. This is how my passion for media started to make my first baby steps. My family eventually found out that I was not attending computer classes and that I was studying journalism. I was told in no uncertain terms that I would never be



allowed to work as a journalist as this was not considered a career for a decent girl with a bright future. Unflinchingly, I stood my ground, however, family pressure grew more intense after I started working as an intern on a local radio station. This time around, things were getting tough and I needed some kind of reprieve. I solicited support from my stepmother to convince my father of the need for the family to trust my choice. They reluctantly agreed. Alleged sexual abuses and harassment against female journalists at media houses, societal misconceptions and cultural beliefs were the major factors underpinning my family's objection. In 2015, I started implementing my dreams despite immense challenges. I always sought the guidance of older and more responsible personalities.

## Is there one particular experience in your life that inspired you to take a career in journalism?

In the past, my passion pushed me to study and work, but when I learned and started to work, I realized a lot which is that society needs a girl who works efficiently and reports on the circumstances of the vulnerable in society, and it is the one that motivates me to continue working.

## There is always something that pushes us to keep going. What is this one thing which energizes you about your work in the media?

Yes, it's true, everything that a person does has something that drives them and keeps them interested in continuing it, the things that motivate me is that my society is a society that is sensitive to women and does not allow women in certain jobs such as my profession, high positions in the administration and government offices, and women should always be the ones who like to be led, so I want to stand up for a visible role that women have always had in the administration of all the places they work, and remove the view and traditional culture that women stay at home and have no role in the administration

## Who is the first Somali woman who inspired you?

Two women were close to me who knew me from the beginning of my journey and who encouraged me to never give up on my goal, those lovely women are my mother and my father's wife who always supported and encouraged me. I am grateful to them all the time.

## Everyone has unconscious bias, what are some of the assumptions you have experienced as a female journalist?

Yes, everything you don't understand or don't know first you take a view that is far from reality and it's normal, so the only thing I learned from them is persistence and determination that you need if you are a woman because societies do not have the same culture. When you live in a society where it is difficult for you to understand that girls can be journalists, work and aim for leadership in the areas they work in, you need to endure all the bad things that come your way until you reach your goal.

## As a female journalist in Somalia, what were some of the biggest challenges and lessons learnt thus far?

The truth is that there are many challenges that female journalists working in Somalia face regularly. The first is to believe that female journalists are bad and do not respect Somali culture. Next, most of them do not have respect and equality in the places they work, in terms of hiring, salaries, management and even work, and they are not seen as important in the places they work and the places they go to work, such as meetings, events and interviews, as they work long hours, they are not entitled to their co-workers, they are not given the authority they want or deserve, and most of the holidays and special circumstances are not considered.

## What do you think is the best decision that you have made about your career in the media?

The best decision I had when it comes to this work is “I was so determined not to drop out of journalism school that my grandmother and father forced me to drop out many times and that I continued the internship training that I went through in a difficult situation, and that I was never deterred by the special circumstances that I faced when I became pregnant with my first daughter, and I remember that time I used to walk to work some days to fulfil my work schedule, also when I gave birth and returned to work after a short

period was difficult time for me. When the world marked the International Day to End Crimes against Journalists two years ago, press freedom campaigners said Somalia remains the most dangerous place for journalists globally. In light of this.

## What are some of the risks you have encountered in the course of doing your work as a journalist?

The dangers are always there and there are many, for example, the security situation in Somalia is always there and you cannot escape from parties like al-Shabaab and sometimes groups against the government. Likewise, there may be a security risk when you post or follow up a topic about them. For example, when I was working on a story about drugs and young girls who were addicted, I was treated with anger and threats by some of those who sell drugs to young people until he threatened to kill me and the other girls who were working with me. Will make a case of falsehood. There was also a young girl who was raped and I was working on the story in 2018. A man called me and told me that if I return to the IDP camp where she live, my life will be in danger and then I cannot talk about the story of the girl's rape.

## In a past interview, you stated that Somalis believe journalism is an unacceptable career for women, has this changed? How are you navigating this?

Yes, that's right, it's still there. And I don't think that this view will go away easily these days, my team and I sometimes get bad comments from the community; as the purpose that was made for you is to change the Somali culture and divert the girls from the culture and modesty, and that I cannot work calmly and peacefully and I cannot control yourself.

## What are some strategies that can help young women journalists in Somalia achieve the success they want in their careers?

First, have personal confidence, resilience and determination and never give up on difficult circumstances and times, such as marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, these are difficult situations but there is no need to divert you from your purpose and progress.



Fathi Mohamed Ahmed works at Bilan media. Bilan Media is Somalia's only all-women media team. Visit Bilan Media at [www.bilan.media](http://www.bilan.media)

# Gender disinformation and fact-checking

By Annelie Frank,  
International Programme Manager  
Fojo Media Institute

Gendered disinformation is the use of false or misleading gendered or sex-based narratives as a way of attempting to deter women from participating in the public sphere.

## “Media should make gender fact-checking a priority”

Fact-checking online is an essential skill for any journalists in the digital age. At its best it can also help to debunk and combat false or misleading gendered or sex-based narratives, so called gendered disinformation. Despite the expansive spread of such disinformation, few journalists engage in this specific area of fact check journalism.

Disinformation campaigns have targeted many high-profile women, including politicians, journalists or women's rights activists. Such campaigns have a broader effect on women generally, discouraging them from becoming politically active or voicing their opinions publicly. The narratives used are often combined with narratives on religion, ethnicity, or race to further extend the damage. Disinformation campaigns can use these narratives to polarize public debates, undermine social cohesion and spread fear.

Gendered disinformation comes in different forms, such as, harmful social media posts and graphics, sexual fabrications, and other forms of conspiracy theories, and is used in different situations and at different places. Not only those in high profile positions, but those also taking up engagement very visibly in their communities as rights defenders, or those having or aspiring political careers, are targets of gendered disinformation. Also, women and gender diverse people who prefer not being on the barricades, can feel the impact of gendered disinformation, and for example the stereotypes that are spread.

“I strongly feel that media should cover the gender

aspect of false information to a much wider extent. There is extensive activity out there with a genuine anti-feminist agenda. The type of disinformation we previously only saw on 4Chan is visible in open Facebook feeds, which shows that the misogynistic and violent language targeting women is being normalised,” says Annelie Frank, Project Manager at Fojo Media Institute's media strengthening programme in Rwanda and long-term expert in fact-checking for journalists.



Annelie Frank

She points out that the current and potential effects of this widespread rhetoric is impossible to foresee – but the reality of it cannot be ignored.

“This agenda surely affects women all over the world extensively and media should be making it their priority to cover it,” she continues.

Annelie Frank, who is currently based in Rwanda, will be giving a crash-course workshop on fact-checking at the up-coming African Women in Media conference in Kigali at the end of November. Although the workshop will not be covering fact-checking of the gendered mis- and disinformation, learning how to spot such campaigns is one method of combating the spread of it.

## Workshop on fact-checking

Dreaming about becoming a fact-checker? Or just want some fact-checking skills to use in private life? This is a workshop for beginners who want to try some of the basics in fact-checking. In this practical workshop, led by Fojo's Annelie Frank, you will get a crash course in verifying pictures and videos. Some key concepts will be explained, and you will get the chance to ask anything you'd ever want to know about fact-checking (if time allows).

## Gender disinformation and fact-checking: A multilayered area of concern

In December 2022, Andrew Tate, “king of toxic masculinity”, was arrested in Bucharest, Romania after having targeted Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg online. The former kickboxer, now accused of trafficking and other offences in Romania, boasted on X, formerly Twitter, about his collection of cars and their huge CO2-impact. In a jovial clip disseminated online, Tate, smoking a cigar, was pictured in front of boxes from a local pizza restaurant which ultimately led to his detection by the Romanian authorities.

Tate claimed that “The Matrix” – a reference to the presumed conspiracy ruling the world, was behind his arrest. To unpack the story of Tate and Thunberg and its relationship to the shadow world of disinformation flooding our information ecosystems, it is important to study the intersections of two typical areas that increasingly overlap: gender and climate.

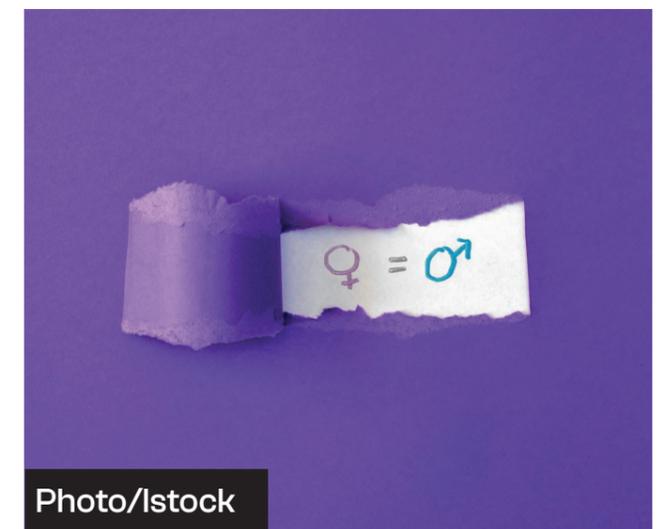
In recent years, the so-called 'anti-gender movement' has gained momentum across the globe. Its proponents are convinced that feminists and HBTQIA+-activists manipulate traditional gender roles in general and undermine masculinity in particular. Their understanding is that 'gender ideology' has invaded multiple areas of society, undermining family values and essentialist biological differences between the sexes. On the extreme fringes of the movement, we find the Incel-movement, united by the claim that their 'involuntary celibacy' is the result of a cabal between feminists and ableist hyperfeminine ('Stacys') and -masculine ('Chads') actors who obstruct a natural male 'right' to sexual partners.

On a more moderate but still fringe part of the spectrum we find people like Tucker Carlson (supported by quasi-intellectual arguments by for instance Jordan B. Peterson) who pushes for a narrative that the 'end of men' (title of a documentary series) has been orchestrated by gender ideology with the aim to emasculate the male part of western societies and turn them into weak 'soy boys'. In response, Carlson and others are pushing for exercise and discipline, nutrition based on raw eggs and meat and – testicle tanning (!). But the fear of 'emo boys' as a threat against natural masculinity is also pushed as a narrative in Russian disinformation campaigns.

Influencers like Andrew Tate have capitalized upon these trends, resonating well in conservative religious circles in all world religions, which can be seen as a backlash to achieving gender equality. Tate instructs his many followers to establish male dominance and encourages them to active abuse of women, rendering them credits in his 'Hustlers university', a school of 'hard life' as opposed to real learning. But this world of toxic masculinity is also infused with anti-climate positions.

Unsurprisingly, masculinity is associated with the unrestrained consumption of CO2 and thus, all talk about climate change or global warming must be a fiction invented to restrict the use of cars, motorcycles or planes consuming large amounts of fossil energy. Cara Daggett has branded this desire to consume fossil fuels 'petromasculinity', a desire that also frequently overlaps with authoritarian ideas.

What implications does this development have for the world of fact-checking and countering disinformation? What we witness is that seemingly unrelated issues – gender and climate – are fused into a joint scheme of meaning-making where they are interrelated. There is a trend that climate-related reporting has turned into a hotspot of disinformation and 'hard facts' where female reporters and fact-checkers are challenged by (self-appointed) experts just because of their gender. Their knowledge and competence are questioned based upon the assumption that climate change is an area of technical expertise where women cannot contribute with facts but are driven by an agenda – to weaken masculinity.



Photo/Istock

# A day in the life of a woman journalist with disability – Yvonne Nkaka Uwicyeza

by Jade Natacha Iriza

Photo/Istock

24-year-old Yvonne Nkaka Uwicyeza has defied the odds and pursued her childhood dream of becoming a journalist despite being visually impaired.

Her journey has been one of strength, determination, and a deep desire to show the world the abilities and resilience of visually impaired individuals.

She sees herself as proof that people with disabilities can succeed in spite of society's prejudices, and she dedicates her life to inspiring those who are still unsure of their potential.

Yvonne's alarm clock buzzes at 6AM, signaling the start of another day filled with passion and purpose. As she rises from bed, she takes a moment to gather her thoughts and mentally prepare for the challenges and triumphs that lie ahead. The sound of running water fills the bathroom as Yvonne showers, invigorating her senses and awakening her spirit.

Unlike most people who start their day with a hearty breakfast, Yvonne prefers to fuel her body later in the day. Yvonne is an early riser who finds solace in the quiet moments before joining the buzz of the city. On a typical working day, she leaves her residence at 7:30 a.m. and begins navigating the street. She does it all by memory and without the use of a cane.

With the traffic whizzing by, she waves down a motorcycle driver, to whom she explains her destination's directions and negotiates the cost. She jumps onto the motorcycle and rides to work once they have reached an arrangement. When she arrives, she walks to the elevator and, by memory, presses the button for the floor of her office. She takes satisfaction in arriving at the workplace before everyone else, which is normally by 8 a.m., while the rest arrive at 9 a.m. for their 9 to 5 routine. Yvonne can type on a laptop, use her phone, and go about her business and typical interactions with others. Yvonne formerly worked as a radio broadcaster at Uwezo Youth Empowerment for a year. She also worked as a writer,

playwright, and audio editor at Girl Effect and Ni Nyampinga Magazine for two years. Both where she's never doubted the warmth of her colleagues.

While her colleagues sometimes offer to assist her throughout the day, by escorting her everywhere, even to the bathrooms, Yvonne cherishes the moments when she can navigate her work independently. She yearns for a world where people understand that having a disability does not equate to helplessness, but rather to unique strengths and capabilities.

When assignments require her to gather stories from rural areas with challenging terrains, Yvonne welcomes the assistance of her colleagues. However, even in these circumstances, she finds her way to locations and conducts interviews with confidence. To aid her work, Yvonne utilizes technologies such as the 'Orbit Reader,' which translates her interviews into Braille, allowing her to keep track of questions and responses quickly and easily.

Being a journalist was Yvonne's childhood dream, inspired by the journalists she heard on television and radio.

"As a child, [Whenever] I listened to the radio or TV at home, I was like, 'I will be like those journalists. I will be listened to, I will be influential and I will show the whole world that visually impaired people are able,'" she narrated.

She pursued her dream by completing a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Communications from the University of Rwanda in August 2021. Now, she covers top stories that encourage young girls to make informed and healthy decisions as well as advocating for people with disabilities.

One of her proudest moments was during the COVID-19 crisis, when she published a story of a young girl who created a tip-tap, a basic device to encourage people to wash their hands in public places, as a way to minimize infections.

"It is not my favorite because it was the greatest story of all times, but because I was able to tell a girl's story that would

have gone unnoticed, despite her commendable efforts to contribute, when the entire country was battling a deadly virus," Yvonne said.

Nevertheless, Yvonne has faced her fair share of doubters and challenges. She has encountered skepticism from others who question her abilities as a visually impaired journalist.

She vividly remembers being asked, "How can you be a journalist when you're visually impaired?" and missing out on some job opportunities due to restrictive mindsets that fail to recognize her capabilities.

"The fact that I'm likely the only visually impaired journalist you know doesn't mean I am the only one capable or the only one who pursued an education for it. I had classmates with different disabilities, but many of them faced discouragement along the way," she said.

Yvonne dreams of a future where more people with disabilities thrive in the workplace and dare to dream big. She emphasized the importance of financial independence for individuals with disabilities, particularly for girls who often face additional challenges.

"I could easily give up, but I can't allow myself to do so. I need to afford my rent, my clothes, my food, basically my lifestyle," she continued, adding, "Without financial independence, individuals with disabilities may find themselves vulnerable to exploitation and trapped in a cycle of dependency."

She passionately urged society to move beyond theoretical discussions and policies that are rarely applied. True disability inclusion, according to Yvonne, should come from individuals with disabilities who have experienced empowerment firsthand.

"Their voices, experiences, and insights are the keys to shaping effective policies and creating a genuinely inclusive society. Otherwise, it remains theoretical and we are kind of tired of that really," she said.

She believes that inclusion and empowerment should begin at home. Yvonne, for example, has very supportive parents who she visits frequently in the countryside where they live.

Her parents would take her to countless doctor appointments as a child, and eventually, doctors found a solution that allowed Yvonne to go from a complete visual impairment at birth to now having limited visibility. Yvonne's parents also enrolled her to a specialized primary school in Rwamagana district, which accommodates visually impaired students.

When asked what her advice could be to other people with disabilities who still struggle with confidence, she said, "Believe in yourself, the world will follow."

Yvonne went on to say, "It doesn't have to be journalism for you; I'm sure you'd be more useful in areas that suit you best and are close to your heart. But sectors like the media require us the most, as we still have a lot of convincing to do."

As the day draws to a close, she usually heads straight home after work. Except on the days when she meets her friends for church or goes out to socialize with them.

When she gets home, she enjoys the company of her housemates, her brother, and her cousin whom she lives with in Kimironko, a suburb in Kigali, engaging in lively conversations and laughter that echo through the room, before she goes to bed around 10PM.

## Fact Sheet

- According to the 5th Population and Housing Census Rwanda 2022, there were 391,775 individuals with disabilities aged 5 and above out of a total resident population of 13.24 million, representing a disability prevalence rate of 3.4% in the country.
- According to the World Health Organization, over 400,000 individuals in Rwanda have visual impairments, and one out of every hundred newborns is born with visual impairment. The government has worked to promote the rights of people with disabilities, particularly those with vision impairments, in order to ensure equal and fair opportunities.
- Rwanda, along with numerous other nations, joined the Marrakesh Treaty in 2013, with the goal of advancing inclusive education through measures such as making Braille textbooks freely available and accessible. In addition, the government enacted an Inclusive and Special Needs Education Policy in 2018, with the goal of increasing learning possibilities for visually impaired persons through the use of accessible, digital learning resources.
- The Rwanda Union of the Blind (RUB), a non-profit organization founded in August 1994, one month after the end of the Tutsi Genocide, was established as part of broader support.
- RUB is committed to improving the living conditions of Rwanda's blind people. It currently has 52 well-established branches in 25 of the country's 30 districts, with over 2500 members.
- All these branches are operated by visually impaired individuals themselves, including its headquarters in Kigali City, Nyarugenge District in Nyabugogo. They focus mostly on campaigning to improve the lives of persons with visual impairment.
- RUB is a member of the National Union of Disabilities Organizations of Rwanda (NUDOR). It is also affiliated with the African Union of the Blind (AFUB) and the World Blind Union (WBU).

# Tips on how to pitch stories

Female editors and senior media experts across Africa share tips on how to write a good story pitch.

**Beatrice Bandawe** is the Managing Editor of the Nipashe Newspaper, a publication of IPP Media, Tanzania. She is also a coach and trainer.

This is her take: "Whenever you are asked to pitch a story, first you should identify a problem, write a subject of your account and explain why your story is newsworthy and relevant to the public. Also, remember to bring out the impact.

Read widely to ensure you are well versed on the topic you want to write about, then think about the unique perspective you can offer before writing your pitch. The pitch should also answer why you are the best person to write that story."



**Amira Sayed** is the head of the department at the Egyptian Gazette Newspaper, AU Media Fellowship Alumni, and MA researcher in Television and Digital Journalism at the American University of Cairo.

This is her take: "In the era of digital media, pitching a story has become more competitive in light of the presence of numerous digital media platforms. Therefore, we should know that pitching is telling an interesting, compelling story that tackles and addresses a real need coupled with a clear and solid plan. The pitch should fulfil the key news value factors: novelty and impact. You have to select the topic and sources that are newsworthy. You must ask yourself what is new in addressing this topic and interviewing these sources. While pitching your story, you have to start with a clear idea in a catchy way. Then, you can move ahead with the details. You should also have a clear dissemination plan, and you have to determine the format of your story from the very beginning."



**Irene Ayaa** is the Director of the Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS). She is also a mentor and media trainer.

"The pitch should capture the editor's attention; it has to be short, precise and concise. What you need to bear in mind is that the pitch should explain what your story is all about. It would be best to present to the editor why your account matters during pitching. Your idea should also address the impact your story is intended to make."



**Pamela Dube** worked in media houses in both Botswana and South Africa; edited publications such as The Voice, Mokgosi, The Gazette and Mmegi. She is a coach, mentor, media and gender trainer and activist.

Her take: [13:42, 2023-10-25] Pamela Sethunya Dube: First establish facts and find an angle of a story; what is it that you want to communicate? Key sources and what impact will the story have. Once you have all the ducks in a row: approach the editor and lay it out:

I always tell my mentees that pitching a story is like proposition. Find an entry line, a hook. Then briefly share, in a sentence or two, why the story and how you are going to go about investigating and writing it. The Six Ws and H apply. The way you package and sell to the editor, will tell if it is a selling or impactful one. Have a hook, informative body, an interesting kicker



# Opportunities Corner

Photo/Istock

## Nominations open for The George Polk Awards [Worldwide]

- Journalists worldwide who produced work that appeared in U.S. media can apply.
- Long Island University is accepting nominations for The George Polk Awards. The annual awards honor special achievement in journalism.
- Stories published or presented in 2023 are eligible for submission. Judges place a premium on investigative work that is original, requires digging and resourcefulness, and brings results.
- Entries should be submitted by category – foreign, national, etc. – but these categories are by no means binding.
- Winners are chosen from newspapers, magazines, television, radio and online news organizations.
- The entry fee is \$75.
- The submission deadline is Jan. 9, 2024.

Link: [ijnnet.org/en/opportunity/nominations-open-george-polk-awards-worldwide](https://ijnnet.org/en/opportunity/nominations-open-george-polk-awards-worldwide)

## Reuters Institute offers journalism fellowships at Oxford [Worldwide]

- Midcareer journalists can apply for a fellowship at Oxford University, United Kingdom.
- The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism seeks applicants for its Journalist Fellowship Program, which will begin October 2023, January 2024 and April 2024, and last three or six months.
- The program gives visiting journalists from around the world an opportunity to critically reflect upon their profession, to research a subject of their choice under the supervision of an academic specializing in that area, and to enjoy the breadth of academic, cultural and social life at the University of Oxford.
- Applicants must have at least five years of journalism experience and strong English skills.
- Most Journalist Fellowships are fully-funded and cover living costs and accommodation.
- The deadline is Feb. 6.

Link: [reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-journalist-fellowship-programme](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-journalist-fellowship-programme)

## Megacities Shortdocs accepting entries [Worldwide]

- Professional and amateur documentarians around the world are invited to enter this contest.
- Megacities Shortdocs hosts an international contest with festivals held in megacities to support the making of short documentaries raising awareness about urban challenges and solutions.
- Documentaries must be up to four minutes long and cover issues and local initiatives in a megacity. Shortdocs should focus on a social-impact initiative or an environmental-impact initiative.
- Applicants are encouraged to review the 17 Sustainable Development Goals from the United Nations for inspiration and pay close attention to their challenges and solutions.
- The shortdoc must be shot in a city with more than one million inhabitants.
- Megacities include Tokyo, Jakarta, Delhi, Seoul-Incheon, Manila, Mumbai, Karachi, Shanghai, New York, São Paulo, Beijing, Mexico City, Guangzhou-Foshan, Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto, Moscow, Dhaka, Cairo, Bangkok, Los Angeles, Kolkata, Buenos Aires, Tehran, Istanbul, Lagos, Shenzhen, Rio de Janeiro, Kinshasa, Tianjin, Lima, Paris, Chengdu, Lahore, London, Bangalore, Ho Chi Minh City, Nagoya, Chennai and Rhine-Ruhr.

- The awards for the MegaCities-ShortDocs Festival will be delivered at the Paris Award Ceremony on May 23, 2024. Multiple screenings across the world will occur throughout the rest of the year. The winners of the “Best ShortDoc” and “Best Student ShortDoc” awards, as well as the winner of the “Greater Paris Metropolis recognition”, are invited to the Cannes Film Festival. Their films will be screened as part of the 9th Positive Cinema Week. The “Best ShortDoc” winner is going up the steps.
- The deadline is Jan. 24.

Link: [megacities-shortdocs.org/registration](https://megacities-shortdocs.org/registration)

### Mongabay seeks Africa French Fellowship Editor [Worldwide]

- Journalists with three or more years of experience working in journalism/editorial/writing (preferably in environmental journalism ) and exceptional fluent (writing and speaking) in French are invited to apply.
- Mongabay is launching a French language fellowship program to provide paid opportunities for young and aspiring journalists in tropical countries. The Fellowship Editor will primarily be responsible for managing Mongabay’s French-language fellowship program in Africa, including overseeing the application process, selecting and onboarding fellows in coordination with other Mongabay staff.
- **Deadline:** Applications are accepted on rolling basis

Link: [mongabay.org/programs/news/opportunities/french-fellowship-editor-mongabay-africa](https://mongabay.org/programs/news/opportunities/french-fellowship-editor-mongabay-africa)

### Knight Wallace Fellowship 2024

- **Eligibility:** Qualified applicants must have a minimum of five years of experience and be currently working in some aspect of journalism for a news organization or as an independent journalist. We are looking for a diverse range of journalists, including reporters, editors, data experts, visual journalists, audio producers, engagement specialists, designers, developers, entrepreneurs and organizational change agents.
- If you are not a full-time journalist, the majority of your work should be in journalism. We do not consider full-time academics, public relations writers, internal trade writers, lobbyists, public advocates, or those seeking a degree.
- If you are a U.S. citizen, apply as a U.S. applicant, even if you work in another country or for a non-U.S. journalism entity. If you are not a U.S. citizen, apply as an international applicant, even if you work in the United States or for an American journalism entity. A Green Card is not the same as citizenship.
- Offers for Knight-Wallace Fellowships for the 2024-2025 academic year will be extended in early May 2024.
- The 2024-2025 academic year begins Monday, August 26, 2024. Fellows are expected to arrive in Ann Arbor at least one week prior for fellowship orientation

Link: [wallacehouse.umich.edu/knight-wallace/how-to-apply](https://wallacehouse.umich.edu/knight-wallace/how-to-apply)

### Fund for Women Journalists

- Promoting the work and advancing the role of women and nonbinary journalists across the globe is critical to advancing transparency and diversity in the news media.
- The Howard G. Buffett Fund for Women Journalists (FWJ), the first funding initiative of its kind, supports journalists and journalism projects including, but not limited to, professional development opportunities, investigative reporting and media development initiatives led by women and nonbinary people. Established with a \$4 million gift from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, FWJ has supported more than 330 journalists from 47 countries since its inception in 2015.
- Applications for FWJ are accepted on a rolling basis and are open to journalists of all nationalities. Learn more about application guidelines here. Questions not answered in the guidelines can be directed to Taylor Moore at [tmoore@iwmf.org](mailto:tmoore@iwmf.org).

Link: [iwmf.org/programs/fund-for-women-journalists](https://iwmf.org/programs/fund-for-women-journalists)

### AACR June L. Biedler Prize for Cancer Journalism

- The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) invites journalists to submit their stories for the 2024 AACR June L. Biedler Prize for Cancer Journalism. This prestigious prize serves to recognize professional journalists who have produced accurate, informative, and compelling stories that enhance the public’s understanding of cancer, cancer research, cancer advocacy, or cancer policy.
- Each award is accompanied by a \$5,000 unrestricted cash prize. To submit a story for consideration, please visit the AACR’s website.
- **Deadline:** 7 December, 2023

Application link: [aacr.org/about-the-aacr/newsroom](https://aacr.org/about-the-aacr/newsroom)

### RCDIJ Africa Fund

- The RCDIJ Africa Fund is currently open for applications from journalists across Africa.
- The fund is open to journalists in the following categories: Employed/Freelance, Online, Print, Broadcast, Photo, Cartoon, and Multimedia.
- The RCDIJ Africa Fund supports small to mid-scale data and/or investigative journalism projects on education, health, security, environment, democracy, corruption, economy, migration, technology, culture or development.
- Proposed projects will be awarded between \$1,000 to \$10,000.
- The RCDIJ Africa Fund is accepting applications on a rolling basis.
- **Deadline:** Rolling

Application link: [rcdij.org/the-rcdij-africa-fund](https://rcdij.org/the-rcdij-africa-fund)

### Sony World Photography Awards 2024

- With its unparalleled reach, the Sony World Photography Awards elevate the careers of photographers to the next level. Since the beginning, the Awards have championed inclusivity and access by being free to enter. Acting as an insight into photography today in all its diversity, the Awards spotlights photographers telling the stories of our time.
- **Deadline:** 12 January, 2024

Application link: [worldphoto.org/sony-world-photography-awards](https://worldphoto.org/sony-world-photography-awards)

### Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2024

- Free to enter, the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards elevates the original voices that bring a fresh perspective to storytelling. The shortlisted filmmakers are flown to Los Angeles for an exclusive four-day event to gain unparalleled insight into all aspects of the filmmaking process to advance their careers. After a black-tie awards ceremony at the Cary Grant Theatre, the 30 successful filmmakers benefit from a four-day workshop program. Aimed at breakthrough artists and independent filmmakers worldwide, there are six categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Environment, Animation, Student and Future Format.
- Each category awards a winner and a shortlist of up to five. The deadline for entries is 07:00 AM (CT) February 15, 2024.
- **Deadline:** 15 February 2024

Application link: [sonyfuturefilmmakerawards.com](https://sonyfuturefilmmakerawards.com)

# Meet the AWiM team



**Dr. Yemisi Akinbobola**  
Co-founder, Chief Executive Officer

Being the co-founder, I have been with AWiM from the very beginning. Having impact on people's lives has been my honour and privilege. A core memory of mine is being 7 months pregnant at the first AWiM conference. The help and support I received from everyone at the event was very heartwarming. I also remember our first training programme of 200 East African women journalists. It was virtual because of the pandemic. For some of them, it was their first formal training in media. During the virtual graduation ceremony, a few of the trainees hired graduation gowns because it meant so much to them. I am so proud to work with such an amazing team, who themselves have grown so much, as have I.

**Olubamidele Ogunleye**  
Co-founder, Chief of Operations

As a co-founder and COO of AWiM, I have been with this team since its inception. I have had the privilege of playing a key role in shaping our company's vision, mission, and overall direction. It has been a tremendously fulfilling experience to witness our ideas come to life and see our hard work transform into tangible results. Being part of the journey at AWiM has been exhilarating. The exhilaration comes from embracing the challenges that arise along the way and working collaboratively with the team members to overcome them. Working with this team has allowed me to witness our team's incredible talent and dedication as we work together to ensure that every aspect of our company runs smoothly and efficiently. Looking back, this journey has been a constant source of personal and professional growth. Each step has provided invaluable lessons and insights, shaping me into a better leader. The pride I feel in seeing AWiM thrive is immeasurable, knowing that I have contributed to turning our vision and mission into a reality.



**Irene Odera**  
Programme Officer

I joined this amazing team in 2020 and I am very inspired with the work that we do at AWiM. We are in an important space where we continually and intentionally amplify women's voices in the media. A core memory was definitely meeting my colleagues for the first time in Morocco. We are a fully remote team and it was good to interact physically and get to know each other more.

**Sam Ejiwunmi**  
Communication Officer

I joined this fantastic team in 2018. Working at AWiM has been a rollercoaster; it gave me the ground to grow. I've worked both as a consultant and a full-time staff. The most critical is the fact that I got the opportunity to be part of something bigger than myself. A core memory of mine was having a conversation with Dr Yemisi at the airport lounge in Morocco, it inspired me to make critical changes in my life.



**Joy Adigwe**  
Community Engagement Officer

I joined this team in May 2020. Since then I have to say working at AWiM has been a surreal journey, and I am thrilled to be part of a global community of African Media Women. The resilience and inspiring stories of these incredible women propel me to constantly strive for excellence, making this experience truly rewarding as it fuels my commitment to be better and do better every day. A core memory of mine was navigating the AWiM21 virtual conference. Overcoming Zoom issues presented a unique challenge, yet it was an exhilarating experience filled with the rush of managing and resolving unexpected hurdles.

**Bukola Amoyedo**  
Finance Officer

Bukola is an experienced accountant with more than three years of dedicated work as a finance officer. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Education from the prestigious University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Additionally, she is currently in the final stages of completing her professional exams with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN).

Besides her professional pursuits, Bukola actively engages in her creative interests during her spare time. She specialises in designing and crafting beautiful female African dresses. Moreover, she passionately imparts her knowledge and skills by providing training to aspiring young ladies who share a similar love for fashion.



**Osideinde Oluwadara**  
Developer

I joined this team August 2021 and It's been great working with a group of accomplished professionals in the media industry. They have taught me a lot and helped me grow immensely. A core memory is Working on SourceHer! Our database for Media Experts, I enjoyed the process. I also can't forget getting calls from Joy Adigwe at odd times with various requests.



**Notable Mention**

**Janet Otieno**  
AWiMNews Web Editor  
January 2022 - October 2023

"Though Janet left us in October 2023, we would like to acknowledge her work and contributions to AWiM and leading the editorial direction of AWiMagazine. Thank you Janet!"

- Dr Yemisi Akinbobola



Thanks to all our partners who have supported AWiM since it was founded in 2016.



AWiM2023 Conference was delivered with the generous support of our partners



Scan Me!

# Dare to Belong:

## AWiM launches premium membership

Join our passionate community of media professionals committed to breaking barriers and advancing opportunities for female journalists in Africa. AWiM Premium is for those who share the same values as ours: people who are passionate about African women and media, gender equality, and the constant pursuit of knowledge and skills development.

Our membership is open to all who wish to support the advancement of African women media practitioners on the continent and across the globe. Benefits of our membership include:

- Free access to AWiMLearning
- Exclusive content on Members-Only Newsletter
- 50% Discount on AWiM Annual Conferences
- Exclusive Member-Only Masterclasses and Book-club
- Early access to AWiM research reports

Subscribe to AWiM Premium now!  
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