

Partnerships for Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls in Southern Africa

South Africa: “National Compact with the Media and Creative Industries for a Positive Portrayal of Gender Relations and Against Gender Violence”

Confronting the Challenge

Research shows that violence against women and girls (VAWG) is generally widespread in South Africa, with rape, domestic violence and intimate-partner violence being particularly prevalent. According to South Africa’s 2016 Demographic and Health Survey, one in five women over the age of 18 has experienced physical violence at least once in her lifetime.

At the core of gender-based violence (GBV) and VAWG lie unequal power gender relations, patriarchal norms, homophobia, sexism and other harmful discriminatory beliefs and practices. The concept of inherited-violence from discriminatory systems of colonialism and apartheid is often cited as cause and driver of VAWG in South Africa.

During the last years, it has been increasingly recognized that the media and creative sector through various channels (e.g. TV, radio, print, social media, advertising) influences societies’ norms and perceptions around gender relations and violence as well as general knowledge of VAWG and forms of support.

There is generally a strong will from media and creative actors to use this influence to benefit society and have a more positive impact. Recognizing challenges relating to patriarchal structures, unequal gender dynamics as well as harassment and violence – also within the structures of the media – PFP has partnered with UN Women South Africa to work together with the South African media and creative sector.

Building Partnerships

The flagship project sets out to jointly with actors from government, civil society and industry shape and implement a

process to develop and formulate, sign up to and promote the implementation of a **National Compact with the Media and Creative Industries** for a positive portrayal of gender relations and against gender violence.

Flagship name	National Compact with the Media and Creative Industries for a Positive Portrayal of Gender Relations and against Gender Violence – Joint project with the UN-Women
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	South Africa
Key stakeholders	Media and creative sector stakeholders from government, civil society and private sector
Duration	12/2017 – 11/2020



The Compact shall help signature media companies and stakeholders to better take on their roles and responsibilities when it comes to shaping gender stereotypes and perceptions of GBV in South Africa through their products (i.e. programmes, news reporting) as well as to formalize their efforts towards safe working conditions in the industry.

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While the ultimate objective is a Compact document with principles and concrete actions that companies can sign up to, the process towards this goal, motivating for and facilitating an inclusive dialogue and debate in the sector and the wider public, will be just as important.

To facilitate this dialogue the flagship project is implementing several key steps. Central to the project is the **multi-stakeholder Advisory Group** that was set up in 2018 to guide the project's activities. The Advisory Group brings together key actors from the media industry and the gender-in-media space, such as the Department of Arts and Culture, the National Film and Video Foundation, the SABC, MultiChoice, the South African National Editors Forum, the South African Guild of Actors and the NGOs Soul City, Gender Links and Sisters Working in Film and Television.

Taking Action and Sharing Evidence

The Advisory Group also informs the research agenda around the flagship. **Research** both informs the activities of the flagship project and is an important tool to kick-start dialogue and discussions. The NGO Gender Links conducted an extensive **media monitoring study** for the project looking at 600 hours of television content in entertainment, news and children's programming of the top 5 South African stations. Results show that women constitute 39% of TV news sources while GBV as a topic constitutes 2% of news, 4% of entertainment and 2% of children's programming. Of particular concern is that prevention itself constitutes only 5% of GBV topic coverage in the news and 29% in children's programming, with very little information on where to get help.

The research is accompanied by **dialogue events, facilitation of international exchange and hosting of discussions sessions** on what could practically be done or changed in the industry to have a more positive effect on societal norms and perceptions. The flagship project has brought South African partner organisations such as SWIFT in contact with similar German and international initiatives. In addition, it is envisaged to support exchange between stakeholders in the Southern African region, where South African media is widely received.

At a **sector-wide conference in August 2019**, the participatory process of content development for the National Compact will be officially launched. Results of the conference will be consolidated into joint commitments for the industry, government and civil society. Stakeholders are invited to voluntarily sign up to these commitments and to use the National Compact as a guiding document for the sector.

The last component of the flagship project is the **direct support to concrete initiatives** in the South African media sector, that can support the efforts laid out in the Compact document. The initiatives could include, for example, trainings for journalists, facilitating to bring international campaigns like Hollywood's 50/50 by 2020 to South Africa or supporting a concept of safety ombudsmen/women for the film and television industry.

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