



African Women in the Media

Reimagining Futures:

Women in Media, Peace and Technologies

AWiM2020 Summit
Johannesburg, South Africa
29-31 July, 2020



Background



African Women in the Media, is a network for African women working in media industries anywhere in the world. Our aim is to impact positively the way media functions in relation to women, and our vision is that one day women of African heritage will have equal access to representation and opportunities in media industries and media content. Founded as a Facebook group in 2016, our members are made up of African women in diverse media backgrounds from factual to fictional content, marketing and communications, academia, entrepreneurship and more. As an international organisation, we aim to support and collaborate with like minded organisations.

AWiM Conferences brings together all media stakeholders, and as it enters its fourth year, we have demonstrated a track record of success in developing effective partnerships with organisations like the African Union Commission, the Ford Foundation, Google News Initiative, Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the International Organisation for Migration, Free Press Unlimited, and various other agencies, associations, news media, academia and private organisations.

Three pillars guide our work:

1

Knowledge exchange between academia and industry

2

Economic empowerment of women

3

Visibility

Concept Note

With the theme *Reimagining Futures: Women in Media, Peace and Technologies*, AWiM2020 Summit takes place in Johannesburg, South Africa on 29-31 July 2020.

Re-imagining Futures reflects innovation in media industries, and the growing drive to change the narrative of Africa globally, particularly as African countries work towards achieving a dominant global position, urgent objectives like Silencing the Guns by 2020, Free movement of people and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Issues around movement, immigration, peace and security, and the lived experiences, roles and insights of women in media practitioners and researchers make the AWiM2020 Summit a timely focal point.

In this respect, AWiM2020 Summit contributes to agendas on the African continent and globally, namely:

- 1 **The African Union Commission's Agenda 2063 Aspiration 4**, which aspires to a "peaceful and secure Africa", and **Aspiration 6** with the specific goal of "an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children";
- 2 **The United Nations' Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 5**, particularly in the aspect of representation. SDG 5 reports a 1% global growth in the representation of women in managerial positions from 26% in 2015, to 27% in 2018, and that this increase is seen in "all regions except in least developed countries."

Sub-theme 1 African Women in the Media

Understanding the lived experiences of African women in media is essential to guiding policy and advocacy agendas towards ensuring that countries and media organisations create the necessary enabling environment for women in media to effectively execute their work.

Part of this initiative to create enabling environments constitutes a reliable tool for monitoring how well countries and organisations comply with women's rights, and a means of obtaining data that will support journalists to perform their functions. Safety is however indispensable for bringing about these enabling environments.

Leadership mentoring is the number one area in which AWiM's support is requested. Increasing the number of women appointed in leadership positions of media organisations and governing bodies is critical to creating an enabling environment that can also contribute to improving sensitive reporting around gendered topics like Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a patterned top, is speaking at a podium. She is looking to her right and smiling. The background is dark with some lights.

Questions

- **Lived experiences**
What are the lived experiences of African women working in the media?
- **Change**
How might we deploy this understanding to effect change?
- **Free movement**
How might easier movement between African countries improve the working conditions and opportunities for African women working in media?
- **Global agenda**
What are the challenges and opportunities for African women in leading and contributing to conversations and policies around global agendas?

Sub-theme 2 Peacebuilding and Movement

Recognising the central role women play in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in Africa, the African Union established the FemWise-Africa (Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation), in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Similarly, the flagship project of the African passport and free movement of Africans within Africa, is a key example of efforts towards better intra-Africa relations that have great potential to contribute to cultural and creative exchange.

Calls on the media and particularly female journalists in Africa to utilise their profession to both raise awareness and mediate in conflict, gives rise to pertinent questions around the effectiveness of media-for-peace initiatives, the lived experiences of African women in the media in security reporting, and policy provisions in this regard. The National Action Plan of South Sudan is notable for its extensive provision for female journalists.

Finally, how is discourse around conflict, displacement and humanitarian crises in Africa constructed and represented in media and creative industries? How might we challenge these narratives?



Questions

- **Reporting security**
What are the lived experiences of women in media reporting on peace and security in Africa?
- **Participation**
How might continental agendas provide for the participation of women in media?
- **Free movement**
How might female media producers use their position and lived experiences to tell the stories in a way that empowers female survivors of conflict to speak out?
- **Global agenda**
How might we reimagine journalistic conversations and representation of migration and displacement in cultural content?

Sub-theme 2 Peacebuilding and Movement



Free Movement

In the area of Peace and Media we consider all elements from policies to free movement, asking:

→ **Opportunities**

How might free movement improve the working environment and opportunities for women in media?

→ **GDP**

How might it improve economic contributions of media and creative industries, for example when we consider the flourishing music industries?

→ **Examples**

What might we learn from examples in the [Caribbean](#) and the [ERASMUS for journalist project](#) in this regard?

Sub-theme 3

Emerging Technologies & Women Empowerment

Technologies have contributed both positively and negatively to empowerment of women in media. On the positive side, it has contributed to closing the gender gap of media ownership, with female media entrepreneurs setting up their own online media organisations.

Social media enabled women only groups has provided spaces for women to share their stories and change the narrative. The #BeingFemaleinNigeria hashtag, is an example of how activism for the rights of women, the mobilization of resistance, and mutual solidarity, is utilising the transformative potentials of social media platforms. But it has also presented challenges with the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) reporting that "online harassment was cited as the biggest threat by 90%" of female journalists in the U.S. and 71% in Canada.

As we consider how Africa will use the Fourth Industrial Revolution with emerging technologies like Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), Data Science, Robotics and Blockchain, how might we deploy these for women's empowerment? How might we close the tech gender gap? How might we address cyber security?

Questions

- **Online safety**
What is the outlook for online safety of female journalists in Africa?
- **Supporting women**
What specific technologies can support specific needs of women in media in African countries?
- **Global media**
How are global media responding to emerging technologies of Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Robotics and others?
- **Audience engagement**
How can these technologies help the media better know and engage audiences?
- **Data**
What can we learn about gathering, storage and access to data?

Content



AWiM19 attendees indicated **Networking, Personal Growth and Content** as the top three reasons for attending the conference. AWiM2020 responds to this feedback by deploying a pedagogical approach to the structure of the conference. This starts with re-imagining the Keynote sessions by replacing these on Day One with a High-Level Panel on *Security and Women in Media*; and on Day Two with Ignite Talks on *Reimagining the Future for Women in Media*. This is followed by a series of panels with audience interaction at its core, and each day ending with solution roundtables and the popular audience showcase segment. These last sessions will aid in capturing reflections on lessons learnt and reporting on solutions and opportunities. Training workshops will be strategic placed to aid this process.

AWiM2020 introduces Pitch Zone Xtra, an expansion to the popular AWiM Pitch Zone., and includes:

- Pitching story ideas to commission editors from media organisations (previous hosts have included BBC Africa, CNN and Channel 4);
- Pitching to win a *Hodan Nalayeh Changing Narratives Award* under one of three categories;
- Media entrepreneurship live stage to win investment for media business ideas;

We are pleased to have the formal permission of the Nalayeh family for the *Hodan Nalayeh Changing Narratives Award*. We are introducing additional categories of AWiM Awards that is focused on entry submission of work already completed. Categories include: Development, Investigative, Technology & Innovation, Impact, and Knowledge Exchange. Finalists will be sponsored to attend AWiM2020, and winners for each category announced during AWiM Awards.

AWiM will be reporting back on its activities and future.

Key features:



Panels & Workshops



Pitch ZoneXtra



AWiM Awards

Objectives and Expected Outcomes



Identify and report on

the impact of restricted continental movement on female media professionals in Africa;

the lived experiences of women in media as participants of peacebuilding and conflict resolution;

emerging technologies and how Africa's media might leveraging these to improve issues affecting female journalists;

1

2

Economic Empowerment of Women in Media

Create opportunities for direct economic empowerment of African women in media through our Pitch ZoneXtra;

Contribute to increasing the number of women as media owners, by connecting budding female media entrepreneurs with investors at our Pitch ZoneXtra Live Stage;

Building Networks

Connect and support regional, national and local media associations and networks, who support African women working in media industries;

Create opportunities for networking and building strategic partnerships among participants and AWiM2020 partners.

3

Output

A handbook will be produced to capture outcomes of the solutions roundtable in relation to the Summit theme and sub-themes.



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