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**INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL**

**Review Theme: Equal sharing of responsibilities between  
women and men, including caregiving in the context of  
HIV/AIDS**

**Panel 4: Gender norms and stereotypes, socialization and  
unequal power relations  
Sharing and balancing life-work responsibilities**

**GENDER EQUITY AND THE MEDIA  
(WITH REFERENCE TO HIV/AIDS)**

by

**MR. WARREN FEEK<sup>1</sup>**  
Executive Director  
The Communication Initiative

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

## Gender and HIV/AIDS

These data from UNAIDS provide both the insight and the urgency for addressing HIV/AIDS issues through media and communication processes: *“Today, more than 30 years into the epidemic, women and girls represent 49% of all adults living with HIV.<sup>2</sup> A heightened burden of the HIV epidemic is faced by sub-Saharan African women, who constitute 58% of all people living with HIV in the region. Almost half of all new HIV infections occur among women, heightened by their vulnerability due to biological susceptibility and gender inequalities.<sup>3</sup> Globally, young women aged 15-24 are particularly vulnerable, with global infection rates twice as high as in young men.<sup>4</sup> Women and girls also bear a disproportionately larger burden of caregiving: 81% of community volunteer care givers are women and girls.”<sup>5</sup>*

It is not possible to isolate the most pressing HIV/AIDS issues from overall gender dynamics across societies, cultures, and countries. The fact that young women aged 15-24 experience infection rates twice as high as young men is not a social accident. Neither is the fact that 81% of community caregivers are women and girls.

HIV/AIDS is an issue that cuts across all major development concerns. Poverty, health structures, the political life of a country, economic development, human rights, and many other development concerns all impact the gender factors associated with HIV/AIDS. For an effective approach to HIV/AIDS, including gender-related aspects and dynamics related to shared responsibilities and caregiving, it will be vitally important to address these concerns at both the HIV/AIDS-specific and overall development levels.

Because the HIV/AIDS gender-related trends and responses are so interwoven with overall social and economic dynamics, the following review of gender equity and media trends since 2009 will be of a general nature.

## Gender Equity, the Media, and Progress since 2009

This is such a huge subject! There are estimated to be 44,000 radio stations in the world<sup>6</sup> and perhaps millions of TV channels – feel free to count just the ones at this limited list<sup>7</sup>. It was impossible to determine how many newspapers there are globally, but there are 2,000-plus in China alone. To define “media” as including only radio, TV, and printed newspapers reflects a very conservative and limited understanding of media. I will address digital and mobile media in depth below, but there are also many other forms of media, such as film and video. The media are a vast, complicated, dynamic, and very quickly changing scene - one that is increasingly integrated. So, separating radio, TV, newspapers,

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<sup>2</sup> UNAIDS, “Women Out Loud: How Women Living with HIV Will Help the World End AIDS”, 2012. [http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2012/20121211\\_Women\\_Out\\_Loud\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2012/20121211_Women_Out_Loud_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>UNAIDS, “Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic”, 2012. [http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/epidemiology/2012/gr2012/20121120\\_UNAIDS\\_Global\\_Report\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/epidemiology/2012/gr2012/20121120_UNAIDS_Global_Report_2012_en.pdf) and UNAIDS and WHO, “AIDS Epidemic Update, 2009” (accessed 1/24/2013)

<sup>4</sup> UNAIDS, “Women Out Loud: How Women Living with HIV Will Help the World End AIDS”, 2012. [http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2012/20121211\\_Women\\_Out\\_Loud\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2012/20121211_Women_Out_Loud_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> UNAIDS Secretariat input to the 2013 CSW review theme: “The Equal Sharing of Responsibilities between Women and Men, including Caregiving in the Context of HIV/AIDS”, page 1.

<sup>6</sup> CIA World Fact Book

<sup>7</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists\\_of\\_television\\_channels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_television_channels)

and digital outlets may present a false picture.

But in 2009 – four long years ago in media terms – such substantive integration was not the case. We will commence with a look at gender equity developments since 2009 for the more traditional media.

There is no comprehensive data on some set of agreed-upon, standard indicators. As a result, there is no 2009 baseline. I have therefore sought insights and data related to the following key indicators:

a. Media Decision-making - Is There a Gender Balance in High-level Media Decision-making?

- A 2011 survey<sup>8</sup> of 500 media companies in 59 countries (does not include online news organisations) found that: women represent only 33% of the full-time journalism workforce; 73% of top management jobs are held by men; and women hold 41% of the news-gathering, editing, and writing jobs.
- Improvement was noted since 1995, when women occupied an average of “only 12% of the top management positions in 239 nations...[This 2011]... global study shows women in 26% of the governing and 27% of the top management jobs.”<sup>9</sup>
- By way of just one regional insight: “Women’s under-representation in the news media is especially pronounced in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi and Zimbabwe where women total 15%, 27% and 27%, respectively.”<sup>10</sup>
- The European Institute for Gender Equity (EIGE)<sup>11</sup>, which is funded by the EU and based in Vilnius, Lithuania, is presently undertaking a major initiative on women in the media, with a focus on women in senior positions. The results will be published soon.
- **The BBC provides an insight into decision-making by gender for one major media agency. There are** high numbers of women in production management at over 80% - with 54% in TV production and 50% at the senior management level. Forty-three percent of BBC’s executive board is female, and 50% of the trustees are women. Across the BBC, 37-38% of all managers are female.<sup>12</sup>

b. Policy Developments – Are There New Policy Developments Related to Gender Equity and Media?

There have been a number of policy developments related to gender equity with an eye on overall national development, including HIV/AIDS. Here are just a few of them:

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<sup>8</sup> International Women’s Media Foundation, “Global Report on Status of Women in the News Media”, 2011 <http://iwmf.org/pdfs/IWMF-Global-Report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> International Women’s Media Foundation, “Global Report on Status of Women in the News Media”, 2011 <http://iwmf.org/pdfs/IWMF-Global-Report.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> International Women’s Media Foundation, “Global Report on Status of Women in the News Media”, 2011 <http://iwmf.org/pdfs/IWMF-Global-Report.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.eige.europa.eu/>

<sup>12</sup> [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/diversity/pdf/22922\\_BBC\\_Equality\\_Information\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/diversity/pdf/22922_BBC_Equality_Information_Report_2013.pdf)

- Morocco, for example, has just adopted a “National Charter for Ameliorating the Image of Women in the Media”.
  - The European Broadcasting has developed a Framework for Action for Gender Equality in the audiovisual sector that includes sections on gender portrayal and women in senior roles.<sup>13</sup>
  - The United Nations Trust Fund has supported a consortium of mainly Southern agencies – including Breakthrough (India), Soul City (Southern Africa), Puntos de Encuentro (Nicaragua), and Oxfam NOVIB – to accelerate entertainment-education-based strategies to significantly reduce violence against women.
  - In March 2013, Internews and its partners launched a report: “**From Counting Women to Making Women Count: Women-Focused Media Development**”.<sup>14</sup>
  - **The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) is an effort to build the evidence base on how to change public institutions and policies to better foster gender equality, with an emphasis on media.**<sup>15</sup>
- c. Specific Programming Initiatives – Are We Seeing a Substantive Growth in Media, Gender, Equity, and HIV/AIDS Programming Initiatives?

There have also been a myriad of programme initiatives. A quick review of our own The Communication Initiative knowledge base (which includes 35,000 summaries of media and communication knowledge shared and accessed by a network of 90,000 people, with 1 million users per annum) finds that there was information on over 200 gender equity media initiatives submitted from 2009 to 2012 in the area of film/video alone (one small part of the media scene).<sup>16</sup> Thousands of initiatives at local, national, regional, and international levels have been implemented around the world when all media are taken into account over the 2009-2013 period. 352 of these gender equity media initiatives are related to HIV/AIDS.<sup>17</sup> This is now a very dynamic field.

To single out just a few examples from such a broad, sophisticated tapestry may be unhelpful. But to give some colour to the above statistics:

- The film *Asmaa* gives HIV a human face in an effort to challenge stereotypes and prejudice in Egypt. 500,000 Egyptians attended screenings; 230 articles have been published in national, regional, and global media; and 34 top-rated television programmes debated related issues.<sup>18</sup>
- Revelados is a national multimedia initiative with close on-the-ground local organisation engagement to spark debate on sexual health issues in

<sup>13</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1111&furtherNews=yes>

<sup>14</sup> <https://app.e2ma.net/app/view/CampaignPublic/id:1406122.13022889445/rid:99c6ba9c39f5ca61dda182fe1bdcd452>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.promundo.org.br/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Evolving-Men-IMAGES-1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.comminit.com/global/search/apachesolr\\_search/?filters=tid%3A36%20tid%3A36%20tid%3A253%20tid%3A62%20tid%3A250%20tid%3A96](http://www.comminit.com/global/search/apachesolr_search/?filters=tid%3A36%20tid%3A36%20tid%3A253%20tid%3A62%20tid%3A250%20tid%3A96)

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.comminit.com/global/search/apachesolr\\_search/?filters=tid%3A36%20tid%3A36%20tid%3A253%20tid%3A250%20tid%3A96%20tid%3A86](http://www.comminit.com/global/search/apachesolr_search/?filters=tid%3A36%20tid%3A36%20tid%3A253%20tid%3A250%20tid%3A96%20tid%3A86)

<sup>18</sup> “UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV: Mid-Term Review - Final Report”, Dec. 2012, page 16.

[http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/pcb/2012/20121206\\_Final\\_Report\\_Mid\\_Term%20Review\\_UNAIDS\\_Agenda\\_for\\_Women\\_and\\_Girls.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/pcb/2012/20121206_Final_Report_Mid_Term%20Review_UNAIDS_Agenda_for_Women_and_Girls.pdf)

- Colombia from a gender perspective, with youth voices highlighted.<sup>19</sup>
- Jasoos Vijay (India) was the centrepiece of a campaign reaching out to sexually active young men to explore HIV and AIDS awareness. The main male character challenged gender stereotypes and treatment of women. Qualitative assessment repeatedly stressed the impact that the programme had on promoting inter-spousal communication.<sup>20</sup>
- “Healthy Images of Manhood: A Male Engagement Approach for Workplaces and Community Programs Integrating Gender, Family Planning and HIV/AIDS” (Tanzania).<sup>21</sup>
- Soul Buddyz - a multimedia "edutainment" vehicle for children aged 8-12 years old that includes a substantive emphasis on gender dynamics and roles in the context of HIV/AIDS.<sup>22</sup>

d. Portrayal – What Are the Trends in the Portrayal of Women in the Media?

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- A series of surveys by Gender Links, the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) - the ongoing "Women In Media" Making A Difference" series<sup>23</sup> - provide portrayal insights for Southern Africa

“Most Southern African media houses in 14 countries had very few reports on gender based violence from mid October to mid November in 2009 in a study carried out during that period...study showed that during the month of study, only five percent of stories were gender based violence stories while the rest did not hint on violence despite escalating records of violence cases on a daily basis.”<sup>24</sup>

“People with HIV comprise a mere 5% of news sources on the topic”.<sup>25</sup>

- The BBC’s newly appointed Director of Diversity was kind enough to provide this overview of the research related to portrayal:

“Based on a series of portrayal analyses, for the last 10 years or so there has no real change in the representation of women on screen. Pan industry there is a ratio of about male: female 2:1 (though this can differ amongst genres). Older women are less visible and there is a sharp decline at about 45 yrs. The lack of visibility of older

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.comminit.com/revelados>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.comminit.com/global/content/jasoos-vijay>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.comminit.com/hiv-aids/content/healthy-images-manhood-male-engagement-approach-workplaces-and-community-programs-integr>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.soulcity.org.za/projects/soul-buddyz/soul-buddyz-series>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page/women-in-media>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.samgi.org/latest-news/101-sa-news-reports-still-not-gender-sensitive-gender-links.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page/media-hiv-and-gender-baseline-study>

women is generally considered to be the biggest issue across the media industry along with a general paucity of female experts.”<sup>26</sup>, <sup>27</sup>

## **The Rapidly Changing Media Scene**

The trends outlined above are important. It is vital to collect comprehensive and consolidated data on some key indicators derived from these trends. Mainstream media will continue to play a key role relative to advancing gender equity.

However, that mainstream media focus is increasingly complemented (perhaps even surpassed) by - and more and more integrated with - digital/mobile media developments. These developments have happened in an extraordinarily short period of time. The appropriation of digital/mobile media for development purposes has been incredibly rapid.

Since 2009 (the baseline comparison point that we have been asked to look to in making our observations), the nature and the very notion of “the media” have changed dramatically. Now almost anyone can produce content, publish content, and make their own choices about how, when, and where they will access the knowledge of most interest to them and the networks they choose to join and engage.

We are at the beginning of a world in which 140 characters may be more influential than op-eds; Facebook “likes” may be more important than subscription sales; going viral could be of greater import than honouring a tradition of editorial independence, and; a very short mobile phone text, even with typos, may have more value than a well-edited long text.

Please consider the following trends – just a few items of indicative data on some global processes; these specific examples are mirrored by hundreds of other global, regional, national, and local digital/mobile media platforms:

**Facebook:** In August 2008, there were 100 million users; today (March 3 2013), there are 963,812,360 – with 61 million in India, 47 million in Indonesia, and 30 million in the Philippines. The fastest growth is in Burundi and Mauritania.<sup>28</sup>

**Twitter:** In February 2009, there were 6 million unique monthly visitors; by December 2012, there were 200 million unique monthly visitors.<sup>29</sup>

**Mobile phones:** From 1990 to 2011, worldwide mobile phone subscriptions grew from 12.4 million to over 6 billion. In 2011, 78% of people in (so-called) developing nations had mobile phone subscriptions (This figure will now be woefully out of date).<sup>30</sup>

**Text messaging (SMS):** 1.6 trillion messages were sent in 2011 rising to (projected) 7.7 trillion messages in 2016.<sup>31</sup>

**Wikipedia:** In 2009, users submitted 14 million articles; now, there are 25 million articles available in 285 different languages.<sup>32</sup>

**iPhone Apps: There are** now over half a millions apps for the iPhone alone, with the vast majority launched in the last 4 years.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Email from Amanda Rice, Head of Diversity at the BBC - March 2 2013.

<sup>27</sup> The last portrayal analysis was conducted, pan-industry, in 2009/10.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.checkfacebook.com/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.beevolve.com/twitter-statistics/#a1>

<sup>30</sup> <http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats/a#subscribers>

<sup>31</sup> <http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats/c#othermessaging>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.ludost.org/content/wikipedia-why-few-women-edit>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/best-iphone-apps/>

These are just a very few statistics. If you did not know these specific data, you will have known these general trends.

### **Qualities of Digital Media**

The media landscape - how knowledge and news is produced, shared, and critiqued - has changed beyond recognition. This is a very different kind of media – people as media content providers, people with the ability to create and control their own media sources, people deciding which media knowledge is important for them, geographic distance becoming irrelevant, time considerations to access media dissolving, people being able to create their own networks on a very steep rise, and often the absence of “expert” and “editorial” filters now commonplace.

These qualities have very significant advantages for the struggles for greater gender equity. The ability and capacity, for example, of women and men who support that struggle to express their voice, share their analysis, and convene organised strategies and actions in ways that are not reliant on the mediating action of others (for example, newspaper editors or chairmen of local councils) are vastly expanded.

And those actions and the resulting impact are all measurable from a gender perspective. In real-time, on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis, data on the agreed measurement points can be collected, shared, and analysed by all and commented upon.

### **Gender Equity and Digital Media**

This brings us to the question of gender equity relative to these digital trends. The qualities outlined above for digital media mean the existence of wide-scale capacities that can substantively advance gender equity across all issues, including the vitally important issues related to HIV/AIDS and gender-shared responsibilities and caregiving.

In the context of HIV/AIDS and other development issues, gender equity progress can only happen with greatly increased public debate, private dialogue, women-convened and -run social action networks, shared knowledge from the perspectives of women, and the amplified (increasingly loud) voices of women and girls within that debate, dialogue, and networking.

Using digital/mobile technologies, women can produce, publish, and share their own knowledge. They can form and sustain their own networks. Broad-scale change processes can be organised, irrespective of distance. Knowledge can be obtained. Shared analysis can be developed.

The digital trends described above are so new that there are no established benchmarks to provide the base from which we can assess progress. In many ways, we are only now at the stage where we can begin to see what those benchmark indicators may be, moving forward.

Whether the issue is HIV/AIDS or any other development concern, I would suggest the following media benchmarks: to measure whether there is full gender equity in all contexts related to:

1. Access – trends in women being able to engage through digital media platforms.
2. Knowledge generation – trends in the levels of knowledge shared by women and girls.

3. Platform development – trends in the numbers of women involved in building digital media processes.
4. Management – trends in the percentage of women making digital media development decisions.
5. Voice – trends in the levels of opinions, ideas, and analysis being voiced from the perspective of women and girls.
6. Portrayal/reflection – trends in the levels of digital content and access with gender equity as its essence.

Related to those indicators, what follows is some data on gender equity trends – with an emphasis on post-2009 where possible. These data are neither comprehensive nor solid. We are not yet at that stage. The figures are simply indicative.

The gender equity perspective on these data tells a positively excellent and a terribly worrying story.

From the “good and helpful” perspective, hundreds of millions of women and girls have embraced the freedom provided by digital technologies, including on HIV/AIDS- related issues, and, in so doing, have: become knowledge generators, network organisers, facilitators, and participants; learned from their peers; and found media that enable them to participate in the all-important national and local debate and dialogue. These were opportunities and processes not previously available.

From the “not so good and worryisome” perspective, women and girls are appropriating these digital technologies and their associated capacities at much slower rates than men and boys – particularly in the (so-called) “poorer” economic contexts.

Digital technologies are widening gender gaps related to media. Those gaps are broadening related to some of the most powerful communication technologies that the globe has seen – technologies that are designed at their very heart to be liberating.

Just a few examples:

Access:

- There are 300 million fewer female mobile phone subscribers than male subscribers.<sup>34</sup>
- In low- and middle-income countries, a woman is 21% less likely to own a mobile phone than a man.<sup>35</sup>
- Lower- and middle-income countries have significantly less Facebook use by women. In Ghana, 69% of Facebook users are male; in Sri Lanka, the percentage is 68% (with 67% in Uganda and 72% in Oman). In the United States, 95% of women (85% of men) log into Facebook on a regular basis.<sup>36</sup>
- Lower- and middle-income countries have significantly fewer Twitter accounts by women. For example, in India, 85% are male users.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup>[http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA\\_Women\\_and\\_Mobile-Global\\_Opportunity.pdf](http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA_Women_and_Mobile-Global_Opportunity.pdf)

<sup>35</sup>[http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA\\_Women\\_and\\_Mobile-Global\\_Opportunity.pdf](http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA_Women_and_Mobile-Global_Opportunity.pdf)

<sup>36</sup><http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/ghana>

<sup>37</sup><http://www.beevolve.com/twitter-statistics/#a1>

### Knowledge Generation:

- 50% of Wikipedia users are women, but only 9 to 10% of the knowledge submitted to Wikipedia is from women and girls.
- Though women and girls globally are 50% of Twitter accounts and use, their profiles highlight “Family” double the times that of men.<sup>38</sup>

### Platform Development

- Women’s representation in the computing and information technology workforce fell from a peak of 38% in the mid-1980s down to 29.6% (2012).<sup>39</sup>
- The percentage of women software developers in the United States has declined from 42% in 1987 to less than 25% today.<sup>40</sup>
- Recall the very auspicious BBC gender and decision-making data above. This is not the case within the BBC for technology, where only 25% of people involved in technology and engineering roles are female - with no women at senior or high management roles.<sup>41</sup>

### Portrayal/Reflection

- 82% of Pinterest users are women – arts, crafts, recipes, gift ideas, hobbies, design, fashion, etc.
- From July 2009 to July 2010, about 13% of Web searches were for erotic content (pornography).<sup>42</sup>

### Voice

There is a growing range of online processes that seek to support people directly affected by a development issue in being able to share their voice and to connect with others of a similar persuasion to organise action, including on HIV/AIDS and gender-related issues. It is almost impossible at present to quantify these. Just a few examples:

- Heartlines “For Good” marketplace.<sup>43</sup>
- UNAIDS’s Women Out Loud Initiative - the voices of some 30 women living with HIV who have given their personal insights into how the epidemic is affecting women.<sup>44</sup>
- The People Living with HIV Stigma Index - the beginnings of a tool that will measure and detect changing trends in relation to stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.beevolve.com/twitter-statistics/#a1>

<sup>39</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_computing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_computing)

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.computer.org/csdl/proceedings/hicss/2012/4525/00/4525f279-abs.html>

<sup>41</sup> [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/diversity/pdf/22922\\_BBC\\_Equality\\_Information\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/diversity/pdf/22922_BBC_Equality_Information_Report_2013.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/sites/julieruvolo/2011/09/07/how-much-of-the-internet-is-actually-for-porn/>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.forgood.co.za/MarketPlace/Pages/MarketPlaceNeeds.aspx>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2012/december/20121211womenoutloud/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.stigmaindex.org/>

- Bring Voices in from the Margins Project – a communication rights programme designed to empower marginalised and vulnerable women in Zimbabwe through training in communication skills and information and communication technologies (ICTs).<sup>46</sup>
- Stigma Action Network (SAN) – a network seeking to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination by catalysing action and commitment locally, regionally, and globally.<sup>47</sup>

### Management

- Women own 40% of the private businesses in the United States, according to the Center for Women’s Business Research. But they create only 8% of the venture-backed technology start-ups.
- (NB There seems a paucity of data in this area)

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The overall change perspective here should be repeated. *“In the context of HIV/AIDS and other development issues, gender equity progress can only happen with greatly increased public debate, private dialogue, women-convened and -run social action networks, shared knowledge from the perspectives of women, and the amplified (increasingly loud) voices of women and girls within that debate, dialogue, and networking.”*

Not only do digital/mobile social networking media have the capability to support such strategies, but they are also increasingly being appropriated by women – sometimes for gender equity action purposes. But that rate of appropriation is much (in many contexts much, much) slower than that of men. And, importantly, women are not in the majority when it comes to building digital platforms and managing digital companies.

There should be solid monitoring of gender equity trends related to digital media. The tracking of such trends – and their reporting in almost real-time – is comparatively easy compared to such trends in “mainstream media”. Virtually everything in the digital media arena can be counted, and most often is counted. This includes content generation, content use, digital media access, search trends, social networking activity, and other factors specific to gender equity, media, and HIV/AIDS. An observatory should be established for such purposes.

With many thanks for the honour of presenting this analysis and these thoughts. And with many thanks to all of The Communication Initiative partners that contributed ideas and suggestions to this paper – see <http://www.comminit.com> - in particular, Citurnas/Imaginario, ANDI, BBC Media Action, Soul City, Breakthrough, UNAIDS, Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs, and Puntos de Encuentro, as well as Internews and the International Women’s Media Foundation. The analysis provided above is exclusively mine alone.

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.comminit.com/hiv-aids/content/bring-voices-margins-project>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.comminit.com/hiv-aids/content/stigma-action-network-san-1>