

What additional dimensions of gender in media would you like to see included in GMMP 2009/2010?

Posted by admin - 2009/04/22 12:12

There is still time! Suggestions are most welcome.

Quels autres indicateurs de genre dans les médias aimerez-vous voir dans le GMMP 2009/2010. Il nous reste toujours du temps! Les suggestions sont encouragées.

=====

Shattering gender stereotypes one picture at a time

Posted by Chloe - 2009/06/16 14:14

As we know, the 2005 GMMP determined that "when women make the news... it is often in conventionally stereotyped ways - as celebrities, victims of crime, or in clearly 'woman-centered' stories that are usually marginal to the main news agenda."

Why does news coverage of women continually relegate them to the same tired and unrealistic roles? How can this tendency be overcome?

Below is an excerpt from Mercedes Sayagues's blog Gender Masala about the recent WACC photo competition. In it, Sayagues writes compellingly about the power of images when it comes to combatting stereotypes...

The entirety of Sayagues's blog can be found at <http://www.ips.org/blog/mdg3/>

The shutter that shatters gender stereotypes

By: Mercedes Sayagues

Posted on June 16, 2009.

<http://www.ips.org/blog/mdg3/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/wacc-first-prize1-300x198.jpg>
Sudiptorana/WACC

"The women paddling in this stunning photo are having fun and a good workout - while breaking cultural barriers. They are competing in a traditional race against men in their village in West Bengal, India, racing against the gender-based division of labour and leisure, paddling energetically into a male space.

The photo just won the sixth photography competition run by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC).

This year's theme is 'portraying gender and challenging conventional understandings of femininity and masculinity.' More than 1,700 entries by 950 photographers were received on flickr.

<http://www.ips.org/blog/mdg3/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/wacc-runnerup1-150x150.jpg>
Jyotikajain/WACC

In the first runner-up photo, two bejewelled young women ride a motorcycle during the Gudi Padva procession, or New Year's Day, in the Indian state of Maharashtra.

The two winning photos portray confident women, dressed in colorful sarees, doing something very un-traditional in traditional events: cultural changes captured with the click of a shutter.

Other photos were more predictable: women in non-traditional jobs like gold mining, sand digging and mending tyres, toiling away equally as men.

Well, not that equally.

Worldwide, women earn less than men. The gender pay gap ranges from three per cent in Malta to 51 percent in Georgia, with a world average of 17 percent, and the gap is higher in the private sector, says Unifem. Worse, in March, the International Trade Union Confederation revised the gap upwards to 22 percent.

Chile has just approved a law guaranteeing equal pay for equal work. Meanwhile, the world's largest corporation, Wal-Mart stores, faces the biggest civil rights class action lawsuit ever filed in the USA, for underpaying 1.5 million women workers since 1998.

Whether in mining or childcare, women work hard enough. It is nice to see them portrayed as protagonists at a race and a procession.

So often well-meaning NGOs dig a well or bring solar stoves, all good things, to ease women's burden so they can work (more) in an income-generating project. Where are the projects to give women free time to rest, exercise and have fun?

In the pool of non-selected photos I discovered a wide variety of meanings for changing gender roles. Lots of gays, lesbians, transvestites and transgenders. Plenty of women in that most male institution, the military. Many fathers and children, including Über Dad Barack Obama with his daughters.

Few entries portrayed men doing women's work. Photographer Sean Hawkey, a founder of the competition, speculates that such images are less popular because they cast aspersions on the subject's masculinity. What do you think?

<http://www.ips.org/blog/mdg3/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/wacc-dolls2-150x150.jpg>
Alampioska/WACC

My prize for Out of the Box photo goes to the androgynous doll heads by Biljana Alampioska.

The not so Out of the Box but accurate caption says: 'Gender is socially created and can be overcome.'"

=====