ALF in Motion – Mobility for Knowledge

**Media Literacy for Women Empowerment**



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**“You are only free when you comprehend, otherwise you are a slave. Given the tools to understand, you can no longer be controlled.”**

Hadhami Henia

**“Women empowerment is a constant, lifelong journey to awareness, and media literacy is an undeniably important vessel.”**

Aspasia Protogerou

May 2024

**Table of Contents**

1. **Executive Summary ………………………………………………………………3**
2. **Introduction and Context Setting ………………………………………………4**
   * Brief overview of intercultural dialogue and its importance in fostering understanding and inclusion.
   * Highlighting the joint efforts of Fotoessa and ATAC in supporting gender equality, media literacy, and women's empowerment through various initiatives.
3. **Understanding Key Aspects …………………………………………………...11**
   * Detailed explanations of the key concepts: gender equality, inclusion, media literacy, and women's empowerment.
   * Insights into the significance of these concepts in ICD.
4. **Transnational Collaboration and Expertise Sharing ………………………14**
   * Highlighting the collaboration between Fotoessa and ATAC as a model for effective transnational partnerships.
   * Emphasizing the role of the weeklong meeting between experts in exchanging knowledge and knowhow.
5. **Mapping Challenges and Solutions …………………………………………..17**
   * In-depth exploration of common challenges faced by girls and women regarding media representation, with a focus on social media.
   * Comprehensive analysis of issues like discrimination, body and age shaming, sexist and abusive messages, domestic violence, opinion manipulation, and mental oppression.
6. **Best Practices and Strategies …………………………………………………22**
   * Sharing successful approaches, case studies, and interventions that have positively impacted media representation and women's empowerment.
   * Providing practical strategies for promoting inclusivity, countering biases, and empowering women through media.
7. **Toolkits and Resources ………………………………………………………...28**
   * Curated collection of resources, tools, and materials for enhancing media literacy, fostering intercultural dialogue, and promoting gender equality.
   * Sample lesson plans, workshop outlines, and activities for educators, activists, and organizations to implement.
8. **Call to Action ……………………………………………………………………..32**
   * Encouraging readers to take concrete steps towards fostering positive change in media representation and women's empowerment.
   * Inspiring collaborations and initiatives within their communities.
9. **Contacts …………………………………………………………………………...35**
   * Providing contact information for further engagement and inquiries.
10. **References and Sources ……………………………………………………….37**

**Executive Summary**

This paper addresses the critical and ongoing issue of gender inequality in media across Tunisia and Greece and their direct connection to women empowerment. It acknowledges the persistent challenges faced by girls and women, including various forms of violence, stereotypical portrayals, discrimination and unequal opportunities, silencing of voices, and limitations on free expression within media. Moreover, the paper delves into the critical issue of media literacy and its role in perpetuating or dismantling gender stereotypes, highlights the importance of ICD, presents positive movements advocating for change and aims to contribute to this progress.

The framework established by this paper is intended to be a practical guide for all stakeholders invested in achieving gender equality in media. The collaboration team seeks to provide up-to-date knowledge and innovative tools which will empower young girls and women, along with educators, youth workers and facilitators, across Tunisia and Greece, to critically analyze media messages and equip users and content creators with the skills to challenge stereotypes, cultivate open-mindedness, and foster empathy towards diverse perspectives.

This paper ultimately serves as a call to action for individuals, organizations, and policymakers across Tunisia and Greece. By working collectively, a more equitable media landscape can be achieved, one that empowers women and fosters their full participation in public discourse. This paper aspires to contribute to a more inclusive and diverse media environment that reflects the voices and experiences of women throughout the Mediterranean region.

1. **Introduction and Context Setting:**
   * **Brief overview of intercultural dialogue and its importance in fostering understanding and inclusion.**

Our cultural environment is changing quickly and becoming more and more diversified. Cultural diversity is an essential condition of human society, brought about by cross-border migration, the claim of national and other minorities to a distinct cultural identity, the cultural effects of globalization, the growing interdependence between all world regions and the advances of information and communication media. More and more individuals are living in a “multicultural” normality and have to manage their own multiple cultural affiliations.

Cultural diversity is also an economic, social and political plus, which needs to be developed and adequately managed. On the other hand, increasing cultural diversity brings about new social and political challenges. Cultural diversity often triggers fear and rejection. Stereotyping, racism, xenophobia, intolerance, discrimination and violence can threaten peace and the very essence of local and national communities.

Dialogue between cultures, the oldest and most fundamental mode of democratic conversation, is an antidote to rejection and violence. Its objective is to enable us to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging.

1. Intercultural dialogue (ICD)
2. Objectives and conditions

In a general sense, the objective of intercultural dialogue is to learn to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging. Intercultural dialogue can also be a tool for the prevention and resolution of conflicts by enhancing the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. More specifically, the following goals have been outlined:

* To share visions of the world, to understand and learn from those that do not see the world with the same perspective we do
* To identify similarities and differences between different cultural traditions and perceptions
* To achieve a consensus that disputes should not be resolved by violence
* To help manage cultural diversity in a democratic manner, by making the necessary adjustments to all types of existing social and political arrangements
* To bridge the divide between those who perceive diversity as a threat and those who view it as an enrichment
* To share best practices particularly in the areas of intercultural dialogue, the democratic management of social diversity and the promotion of social cohesion
* To develop jointly new projects.

A more practical approach is to describe the conditions, the “enabling factors” that characterize a true, meaningful intercultural dialogue. Based on existing experience, one can propose at least six crucial conditions that must be fulfilled from the very outset, or achieved during the process:

* Equal dignity of all participants
* Voluntary engagement in dialogue
* A mindset (on both sides) characterised by openness, curiosity and commitment, and the absence of a desire to “win” the dialogue
* A readiness to look at both cultural similarities and differences
* A minimum degree of knowledge about the distinguishing features of one’s own and the “other” culture
* The ability to find a common language for understanding and respecting cultural differences.

According to a recent, general reference definition from the Council of Europe (<https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/concept_EN.asp>) Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other’s global perception.

In this definition, “open and respectful” means “based on the equal value of the partners”; “exchange of views” stands for every type of interaction that reveals cultural characteristics; “groups” stands for every type of collective that can act through its representatives (family, community, associations, peoples); “culture” includes everything relating to ways of life, customs, beliefs and other things that have been passed on to us for generations, as well as the various forms of artistic creation; “world perception” stands for values and ways of thinking.

According to the Institute for Economics & Peace’s publication “Measuring Intercultural Dialogue – A conceptual and technical framework”, published in 2020 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ICD (Intercultural Dialogue) is a process undertaken to realize transformative communication. At the most basic level, it refers to the space or opportunities created for dialogue among a diverse group of participants with the aim of finding common ground. It is a value-driven process as it requires participants’ commitment to values such as mutual respect, empathy and a willingness to change perspectives.

One of the most widely cited definitions of ICD is from the Council of Europe’s White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: Living Together as Equals in Dignity (2008). It states that ICD is ‘an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It operates at all levels – within societies, between societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world’ (Council of Europe, 2008, pp. 10–11). Another definition for ICD is: ‘An equitable exchange and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect and the equal dignity of all cultures [that] is the essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations’ (UNESCO, 2017).

In summary, this paper understands ICD as a process undertaken to realize transformative communication that requires space or opportunities for engagement and a diverse group of participants committed to values such as mutual respect, empathy and a willingness to consider different perspectives.

Importance of ICD

Many of the grave problems currently faced around the world — including, among others, inequality, divisive populism and xenophobia, migration and displacement, and violent extremism — are shared across and within societies. Such problems require coherent and cohesive solutions centered around productive dialogue, yet these are often stalled by polarized positions and the lack of a sense of shared responsibility. Learning how to live together in a world of increasing diversity has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges of our time. Yet despite ever-growing economic interconnectedness and technological advancement, we live too often in silos, and our positions are reinforced rather than confronted. In increasingly mixed and heterogeneous societies, we can live in bubbles. The real potential strength in such times lies in the lesser-told stories of the coming together of groups that typically do not interact or are characterized by opposing views. Examples of such groups finding common ground are remarkable, yet rarely analyzed for the precise conditions and actions that helped de-escalate tensions, educate and inform participants, and ultimately create meaningful and fair communication across difference.

Improved communication is the first step towards enhancing interculturalism within diverse societies and laying the foundation for peaceful societies, without which progress towards the SDGs cannot be achieved. ICD, understood as a transformative form of communication, has the ability to increase the bonds, connections and trust among individuals, groups and public institutions and thereby contribute to a range of outcomes that enable peaceful and productive societies. The UNESCO Member States Survey on Intercultural Dialogue shows that the understanding of the use of ICD has two main objectives: (i) as a prerequisite environment for peace and social cohesion; and (ii) an instrumental tool for education and advocacy, contributing to issues such as the integration of refugees, and countering radicalization, discrimination and racism’ (UNESCO, 2018, p. 16). ICD is understood in its duality as a necessary context for peace to exist, and as an important tool or process for specific policy needs towards greater peace. The need to reinforce the values, institutions and skills that promote ICD, as a means of building the trust, belonging, understanding and respect needed to prevent and peacefully resolve intercommunity conflict, is increasingly apparent. We know that without this reinforcement, the potential of diversity as a source of innovation and dynamism for advancing inclusive and sustainable development will be lost, and the cost of violence – borne disproportionately by the world’s poorest and most fragile countries – will continue to impede equitable progress.

* + **Highlighting the joint efforts of Fotoessa and ATAC in supporting gender equality, media literacy, and women's empowerment through various initiatives.**

Since its foundation, in 2016, Fotoessa has being focusing in supporting women, especially women from underprivileged and low representation backgrounds, and in promoting women’s empowerment through projects, educational programs and initiatives. Just to mention a few:

* Fotoessa has been a host company in the European exchange program for Entrepreneurs supporting young women, such as Tijana Mladenovic from Serbia and Elena Beurdeley from France, to learn from experienced entrepreneurs, empowered them with know-how and helped them acquire the necessary skills to become themselves successful young entrepreneurs.
* In 2019, Fotoessa took part in the Erasmus + program “AGORA” together with FöreningenStapelbädden – STPLN and Swldeas AB from Sweden, In Place of War CIC from England and Federatia Fabrica De Pensule from Romania and supported three young Greek women to participate, with a goal to create innovative and successful business ventures in the wider area of art and culture, with an emphasis on social entrepreneurship.
* The same year, Fotoessa’s member, educator Aspasia Protogerou has been certified from Anna Lindh Foundation as an Intercultural Citizenship Education ToT. Since then she has been organizing workshops to promote ICD and women empowerment in a community, national and transnational basis, with community women, educators and trainers, youth workers, youth, volunteers and private company employees.
* During the transnational solidarity program BeMyVoice (2021-) in support of freedom of speech, together with 16 country-members of ALF network, Fotoessa: 1. interviewed women victims of war, domestic violence, sexual abuse, inequality and social discriminations, and collected their testimonials anonymously in the BeMyVoice’s safe platform and 2. gave the opportunity to 10 women artists in Greece to be inspired by those testimonials and create a plethora of artworks (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obLG5zhFr4M> )
* Fotoessa participated in the transnational Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) program “Women on islands, Motors of Sustainable Tourism” (2020-2021), a project empowering local women in four small islands, (in Croatia, UK, Greece and Tunisia) to create innovative tourist activities, experiences and products, and promoting the role of women as drivers of more sustainable development on an island scale.
* Fotoessa’s members John Sourelis and Aspasia Protogerou participated in 2022 in the Gender Alliance Initiative “From gender stereotypes to gender-based violence” to acquire alternative and educational tools for more effective women empowerment
* In 2023, Aspasia Protogerou and John Sourelis participated in the 10 days Erasmus+ training program “GIVEN – Gender Identity & Violence when Empowering the Youth” for youth workers and facilitators. Participants acquired specialized knowledge and skills, and create educational and methodological tools which can be used as an integral part of their working methods, so as to address issues of gender, gender identity, and violence.
* The same year Aspasia Protogerou participated in the “Bridging Boundaries” Media Literacy training for empowering civil society organizations, held by Aequalitas
* In 2023 Fotoessa participated in the “Frame the Change” – Ethical storytelling and photography training by femLENS NGO with a mission to empower women to become social change agents themselves.

ATAC was founded in 2011 by group of young leaders who wanted to change the status quo and aspire for a better future. Over the course of more than a decade, the team has made its mission to use art to defend human rights and spread a culture of equity, dignity, tolerance, and inclusion. Girls and women are ATAC’s primary target group and have worked relentlessly for their empowerment and inclusion.

| **ANNEE** | **PROJET** |  | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cinéma Ambulant Citoyen - CACI : Depuis 2012**  [**https://web.facebook.com/CinemaAmbulantCitoyen/**](https://web.facebook.com/CinemaAmbulantCitoyen/) | | |
| 2022 | Small Screens 7ème Edition |  | |
| 2021 | Small Screens 6ème Edition |  | |
| 2018-2020 | Ciné –Foyer 5ème Edition |  | |
| 2016-2018 | Screen Moov 4ème Edition |  | |
| 2015-2016 | Ecran Contre Corruption Ouvert- ECCO 3ème Edition |  | |
| 2014 | Screen Moov 2ème Edition |  | |
| 2013 | Cinéma Ambulant CItoyen (CACI) 1ère Edition |  | |
| **Académie des Jeunes Observateurs des Violations des Droits Humains OJV! Depuis 2013**  [**https://web.facebook.com/ATAC.OJV/**](https://web.facebook.com/ATAC.OJV/) | | |
| 2021-2023 | Women Leaders Network (WLN) |  | |
| 2022 | Femmes Ouvrières dans le Secteur Agricole en Tunisie |  | |
| 2020-2021 | Stop – Leishmaniose |  | |
| Riche Terroir |  | |
| Académie OJV! PHASE III FOSA |  | |
| 2018-2020 | Sidi Bouzid: Towards a Locally Driven Cultural Policy |  | |
| 2017-2018 | Save Bouhedma II |  | |
| 2016-2017 | Jeunes & Elections Municipales - JEM: PHASE II |  | |
| 2013-2016 | Promotion de l’Emploi Agricole des jeunes dans les zones Rurales « Oui, l’agriculture recrute » (PEAR) |  | |
| Jeunes & Elections Municipales - JEM : PHASE I |  | |
| NET-WORK MED |  | |
| Académie OJV ! PHASE II |  | |
| Save Bouhedma I |  | |
| **Espace Culturel Mandela : Depuis 2015**  [**https://web.facebook.com/Espace.Mandela/**](https://web.facebook.com/Espace.Mandela/) | | |
| 2021 | Green-Zones - Space |  | |
| Mandela Flowers |  | |
| 2020-2021 | Intercultural Cities |  | |
| Espace Anti Discrimination |  | |
| Stop Violence à L’égard des FOSA |  | |
| Zéro tolérance contre la violence à l'égard des FF |  | |
| Euro Med the Flying Classroom |  | |
| 2016-2017 | Different Cultures-Common Values |  | |
| 2015-2016 | Festival International de la danse 3ème Edition 2015 «La Rencontre» |  | |

1. **Understanding Key Aspects:**
   * **Detailed explanations of the key concepts: gender equality, inclusion, media literacy, and women's empowerment.**
2. **Gender equality**

**Equality between women and men (gender equality):** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development. (<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm> )

1. **Inclusion**

A general definition about inclusion is the aim and procedure to embrace all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need. It is about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance (removal of barriers).

**Social inclusion** is defined as the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. **Inclusion in education** is a process that helps to overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.’ (UNESCO, 2017: 7). ‘[*Inclusion*](https://policytoolbox.iiep.unesco.org/glossary/inclusion/) involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences.

1. **Media literacy**

Media literacy is the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media messages of all kinds. (Christ & Potter, 1998; Livingstone, 2004; Sonia Livingstone and Vander, 2010). It is the process through which individuals become media literate – able to critically understand the nature, techniques and impacts of media messages and productions. In the words of digital media literacy scholar Sonia Livingstone, “the more that the media mediate everything in society – work, education, information, civic participation, social relationships and more – the more vital it is that people are informed about and critically able to judge what’s useful or misleading, how they are regulated, when media can be trusted, and what commercial or political interests are at stake. In short, media literacy is needed not only to engage with the media but to engage with society through the media.”[1] Like the rest of need to be able to make good choices about privacy, ethics, safety and verifying information when they’re using digital media, and they need to be prepared to be active and engaged digital citizens.

1. **Women’s empowerment**

It is a process that enables women to develop self-control, independence, and confidence in the face of a patriarchal culture. The major tools for empowering women are independence from others and economic freedom. Some fundamental barriers to women’s empowerment include lack of confidence, inferiority complex, limited options, and all sorts of deprivation. Women’s empowerment is therefore a change in a woman’s life that increases her potential to live a full human life (Tamuli and Mishra,2022). Most current definitions of empowerment in the development literature draw upon Amartya Sen’s articulation of “Development as Freedom” (1999) where development is about expanding people’s choices.

* + **Insights into the significance of gender equality, inclusion, media literacy and women's empowerment in ICD**

Intercultural dialogue is a two-way street where people from different cultures can exchange ideas and build understanding. Here's why gender equality, inclusion, media literacy, and women's empowerment are crucial for successful intercultural dialogue:

1. **Gender Equality:** Imagine a dialogue where only half the voices are heard. Without gender equality, women's perspectives and experiences are excluded, leading to an incomplete picture of each culture. Equality ensures all voices are included, enriching the conversation and fostering a more comprehensive understanding.
2. **Inclusion:** Intercultural dialogue should involve everyone, not just the dominant groups. Inclusion goes beyond gender and encompasses race, disability, and other factors. When everyone feels welcome to participate, the dialogue becomes more representative and fosters a sense of community across cultures.
3. **Media Literacy:** Media shapes our perception of the world, and often portrays stereotypes about different genders and cultures. Media literacy equips people to critically analyze these portrayals. In intercultural dialogue, this skill helps identify biases and ensures a clearer understanding of each other's cultures.
4. **Women's Empowerment:** When women are empowered, they have the confidence and resources to participate fully in society, including intercultural dialogue. Their voices and experiences enrich the conversation and provide a more nuanced perspective on each culture. Women's empowerment also challenges traditional gender roles, which can be a barrier to understanding between cultures.

In essence, these concepts work together to create a foundation for fair and meaningful intercultural dialogue. By ensuring everyone has a voice, can critically analyze information, and feels empowered to participate, we can build bridges of understanding and appreciation between cultures.

1. **Transnational Collaboration and Expertise Sharing:**

* **Highlighting the collaboration between Fotoessa and ATAC as a model for effective transnational partnerships.**

The collaboration between Fotoessa, a Greek intercultural dialogue and civil society issues expert organization, and ATAC, a Tunisian association that advocates for peace by working to overcome misunderstanding and stereotypes that affect relations between and within societies in Tunisia, presents a compelling model for effective transnational partnerships that promote media literacy, women's empowerment, inclusion, and gender equality. Here's why this collaboration is significant:

* 1. **Shared Goals**: Both Fotoessa and ATAC focus on empowering individuals, particularly women, through media literacy. This creates a strong foundation for collaboration, allowing them to share expertise, resources, and best practices in each other's contexts.
  2. **Addressing Gender Imbalance**: Media literacy is crucial for challenging gender stereotypes often portrayed in media. By working together, Fotoessa and ATAC can amplify their impact in both Greece and Tunisia, promoting a more balanced and critical approach to media consumption, especially among women.
  3. **Fostering Inclusion**: By providing media literacy training, they can equip historically excluded groups, like women in both countries, with the skills to navigate the media landscape and have their voices heard. This fosters a more inclusive media environment and intercultural dialogue.
  4. **Cross-cultural Exchange**: The partnership allows for a valuable exchange of knowledge and experiences between Greece and Tunisia. Fotoessa can share its expertise in intercultural citizenship education program development, while ATAC can provide insights into the specific needs and challenges faced by women in Tunisia's media landscape. This cross-pollination of ideas strengthens their approaches in each country.
  5. **Empowering Women through Media**: By training women in media literacy and production skills, Fotoessa and ATAC can empower them to create their own media narratives that challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality within their respective cultures.

Overall, the Fotoessa-ATAC collaboration exemplifies the power of transnational partnerships in achieving shared goals. By working together, they can make significant strides in promoting media literacy, women's empowerment, inclusion, and gender equality on both sides of the Mediterranean.

* **Emphasizing the role of the weeklong meeting between experts in exchanging knowledge and knowhow.**

## **A Week of Powerful Exchange: Fotoessa - ATAC collaboration takes flight**

The recent weeklong meeting between Aspasia Protogerou from Fotoessa and Hadhami Henia from ATAC marked a significant milestone in our collaboration. This dedicated exchange focused on intercultural dialogue, women's empowerment, inclusion, gender equality, and media literacy, laying the groundwork for a powerful partnership in writing this paper.

Here's how this week of intensive exchange has strengthened our collaboration:

* **Shared Vision, Deeper Understanding:** We spent a productive week exchanging knowledge and experiences on the chosen themes. This fostered a deeper understanding of the shared challenges and opportunities faced by women in both Greece and Tunisia and a common vision.
* **Collaborative Action Plan:** Through focused discussions, we co-created a concrete content plan. This plan outlined all the necessary sources and angles of examination that should be examined in order to get a clear understanding of the situation in both countries of the issues of media literacy, women empowerment, intercultural dialogue and gender equality.
* **A Culture of Exchange Established:** The dedicated time spent learning from one another has fostered a lasting spirit of collaboration. This sets the stage for a long-term commitment to knowledge sharing and mutual support between Fotoessa and ATAC.
* **Shared Expertise, Stronger Voice**: By combining our knowledge and experience from Greece and Tunisia, we can craft a paper with a unique cross-cultural perspective. This enriched perspective is bringing greater depth and nuance to this paper's exploration of the chosen themes.
* **Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice**: Protogerou's experience with Fotoessa's intercultural citizenship education and gender equality media literacy programs and Henia's insights from ATAC's work on overcoming misunderstanding and stereotypes that leads to youth civic participation can bridge the gap between theory and practice. Our paper is grounded in real-world experience, offering practical recommendations for fostering intercultural dialogue.
* **A Platform for Advocacy**: The paper co-authored by Protogerou and Henia has the potential to become a powerful advocacy tool. By sharing our insights with policymakers, educators, and civil society organizations, we can raise awareness of the importance of media literacy, women's empowerment, inclusion, and gender equality through intercultural dialogue.
* **A Model for Future Collaboration**: This successful co-authoring effort paves the way for future collaboration between Fotoessa and ATAC. Our combined expertise makes us a powerful force for positive change in the Mediterranean region.

The synergy created by Protogerou and Henia's meeting holds immense promise. This collaborative paper has the potential to significantly impact our understanding of how to promote successful intercultural dialogue that is mindful of gender equality, inclusion, and media literacy. The Fotoessa-ATAC collaboration is now positioned to make significant strides thanks to this week of intensive exchange. With a shared vision we can make a real difference in promoting media literacy, women's empowerment, inclusion, and gender equality across the Mediterranean.

1. **Mapping Challenges and Solutions**

* **In-depth exploration of common challenges faced by girls and women regarding media representation, with a focus on social media.**

In Greek media, as in many other societies, girls and women face several challenges, especially in the realm of social media. Here are some common ones:

1. **Stereotyping and Objectification**: Women in Greek media are often portrayed according to traditional gender stereotypes, such as being submissive, nurturing, or solely focused on their appearance. Women are often portrayed based on beauty standards, emphasizing physical attractiveness over skills or achievements. This is particularly prevalent in advertising and social media influencers. Social media platforms can exacerbate this issue by promoting unrealistic beauty standards and objectifying women for likes and shares. This reinforces traditional gender norms and limits role models for girls.
2. **Cyberbullying and Online Harassment**: Social media platforms can become breeding grounds for cyberbullying and online harassment targeted at girls and women. Women and girls are more likely to be targeted with online harassment, body shaming, and hateful comments. This can include derogatory comments, threats, or the spreading of rumors and private information. This can have a significant impact on their mental health, physical health and self-esteem.
3. **Underrepresentation and Misrepresentation**: Women are often underrepresented in Greek media, especially in positions of power and authority. When they are represented, it may be in stereotypical or limited roles, failing to capture the diversity and complexity of women's experiences. Women are less visible in positions of power, such as CEOs, politicians, or experts. This creates a perception that these roles are primarily male-dominated.
4. **Curated Perfection:** Social media platforms often showcase unrealistic portrayals of “perfect” lives and bodies. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and social comparison for women and girls.
5. **Pressure to Conform**: Social media can amplify the pressure on girls and women to conform to societal expectations of beauty, behaviour, and lifestyle. They create pressure to conform to specific beauty standards and trends, promoting a narrow definition of femininity. This pressure can lead to issues such as low self-esteem, body image concerns, and even mental health problems.
6. **Lack of Female Voices and Perspectives**: Women's voices and perspectives are often marginalized or overlooked in Greek media, including on social media platforms. This lack of representation contributes to a narrower range of narratives and viewpoints being shared, which can perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce existing power dynamics.
7. **Disinformation and Misinformation**: Women may be particularly vulnerable to disinformation and misinformation spread through social media, especially on topics related to health, reproductive rights, and gender equality. This can have serious consequences for women's health, rights and prosperity.
8. **Inequality in Opportunities and Recognition**: Women in Greek media may face barriers to accessing the same opportunities and recognition as their male counterparts, including in terms of employment, pay, and professional advancement. Social media platforms may also reflect and perpetuate these inequalities.

Consequences of These Challenges:

* **Low Self-Esteem:** Negative portrayals can lead to body image issues, low self-confidence, and internalized sexism.
* **Limited Aspirations:** Girls may limit their career aspirations based on the lack of female role models in leadership positions.
* **Silencing of Women's Voices:** The underrepresentation and harassment can discourage women from expressing themselves online and in public spheres.

Positive Developments:

* **Growing Awareness:** There's a growing movement advocating for gender equality in media representation, with initiatives promoting strong female characters and diverse narratives.
* **Rise of Feminist Voices:** Social media platforms provide opportunities for female voices to be heard, challenging stereotypes and promoting body positivity.
* **Increased Scrutiny of Sexism:** There's a greater awareness of sexist portrayals, with online communities calling out and critiquing them.

Moving Forward

* **Support for Women in Media:** Encouraging women to pursue careers in media production, journalism, and content creation.
* **Media Literacy Education:** Teaching critical thinking skills to analyze media messages and recognize stereotypes.
* **Promoting Diverse Role Models:** Highlighting successful women in various fields across media platforms.
* **Holding Social Media Platforms Accountable:** Advocating for policies that create safer online environments for girls and women.

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from both media organizations and society as a whole to promote gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in all forms of media representation, including social media. This can involve implementing policies to combat online harassment, promoting diverse voices and perspectives, and fostering a culture of respect and equality online. By acknowledging these challenges and supporting positive developments, Greece can create a media landscape that empowers girls and women to thrive.

* **A comprehensive analysis of issues like discrimination, body and age shaming, sexist and abusive messages, domestic violence, opinion manipulation, and mental oppression.**

A deeper look into each of these issues within the context of Greek media, particularly focusing on social media platforms is quite revealing:

1. **Discrimination**: Discrimination against women in Greek media can manifest in various forms, including unequal opportunities for employment and representation, as well as biased portrayals that reinforce gender stereotypes. On social media, discriminatory practices include targeted harassment based on gender, exclusion from certain discussions or groups and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes through memes, jokes or comments.
2. **Body and Age Shaming**: Social media platforms are breeding grounds for body and age shaming, where individuals, particularly women, are criticized or ridiculed based on their physical appearance or age. This can lead to body image issues, low self-esteem, and even eating disorders. In Greek media, the pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards can exacerbate these issues, with images of digitally altered models further distorting perceptions of beauty and normalcy.
3. **Sexist and Abusive Messages**: Women on social media often face sexist and abusive messages, ranging from derogatory comments to explicit threats of violence. This can have a chilling effect on women's participation in online spaces, leading them to self-censor or disengage from discussions altogether. Greek media may also perpetuate sexism through the portrayal of women in subordinate or stereotypical roles, reinforcing the notion that women are less deserving of respect and dignity. Often Greek media gives voice to prominent journalists, politicians and other public figures that express sexist, racist and discriminative views.
4. **Domestic Violence**: While not always directly addressed in media, domestic violence is a prevalent issue affecting many women in Greece. The portrayal of domestic violence in Greek media can influence public perceptions and attitudes towards this issue, either by raising awareness and promoting support services or by perpetuating harmful myths and victim-blaming narratives. Social media can be a double-edged sword in this regard, providing a platform for survivors to share their stories and seek support, but also exposing them to further harassment and abuse.
5. **Opinion Manipulation**: Social media platforms have been increasingly implicated in the spread of disinformation and opinion manipulation, where false or misleading narratives are amplified to sway public opinion. Women may be targeted with manipulative content aimed at undermining their credibility or discrediting their achievements, particularly in male-dominated fields or positions of power. Greek media can also be complicit in opinion manipulation through biased reporting or the amplification of certain voices over others.
6. **Mental Oppression**: The cumulative effect of discrimination, harassment, and societal pressures can contribute to mental oppression among women in Greek media. This may manifest as anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues stemming from the constant scrutiny and judgment faced in both traditional and digital media spaces. Social media, in particular, can exacerbate these mental health challenges by fostering a culture of comparison, perfectionism, and validation-seeking behavior.

Addressing these multifaceted issues requires a holistic approach that tackles root causes such as gender inequality, social norms, and systemic biases. This includes implementing policies to combat online harassment, laws against cyber bullying, discrimination and harassment, promoting media literacy and critical thinking skills, both in formal and informal education, amplifying diverse voices and perspectives, and providing support services for those affected by discrimination, abuse, or mental health issues. Additionally, fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusivity both online and offline is crucial in creating safe and supportive environments for women working in or using Greek media.

## The Interconnected Web: Media, Discrimination, and Oppression in Greece

Building on the analysis of media representation, we can see how issues faced by girls and women on social media are part of a larger web of discrimination and oppression in Greece. Here's a deeper look at the interconnectedness:

Media as a Reinforcing Factor:

* **Beauty Standards and Body Shaming:** Media portrayal of unrealistic beauty standards fuels body shaming and low self-esteem not just for women, but also for men who may feel pressure to conform to idealized body types.
* **Sexist Messages and Domestic Violence:** Trivialization of violence against women in media normalizes it, making it harder for victims to speak up and seek help, and -even worse- not to blame themselves.
* **Traditional Gender Roles:** Media often reinforces stereotypical gender roles, limiting opportunities for both men and women to break free from societal expectations.

Social Media as a Double-Edged Sword:

* **Amplifying Discrimination:** Social media platforms can be breeding grounds for hate speech, sexist comments, and online harassment, further marginalizing vulnerable groups.
* **Spreading Awareness:** Social media can also be a tool for positive change, allowing marginalized voices to be heard, promoting body positivity campaigns, and raising awareness about discrimination.

Mental Oppression and the Cycle:

* **Media's Impact on Mental Health:** Constant exposure to unrealistic portrayals and negativity online can contribute to anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy.
* **Mental Health and Vulnerability:** Mental health struggles can make individuals more susceptible to manipulation by biased media narratives or online abuse.

Breaking the Cycle:

* **Media Literacy Education:** Teaching critical thinking skills to analyze media messages and recognize stereotypes can empower individuals to resist negative media influence.
* **Promoting Diverse Role Models:** Highlighting successful individuals from diverse backgrounds in all forms of media can challenge narrow definitions of beauty and success.
* **Supporting Mental Health:** Investing in accessible mental health services can help individuals cope with the pressures of media representation and online negativity.

Additional Considerations:

* **Socioeconomic Status:** Financial insecurity can exacerbate the impact of discrimination and limit access to resources to address mental health challenges.
* **The Role of Men:** Engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality and challenging traditional masculinity can help dismantle systems of oppression and dehumanization.

By recognizing the interconnectedness of media representation and broader societal issues, we can create more effective strategies to address discrimination, body shaming, and mental oppression in Greece.

1. **Best Practices and Strategies:**

* **Sharing successful approaches, case studies, and interventions that have positively impacted media representation and women's empowerment.**

1. **#MeToo Greece Movement (2019):** This social media movement inspired by the global #MeToo movement gave voice to women experiencing sexual harassment and assault, particularly in the sports, media and entertainment industry. It led to investigations, resignations of prominent figures, support for survivors, efforts to promote gender equality and prevent workplace harassment and a national conversation about consent and accountability.
2. **#EnaZeda,The Birth of a Movement Against Sexual Harassment in Tunisia:** The movement initially started in the social media sphere, in October 2019, as a local appropriation of the international #MeToo movement. It seeks to to support survivors of sexual assault and break the silence around sexual violence in Tunisian society by offering digital platforms where testimonies can be posted personally or anonymously, and debated.
3. **Women on Air Initiative (2020):** Launched by the Hellenic National Radio Television (ERT), this initiative aims for gender parity in news programs and documentaries. It provides training for female journalists and editors, promoting their voices and expertise on air.
4. **Women Deliver Greece Forum (2022):** This international forum brought together stakeholders to discuss gender equality issues, with a focus on women's leadership in media, business, and politics. It provided a platform for women's voices to be heard on a global stage and fostered collaboration for change.
5. **Women Business Forum 2023 in Tunis:** The forum provided a platform for the exchange of ideas, experiences, and insights on women’s economic inclusion within innovative fields such as AI, Energy, Circular Economy, ICT, and Digitalization. It brought together high-level participants from the Tunisian government, international donors, regional and national stakeholders, including private sector organizations and female entrepreneurs from across the MENA region.
6. **Feminist Film Festivals:** Festivals like the Olympia International Film Festival for Women in Directors' Roles (founded 2018) and the Thessaloniki International Film Festival's Agora Doc Market (established focus on female filmmakers in 2020) are showcasing films by women directors and promoting diversity in storytelling.
7. **Documentary Films:** Films like "My Stuffed Granny" (2020) exploring body image and "Stateless" (2021) highlighting the struggles of migrant women are sparking conversations about under-represented narratives and social issues.
8. **Feminist cinema in Tunisia:** Festival Regards de Femmes, Chouftouhonna, la manifestation cinématographique régionale, and many other feminist films festival initiatives take place on a yearly basis in Tunisia. A female film director called Kawther ben Henia was nominated for an Oscar for her work on women representation.
9. **Independent Media Platforms:** Online platforms like "Lifo" and "The Toc" in Greece and “inkyfada” and “nawaat” in Tunisia are creating a space for diverse voices, including female journalists and writers, to publish investigative stories and feminist perspectives.
10. **Social Media Campaigns:** Campaigns like [#SAFEable](https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/safeable) | Signs of gender violence (2023) and "Body without Shame" (2022) promoting body positivity have utilized social media to raise awareness and inspire change.
11. **Women in Tech Initiatives:** Programs like "She Leads Tech" by Google Greece (launched in 2020) offer training and mentorship for women in the tech industry, increasing female participation in this growing sector.
12. “I Am That Girl:” Women’s Empowerment Through Social Media: an initiative examining the role of social media and internet communication tools to advocate for women’s issues. Participants learned how these tools can help to raise awareness about women’s causes and promote positive change in the real world.
13. **Gender Equality Awards:** Organizations like the Greek National Commission for Women and Gender Equality recognize media outlets and individuals promoting gender equality through their work. This recognition provides positive reinforcement and encourages others to follow suit.
14. **University Programs:** Universities like Panteion University and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki are offering courses and seminars on gender studies, media literacy, and feminist filmmaking, equipping future generations with critical thinking skills and tools to advocate for change.
15. **Women in Advertising and Marketing (WIMA) Greece Chapter (2021)**: This international organization's Greek chapter promotes gender equality in the advertising and marketing industry. They advocate for fair representation of women in advertising campaigns and organize workshops and networking events to empower women in the field.
16. **#WeSeeYou Project (2022):** This social media campaign by the Greek Journalists' Union highlights the underrepresentation of women in news articles as sources and experts. It encourages journalists to actively seek out female voices for their stories.
17. **Mentorship Programs:** Organizations like Women Act (established 2018) offer mentorship programs connecting established female professionals with young women entering the workforce. This provides valuable guidance and support for women's career advancement.
18. **Theatre Productions:** Plays like "Antigone Now" (2016) reimagining classic stories with a feminist lens, and "To Cheri" (2024) exploring themes of domestic violence, are sparking conversations around gender roles and social issues through the power of theater.
19. **Women in Sports Media:** Initiatives like "She Talks Sports Greece" (founded 2020) and “I’m not a model” in Tunisia encourage female sports journalists and commentators, increasing women's voices in a traditionally male-dominated field.
20. **Educational Resources for Schools**: NGOs like the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS), create educational resources for schools that address gender stereotypes and promote media literacy. This helps equip younger generations with critical thinking skills.
21. **Representation in Children's Books**: Publishing houses like "Patakis” produce children's books featuring strong female characters and diverse narratives, challenging traditional gender roles from a young age, like the book “30 women who changed the world” (2020)
22. **100 Women: 'We can't teach girls of the future with books of the past':** Gender bias is rife in primary school learning books and can be found, in a strikingly similar form, on every continent. It is a problem "hidden in plain sight" but many civil society organizations in Tunisia are advocating for inclusive textbooks and children’s books.
23. **Women in Music Initiatives**: Platforms, by non-profit associations and female musicians and bands, promote diversity in the music scene.
24. **Networking Events for Women Entrepreneurs**: Organizations like Women on Top Greece (founded 2020) hold networking events and workshops for female entrepreneurs. This fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and empowers women to succeed in business.
25. **Local Initiatives**: Local women's shelters (like the “Katafygio Gynaikas” Woman’s Shelter) and organizations are using social media and community events to raise awareness about domestic violence and provide support services for victims. This empowers women to speak out and seek help.
26. **Investing in women-led startups in Tunisia:** the representation of women in leadership positions in venture or private equity funds is low, putting access to financing at risk for female entrepreneurs and many NGOs in Tunisia are creating more and more leadership programs for women entrepreneurs like “tech girls”, “SUSI” program, “We-Fi” etc,

* **Providing practical strategies for promoting inclusivity, countering biases, and empowering women through media.**

Content Creation and Production:

* **Diversity in Storytelling**: Empower women to share their own stories and experiences through various media platforms, including digital storytelling, documentaries, and personal essays. Promote narratives featuring women from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, socioeconomic classes, abilities, and sexual orientations. Ensure diverse representation of women in all forms of media, including different ages, backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.
* **Gender-Balanced Authorship**: Encourage and support female journalists, directors, writers, and content creators across all media platforms.
* **Conscious Language**: Utilize gender-neutral language or phrasing that emphasizes women's achievements and expertise.
* **Fact-Checking and Bias Awareness**: Implement fact-checking procedures and train media professionals to identify and avoid biases in their work.
* **Positive Portrayals**: Showcase women in leadership roles, non-stereotypical professions, and everyday life with strength, agency, and a variety of body types.
* **Promotion of Women Leaders**: Promote women leaders and experts in the media industry through interviews, profiles, and features, showcasing their achievements and contributions.
* **Addressing Gender Stereotypes**: Challenge gender stereotypes and biases in media content through conscious efforts to portray women in diverse and non-traditional roles.
* **Accessible Media Platforms**: Ensure that media platforms and content are accessible to women from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities, linguistic minorities, and rural communities.

Media Literacy Education:

* **Educational Programs**: Integrate media literacy education into school curriculums, teaching critical thinking skills to analyze media messages and advertising. Develop media literacy programs targeted at both women and men to promote ICD, critical thinking and awareness of gender issues in media representation.
* **Public Awareness Campaigns**: Launch public campaigns promoting media literacy and encouraging audiences to question media portrayals.
* **Workshops and Training Programs**: Provide training and education for media professionals on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, including workshops, seminars, and courses. Organize workshops and training programs for media consumers and professionals on identifying bias and stereotypes.
* **Partnerships with Educational Institutions**: Partner with educational institutions to integrate gender equality and media literacy into school curricula and extracurricular activities.

Policy and Industry Action:

* **Gender Parity Initiatives**: Support initiatives like "Women on Air" that promote gender balance in newsrooms and media production teams.
* **Funding and Grants**: Allocate funding and grants specifically for media projects led by women or featuring diverse narratives.
* **Transparency and Reporting**: Encourage media outlets to adopt and report on clear diversity and inclusion policies within their organizations. Foster transparency and accountability in media organizations regarding their commitment to gender equality and inclusivity through public reporting and disclosure.
* **Anti-Discrimination Policies**: Implement and enforce robust anti-discrimination policies within media companies to ensure fair hiring and representation. Implement gender-equal hiring practices in media organizations to ensure equitable representation and opportunities for women at all levels.
* **Guidelines and Standards**: Develop and implement guidelines and standards for gender-sensitive and inclusive media content production, including language use, imagery, and storytelling approaches.
* **Research and Data Collection**: Conduct research and data collection on gender representation and portrayal in media to inform evidence-based interventions and policy decisions.
* **Advocacy for Policy Change**: Advocate for policy change at the national and regional levels to promote gender equality and diversity in media ownership, content production, and representation.
* **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement**: Continuously evaluate and improve strategies for promoting inclusivity and empowering women through media, incorporating feedback and lessons learned.

Technological Advancements:

* **Inclusive Algorithms**: Advocate for social media platforms to develop and utilize algorithms that promote diverse content and prevent the spread of sexist or discriminatory content.
* **Support for Women in Tech**: Encourage women to pursue careers in technology and participate in shaping the future of media platforms.
* **Combating Online Harassment**: Develop and implement effective reporting and takedown mechanisms to address online harassment and abuse targeting women.

Community Building and Collaboration:

* **Mentorship Programs**: Establish mentorship programs connecting established female media professionals with aspiring women in the field. Enable them to provide guidance, support, and opportunities for career advancement.
* **Networking Events**: Organize networking events and conferences that bring together women working in media across different sectors.
* **Awards and Recognition**: Recognize and celebrate media projects and individuals who champion gender equality and positive representation.
* **Collaboration between NGOs and Media**: Foster collaboration between NGOs working on women's empowerment issues and media outlets to create informative and impactful content.
* **Collaboration with Women's Organizations**: Collaborate with women's organizations and advocacy groups to incorporate diverse perspectives and voices into media coverage and content.
* **Community Engagement**: Engage with communities and audiences to understand their needs and preferences, and involve them in shaping media content and programming.
* **Celebration of Women's Achievements**: Celebrate women's achievements and milestones in all sectors through media coverage and special features, highlighting their leadership and contributions.
* **Networking Opportunities**: Provide networking opportunities for women in the media industry to connect, collaborate, and support each other professionally.

1. **Toolkits and Resources:**

* **Curated collection of resources, tools, and materials for enhancing media literacy, fostering intercultural dialogue, and promoting gender equality.**

**Resources**

**Media Literacy (English, Greek and Arabic)**

* **Reports:**
  + UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Resources: <https://www.unesco.org/en/media-information-literacy>
  + EU Media Literacy Week Country Reports (explore reports from other European countries for insights): <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/report-2022-european-media-literacy-week>
  + https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353201876\_Tunisian\_High\_School\_Students\_and\_Digital\_Media\_Literacy\_A\_Quantitative\_Study
* **Organizations:**
  + Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (EKO) website (Greek): <https://gfc.gr/en/> (Explore news for their media literacy initiatives)
  + Psaroloco Media Literacy Project (Greek): <https://www.psarokokalo.org/sdgs-psarokokalo>
  + <https://www.facebook.com/femmesdemocrates/>
  + <https://tounissiet.tn/>
  + <https://www.aswatnissa.org/>
  + https://www.facebook.com/people/Femmes-Leadership/100064560287738/
* **Academic Sources:**
  + "Media Literacy In Greece" by Irene Andriopoulou: <https://www.unaoc.org/what-we-do/projects-and-initiatives/media-and-information-literacy/>
  + Search for academic journals using keywords like "media literacy," "Greece," and "education" in JSTOR (<https://www.jstor.org/>) and Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>)
  + <https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/38042/>
  + <https://content.iospress.com/articles/information-polity/ip210329>
  + https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/210109eng.pdf
* **News and Media:**
  + Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies: <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/cjsb20> (Publishes articles on social and political issues in Greece, including gender equality)
  + Search for English-language news articles on media literacy initiatives in Greece and Tunisia.
* **Webinars (check availability):**
  + Webinar on Media Literacy in Europe: Greece (<https://media-and-learning.eu/about/>)
  + <https://arabfcn.net/verify-en/news/n05.html>

**Intercultural Dialogue (English, Greek and Arabic)**

* **Organizations:**
  + Anna Lindh Foundation: <https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/> (Promotes intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean)
  + BA (British Council) Arts: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts> (Supports cultural exchange programs)
  + Mediterranean Institute for Dialogue and Cooperation (MED): <https://mediterraneandialogue.org/> (Greek, English available)
  + Tunisian International Model United Nations (TIMUN)
* **Websites:**
  + Europeana: <https://www.europeana.eu/en> (Digitized cultural collections from across Europe)
  + Tria Lumina: <https://ascopubs.org/doi/10.1200/JCO.2022.40.17_suppl.LBA501> (Greek website promoting intercultural dialogue)
* **Initiatives:**
  + European Year of Youth 2023: <https://youth.europa.eu/year-of-youth_en> (Look for Greek-specific events)
  + Model United Nations (MUN) Greece: <https://imuna.org/resources/country-profiles/greece/> (English, Greek)
  + Model United Nations Tunisia: <https://timun.tn/#:~:text=Tunisian%20International%20Model%20United%20Nations%20(TIMUN)%20is%20a%20non%2D,among%20young%20people%20in%20Tunisia>.

**Gender Equality in Greece and Tunisia (English, Greek and Arabic)**

* **Government Initiatives and Reports:**
  + General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) website (Greek): <https://isotita.gr/>
  + National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025 (GSGE) (Search for this report on the GSGE website)
  + A national program for female entrepreneurship and gender-based investment entitled in Tunisia: “RAIDET”
  + The national plan for strengthening the private women’s initiative “RAIDA”
  + The observatory for the fight against violence against women
  + 24 units to listen to women who are victims of violence
  + 130 units to combat violence against women and children
  + care centers for women victims of violence.
* **International Organizations and Reports:**
  + UN Women Greece website: <https://data.unwomen.org/country/greece>
  + European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) Greece website: <https://eige.europa.eu/countries/greece>
  + <https://www.social.gov.tn/sites/default/files/2023-01/RAPPORT%20APG%20MAS%20TUNISIE%20MAS_19%20Juin%202021_compressed.pdf>
* **Academic Resources:**
  + "Women and Social Movements in Greece" by Alexandra Kokali: <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i158/articles/eleni-stamiris-the-women-s-movement-in-greece.pdf>
  + Search for academic journals using keywords like "women's empowerment," "Greece," "gender equality," and "feminism" in JSTOR and Google Scholar
* **News and Media:**
  + Lifo (Λίφο): <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/lifo.asp> (Greek, independent online news with feminist perspectives)
  + The Toc: <https://www.thetoc.gr/> (Greek, independent online news platform with social justice focus)
  + Search for English-language news articles on women's rights issues in Greece.
* **Documentaries and Films:**
  + Explore documentaries that highlight the experiences of women in Greece.
* **Social Media:**
  + Follow social media accounts of the organizations mentioned above.
  + Use relevant hashtags like #womeningreece, #

**Tools**

* Fact-Checking Websites:
  + Snopes (English): <https://www.snopes.com/>
* Digital Verification Tools:
  + TinEye (reverse image search): <https://tineye.com/>
  + InVid WeVerify (video verification tool): [invalid URL removed]
* Social Listening Tools (Free/Trial Versions):
  + Hootsuite (monitor social media conversations): <https://hootsuite.com/>
  + TweetDeck (manage Twitter accounts): <https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/>
* Language Translation Tools:
  + Google Translate: <https://translate.google.com/>
  + DeepL Translate: <https://www.deepl.com/translator>

**Materials**

* Media Literacy Lesson Plans (Adaptable):
  + UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers: [invalid URL removed]
  + American Library Association Media Literacy Toolkit: [invalid URL removed]
* Intercultural Activities:
  + Online cultural exchange platforms (e.g., eTwinning for schools): [invalid URL removed]
  + Cultural heritage websites and online museums (e.g., Acropolis Museum): <https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en>
* Gender Equality Advocacy Materials:
  + UN Women Greece: HeForShe Campaign Resources: <https://www.heforshe.org/en>
  + European Women's Lobby Policy Papers on Gender Equality: <https://www.womenlobby.org/publications/>
* Educational Documentaries and Films:
  + "Miss Representation" (documentary on media portrayal of women): [invalid URL removed]
  + "My Name is Mahtob" (documentary on women's rights in Iran): [invalid URL removed] (Consider maturity rating)
* Creative Advocacy Tools:
  + Canva (create social media graphics and presentations): <https://www.canva.com/>
  + Spark Video (create short explainer videos): [invalid URL removed]
* **Sample lesson plans, workshop outlines, and activities for educators, activists, and organizations to implement.**
* <https://newseumed.org/medialiteracy>
* <https://www.readwritethink.org/>
* <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/subjects/media-literacy>
* <https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/collection/media-literacy/>
* <https://www.commonsense.org/education/news-media-literacy-resource-center>
* <https://guides.library.queensu.ca/is-media-literacy/lesson-plans>
* <https://klru.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/be-mediawise-news-literacy-lesson-plans/>
* <https://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/Seven-Media-Literacy-Lessons.shtml>

1. **Call to Action:**

* **Encouraging you, our readers, to take concrete steps towards fostering positive change in media representation and women's empowerment.**

From the sun-drenched shores of Greece to the bustling streets of Tunis, an urgent need exists to harness the power of media to drive positive change towards a more equitable future. While initiatives, like Greece's #WeSeeYou campaign and Tunisia's thriving community of women filmmakers, celebrate the strides already taken in breaking down stereotypes and showcasing diverse narratives, the journey for supporting women’s empowerment through media and media literacy is far from over. Together, let us take concrete steps towards building a world where all women in Greece, Tunisia, and the Mediterranean region are seen, heard, and valued in the media.

Primarily, we need to raise our self-awareness since we all, as audience, have a great transformative power. Equipping ourselves and future generations with media literacy skills empowers us not just to critically analyze media messages, recognize and resist bias, demand fair and balanced representation, but also to work on our responsible “citizen muscle”. Empowerment goes beyond passive consumption. Holding media accountable is equally important. When we see biased or stereotypical portrayals, silence is not an option. Expressing our concerns and demanding better representation through social media campaigns and public pressure can be powerful tools.

Supporting women to share their own experiences and perspectives through various media platforms is vital across Greece, Tunisia, and the Mediterranean region, in order to dismantle the invisibility that often plagues them in media portrayals. Digital storytelling, personal essays, and community-based media initiatives along with artistic and cultural civic society activities provide opportunities for women to reclaim their narratives and challenge dominant narratives.

The stories of women across the Mediterranean are as rich and diverse as the region itself. From female refugees making a fresh start from survival to growth, to scientists making groundbreaking discoveries in research labs, the region is brimming with role models waiting to be showcased. Promoting women's achievements and contributions in all spheres, through joined artists’ initiatives, documentaries, films, and online content can inspire future generations of women to pursue their dreams and challenge the status quo.

Online platforms can be leveraged for knowledge sharing and networking. Webinars, online courses, and virtual conferences can connect women across the vast expanse of the Mediterranean, fostering a sense of community and a united front for change. These virtual spaces can transcend language barriers and create a platform for sharing experiences, best practices, and strategies for promoting gender equality in media.

The fight for gender equality requires allies from all genders. Engaging men and boys in this conversation is crucial. Educational programs and social media campaigns that challenge toxic masculinity stereotypes and promote gender equality contribute to a more inclusive environment. By encouraging men and boys to become advocates for a balanced media representation, we can create a ripple effect that transforms media portrayals and societal attitudes, not only empowering individual women, but also promoting a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of gender issues.

Empowering women across the Mediterranean necessitates international collaborations and partnerships essential for fostering cross-cultural exchange, learning, and solidarity. Initiatives such as regional media forums, exchange programs, and collaborative storytelling projects bring together media professionals, activists, and policymakers from Greece, Tunisia, and other Mediterranean countries to share best practices, build networks, and develop joint advocacy strategies. Workshops, mentorship programs, and co-productions can spark creative synergies which not only amplify the voices of women but also create spaces for meaningful dialogue and action. Imagine a network of women filmmakers in Tunis mentoring their counterparts in Greece, or journalists across the region sharing best practices for countering online harassment. By working together across sectors and borders, we can harness the collective power of our communities to create a more inclusive and equitable media landscape for women on a global scale.

One of the most impactful collaborations within our communities is the partnership between media organizations and women's advocacy groups. By joining forces, these stakeholders can leverage their respective expertise and resources to promote gender equality and amplify women's voices in the media. This means moving beyond narrow stereotypes and showcasing the full spectrum of women's experiences, including different ages, backgrounds, abilities, and identities and portraying women as multifaceted individuals with agency, aspirations, and achievements. In Greece, for example, collaborations between feminist media outlets and women's organizations have resulted in powerful storytelling initiatives that challenge stereotypes and highlight the diverse experiences of women.

Prioritizing training media literacy and human rights education across Greece, Tunisia, and the Mediterranean on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion is essential. By equipping youth, students, journalists, content creators, and decision-makers with the knowledge and skills to recognize and address biases, media content can be produced in a responsible, safe and inclusive manner. Non-formal education workshops, seminars, and courses focused on gender-sensitive reporting and storytelling can help foster a culture of awareness and accountability within the media industry.

Moreover, collaborations between media professionals and educational institutions are essential for nurturing the next generation of storytellers and change makers. Workshops, internships, and mentorship programs provide aspiring journalists and content creators with the skills, knowledge, and support they need to produce gender-sensitive and inclusive media content. In Tunisia, partnerships between universities and media organizations have led to the development of curriculum modules on gender and media, ensuring that future media professionals are equipped to address gender biases in their work.

Partnerships with NGOs and advocacy groups working towards gender equality and diversity in media representation can be instrumental. These organizations possess valuable resources, training opportunities, and support systems that can be immensely beneficial for media professionals, female storytellers and content creators. By combining their expertise with the creative energy of these women, we can advocate for gender-sensitive policies, promote women's leadership and addressing systemic barriers to women's participation and create a powerful force for change within the media landscape.

The journey towards a more equitable media landscape which empowers women in the Mediterranean is ongoing. By fostering collaboration across borders, strengthening human rights, amplifying women's voices, and harnessing the power of technology and education, we can create a media ecosystem that celebrates diversity and inclusion, empowers women, and reflects the true essence of the region. This collaborative effort paves the way for a future where all women can be, not just seen but heard, not just passive consumers but active citizens and, also, dynamic agents of change, shaping the narratives that define their communities and the wider Mediterranean world. Our common efforts in this direction, contribute to a more inclusive, vibrant and resilient society for the whole human family.

1. **Contacts:**

* **Contact information for further engagement and inquiries.**

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