



WOMEN : OCCUPY THE MEDIA

Empowering the women to increase their political representation
and to combat gender-based violence
in Niger, Mali, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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Presentation and main results of the project

PANOS-Institute in West Africa (PIWA for its English acronyms) is an African non-governmental organization established to support the development of media. It was created in 2000, and works towards the democratization of communications, and the consolidation of open African societies in which citizens' opinion is informed, and their voices amplified and heard. Based in Dakar (Senegal), PIWA operates regionally, and has implemented projects in 14 countries of West Africa. It is member of the PANOS network, which gathers eight regional institutes around the world.¹

Since 2016, PIWA implements the project "Women: Occupy the Media!" (WOM), funded by Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. WOM's aims at contributing to the promotion of gender equality through collaborative actions between (professional and citizen) media and women civil society organizations (WCOSs), with a special emphasis on political participation of women and violence against women. WOM's strategy seeks impulse changes in three interrelated and interacting areas:

- (1) In Senegal, Mali, Niger and Côte d'Ivoire, the inclusion of gender and women's rights perspectives in media contents and institutional policies and practices has improved, through an increased capacity and awareness of journalists and key media practitioners, and the review of media legal regulations and policies;
- (2) In Senegal, Niger and Côte d'Ivoire, WCOSs and teenage women effectively use citizen medias and interact with professional media to promote and defend women's rights, in particular with regards to women's political participation, and violence against women;
- (3) In Senegal, Mali, Niger and Côte d'Ivoire, WCOSs and media are jointly engaged with decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders (religious and community opinion leaders) in open, tolerant and informed dialogue about women's rights, with a particular emphasis on women's political participation and gender-based violence.

The project is implemented in four West African countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Senegal), each of which presenting very dissimilar political, legal and mediatic contexts, as well as civil society dynamic.

WOM officially initiated its activities in August 2016. Therefore, 2017 represents its first full year of execution. Based on the conclusions of the innovative studies it conducted in the four countries in 2017, PIWA further tailored its strategy to the specificities of the countries, identifying thematic priorities, and taking advantage of contextual opportunities (such as elections and political processes, or the intervention of international human rights protection mechanisms). PIWA also fostered its partnership relationships (with media, journalists and media professionals, and WCOSs), and identified key stakeholders (among public institutions, and opinion leaders).

Promising results in terms of knowledge, capacity and even behavior were already observed under each outcome.

- Under outcome 1: (i) in each country, mainstream media increased their awareness on women's rights and gender perspective; (ii) trained journalists and media practitioners published a series of articles on gender and women's rights in mainstream and on-line newspapers, showing an improved awareness towards women's rights, and a better capacity to tackle women's issues from a gender perspective.
- Under outcome 2: (i) trained WCOSs gained a better understanding of how to work with the media, and applied their newly-acquired knowledge to advocacy work on women's rights; (ii) bridges were also built between WCOSs and the media, allowing for some productive interactions and collaborations.
- Under outcome 3, WOM provided the opportunities to stimulate informed interactions and dialogue between WCOSs, the media, state institutions and opinion leaders. These events revealed the eagerness of some opinion leaders, including religious representatives, to participate in debates and communicate on women's rights.

Additionally, the creation of the four national media observatories (one in each country) proved to be an essential part of the project, and of its sustainability. The role as media watch on women issues of these multi-stakeholder independent

¹ PANOS network mission is "to ensure that information is effectively used to foster public debate, pluralism and democracy." For further information, please refer to <http://panosnetwork.org/about>

organisms was recognized as necessary to advance media awareness on women's rights, and thus social responsiveness on these topics.

PIWA encountered some external and internal challenges. In some countries (especially Mali and Niger), conservative and radicalism views are hindering the development of women's rights. In times of legitimizing the validity and urgency of WOM's objectives, their increase influence pauses real challenges for freedom of expression and liberty of the media. In terms of partnership, PIWA is working with its partners to modify the service-provider paradigm that characterizes traditional collaboration between CSOs, and to establish a genuine partnership aimed at achieving common results. Finally, PIWA was able to consolidate its project team at central and country levels, after facing some difficulties to find appropriate candidates to fill the required positions.

This report presents the results obtained through the execution of WOM during 2017. It is divided in three parts. After summarizing the main contextual factors that impacted the project's implementation in 2017, the text examines the progresses achieved as well as the main challenges met. The analysis will be separated by outcomes' results. Noteworthy stories illustrate the results obtained. The last segment focuses on the lessons learned and the objectives for 2018.

Context of the project implementation

The four States where the project is implemented have ratified the main international and regional conventions on women's rights. However, international obligations are still partially and timidly reflected in national legislations and policies, and insufficiently implemented and enforced.

The persistence of adverse cultural practices and traditions, patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society and in the family continues to affect the enjoyment of women's rights in the four countries. Additionally, the increased influence and pressure of religious and conservative groups on national life have had adverse consequences for the rights of women. Particularly impacted were reforms or attempts of reform to family laws: for example, in Mali, many discriminatory provisions were maintained in the revised version of the Personal and Family Code; in Niger, fundamentalists religious leaders were successful in impeding the adoption of a law forbidding marriage before 18; in Senegal, the Family Code is one of the main source of discrimination against women.

Moreover, expressions of violent extremism (in Niger, Mali and Senegal), terrorist attacks and challenges to the peace agreements (in Mali), precarious security situations (in the Lake Chad region in Niger, which has provoked the displacement of populations; in northern and central Mali; in some parts of Côte d'Ivoire; and in the Casamance region of Senegal), and the presence of armed groups (in Mali and Côte d'Ivoire) worsen the situation of women. For example, in some parts of northern Mali, the sharia law continues to be applied, and women are being used as kamikaze in terrorist attacks; poverty associated to population displacement in northern Niger has led families to marry their daughter in very young age. Finally, transitional justice mechanisms in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali have shown their limits in terms of gender. The procedure established to repair victims of the 2011 post-electoral crisis, which finalized in July 2017, did not have a gender perspective. The lack of transparency of the Mali Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, whose mandate ends in 2018, is deplored by victims associations (most of them composed of women and girls).

Participation of women in public and political life varies from one country to the other. However, the legislative elections in Senegal (in July 2017), as well as the local and communal elections in Mali have led to the active participation of women. In terms of representation, the status quo persists. The effective participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels remains one of the main challenges paired with the lack of involvement of rural and young women.

Regarding the media, recent tendencies remain unchanged: audience drop of the newspapers; decline of community radios; lack of independence of some professional media organizations; emergence of on-line media, and increased influence of cell phones and social media in the dissemination of information. The pressure of religious radicalism has also led the media to exercise self-censorship, especially at local levels and on women's rights.

The organizational capacity of WCSOs is variable according to the country, and their urban or rural nature. Generally, rural or local organizations remain poorly associated or affiliated to the main and influential WCSOs. In some countries, such as Niger, CSOs are still linked to state institutions. Effective collaborative work between WCSOs continues to be a challenge.

Analysis of progress and challenges

Outcome 1: Inclusion of gender and women's rights perspective in media contents and institutional policies

Outcome	Indicators	2017 results
Outcome 1. In Senegal, Mali, Niger and Côte d'Ivoire, the inclusion of gender and women's rights perspectives in media contents and institutional policies and practices has improved, through an increased capacity and awareness of journalists and key media practitioners, and the review of media legal regulations and policies	1.1. Number of media contents (newspaper articles, radio reports, debates and shows, television news content and programmes) produced by the (rural and local) trained journalists or by representative and influential medias that tackle centrally/specifically women's rights issues or women's special concerns using adequate information (not based on gender stereotypes, informed by international norms on women's rights, etc.) in each country of the intervention	32 articles published by the trained journalists : 21 on political participation (16 in Senegal and 5 in Côte d'Ivoire); and 11 on violence against women (7 in Mali and 4 in Niger)
	1.2. By 2020, in the four countries of the intervention, number of media organizations or entities that have adopted and/or put into place at least one substantive gender modifications to media regulations, practice and policies able to favor women's participation in media and/or media coverage of women's rights (for example, the ones contained in the "Charte des médias")	The work with media institutions will be initiated in 2018.

To impulse a sustainable change in the way (rural and urban) media cover women's rights, PIWA decided to adopt a threefold strategy and to impact (1) the capacity of journalists and media practitioners; (2) the available resources; and (3) the policies and practices of media institutions. For its first year of implementation, WOM focused on (1) establishing sustainable training methods and partnerships with mainstream media; and (2) developing a resource platform for journalists. The work on and with media institutions will begin in 2018.

During 2017, WOM awareness-raising and training activities focused on mainstream media. As a global result, they led to the production and publication of 32 articles by the trained journalists : 21 on political participation (16 in Senegal and 5 in Côte d'Ivoire); and 11 on violence against women (7 in Mali and 4 in Niger). In Côte d'Ivoire, the articles tackled the participation of women in rural areas, the participation of young women in political parties, the debate on parity law. In Senegal, the articles covered political participation of women in local development and the role of women in political parties. In Niger, they covered violence against women associated to polygamy, early marriage or domestic violence. In Mali, two articles offered the perspective of religious leaders (one imam and one priest) on women's rights; other talked about the law on gender-based violence, violence in marriage, sexual harassment and early marriage.

Some of the articles reached a large audience through the main daily (private and public) newspapers of the countries (such as in Les Echos ou l'Indépendant in Mali, Fraternité Matin and La Nouvelle Expression in Côte d'Ivoire, Le Sahel, La Nation and La Griffé in Niger, L'Observateur, L'As, Sud Quotidien, Le Soleil, L'Enquête, or Le Quotidien in Senegal), web newspapers (such as Maliweb in Mali, PoleAfrique.info, Fratmat.info in Côte d'Ivoire, Actusniger.com in Niger, or PressAfrik et Leral.net in Senegal) or radio broadcasts. Articles published by newspapers have benefited from an audience that exceeds their readership. They were republished by different other local sites, and by international sites (anotao.com, african.info, news.imperial.plus, alvinet.com, afropages.fr, africanewshub.com, niooz .com).

A Senegalese Government official praised a journalist production and its contribution to fighting violence against women

"Sud Quotidien"'s article written by one of the trained journalists was praised by Zahra Iyane Thiam, Special Adviser to the Senegalese President. Regarding the article, entitled "*Promoting Women's Leadership in Local Governance: Saint-Louis Has Not Made It Happen*", she said: "This is a good record.... Personally, I encourage this kind of work to raise public awareness on the discrimination against women, especially those who are militant in political parties".

In Senegal, the mentoring mechanism resulted in the increase of media contents on women's political participation during a key period: the legislative elections campaign (July-August 2017). The journalists committed themselves beyond the expectations: they produced much longer articles than planned, which the editors accepted to publish. The training also allowed to produce more and more relevant articles (8 in-depth reports), which portrayed women political leaders, or described the constraints women face to actively participate in political life.

The quality and quantity of the media contents vary from one country to the other. However, through the training, the journalists showed that they were able to change their perspective on women issues, use women as direct source of information for their reports, and include a gender perspective in their production (for example, on the conflict in the region of Casamance², or the impact of the installation of charcoal plant in Senegal³).

These media contents constitute the first step to modify the way media currently approach violence against women (as a trivial event) or women (lack of maturity, inferiority of the woman compared to the man, weakness, submission, unintelligence, etc.).

Outcome 1.1. The capacities and awareness of journalists and key media practitioners on gender-sensitive journalism have improved

Outcome	Indicators	2017 results
Outcome 1.1.	1.1.1. By 2020, number of (urban and local) journalists and other media professionals successfully trained on gender-sensitive journalism (knowledgeable of international and national norms on women's rights, able to identify bias and stereotypes in the media, aware of their own prejudice and bias) by PANOS and its partners in each country of the intervention	32 journalists (8 in each country), 4 mentors and 17 editors in chiefs successfully trained from newspaper, radio station and media web-sites
	1.1.2. By 2020, number of journalists and other media practitioners active members of a regional network of gender-sensitive journalism	The regional network will begin to operate in 2018 with journalists and media professionals trained in 2017

PIWA organized the training of journalists using a two-step method: in each country, one mentor trained and accompanied eight selected journalists, personally meeting them every 2 weeks; additionally, one three-day workshop was organized in each country to deepen the training on gender sensitive journalism techniques.

WCOSOs actively participated in the training sessions presenting expert perspective on women's rights. They were also used as sources in articles. Their participation gave rise to their increased interest and demand for active involvement in the training.

A total of 53 media professionals were successfully trained (4 mentors, 32 journalists, 17 editors in chief) among journalists of radio, press, online press, and WebTV. The 4 mentors themselves received a specialized. It is noteworthy that, in each country, several editors from significant mainstream media participated in the workshop organized (5 in Mali, 1 in Côte d'Ivoire, 7 in Niger, and 4 in Senegal). It allowed them to measure the extent to which women are under and misrepresented in the media. Their participation also provided an essential institutional support for the project and the participating journalists.

As the result of the workshops and the mentorship training, the trainees got a wider understanding of the women's rights, and were able to publish meaningful media content on the different issues affected women's rights. Indeed, the pre-training evaluations clearly revealed that their perception of violence against women was mainly limited to domestic violence. The process also showed that gender stereotypes are as deep and unconscious among the journalists (including the female journalists). The workshops helped them understand the different forms of violence, and the necessity to widen the scope of their coverage. Their understanding of political participation was also mainly limited to women representation in institutions. The workshop allowed them to better comprehend that women's political participation had to be monitored not only during the elections, but on a day-to-day basis. For most of the journalists it was the first time they approached gender sensitive journalism.

² RÉSOLUTION DU CONFLIT CASAMANÇAIS : Quand les femmes entrent dans la danse by Nando Cabral Gomis.

³ BARGNY - COLLECTIF CONTRE L'INSTALLATION DE LA CENTRALE A CHARBON : Des femmes de « mer » au cœur de la lutte, by Seydina Bilal Diallo.

Although some concrete results were obtained, the way the mentorship method was carried out proved to be burdensome, since it required too much assistance from the mentors. The program also faced some challenges in terms of human resources (two of the mentors had to be replaced), due to the lack of local capacity on gender sensitive journalism. In order to sustain and improve the volume and quality of the media contents produced in 2018, it is therefore necessary to review the mentorship method, as well as the selection of mentors and journalists. In addition, proper “investigative journalism” is still an ambitious goal, given the low level of experience of the journalists in Francophone West Africa in general. Building capacities on “investigative journalism” will be a process.

Outcome 1.2. Thematic and technical resources and tools about women’s rights and gender journalism are available on line, broadly accessible, and used by journalists

Outcome	Indicators	2017 results
Outcome 1.2.	1.2.1. By 2020, an operational platform on resources regarding gender-sensitive journalism is available to and used by media practitioners in the four countries of the intervention	The platform http://panosmedia.org/en/program/women was created.
	1.2.2. Manuals on gender-sensitive journalism produced	Manuals have not yet been produced

To reduce unnecessary costs, PIWA decided to renew and update its current resource platform, and dedicated a whole section to WOM.⁴ This platform hosts various media contents, in a classified way: by development themes (Governance, Diversity, Migrations, Women), and by category of products (Radio, Press and Video). All the media content produced by the trained journalists is posted in the platform, and could be used as a reference by other journalists. In addition, it also provides useful resources on gender sensitive journalism and women’s rights intended to media practitioners and CSOs.

The content of the platform still needs to be completed and strengthened, and its use to be promoted among journalists so that it could serve as an exchange platform to network between them (for outcome 1.1.2).

Outcome 2: Effective use of the media by WCSOs and teenage women

It is necessary to stress two issues related to OC2:

- Although Mali was not initially foreseen for OC2, Malian WCSOs strongly insisted to be included and trained. PIWA decided to involve them in the training, as a strategical choice. OC2 constitutes a logical prerequisite to the development of OC3: without a proper training on the use of media, it might be more challenging to associate WCSOs to dialogues with the media.
- The activities related to school-aged girls (OC. 2.2.) will be initiated in 2018, reason why no results are reported here.

Outcome	Indicators	2017 results
Outcome 2. In Senegal, Niger and Côte d’Ivoire, women civil society organizations and teenage women effectively use citizen medias and interact with professional media to promote and defend women’s rights, in particular with regards to women’s political participation, and violence against women	2.1. Between 2017 and 2020, increased number of initiatives (press releases, Facebook pages, press conference, op-ed, participation in radio and TV programmes, interviews given, tweeter accounts, etc.) undertaken by trained women’s rights organizations using traditional and citizen media (social and community media) to voice their concerns, opinions and recommendations	3 blogs (in Mali, Niger and Côte d’Ivoire) created 18 radio debates and debates organized by WCSOs in Senegal 14 tweeter accounts opened by Senegalese WCSOs
	2.4. Between 2017 and 2020, increased number of media contents (newspaper articles, radio reports, debates and shows, television news content and programmes) that take into account women civil society organizations’ initiatives, concerns, views or opinions or use them as sources for their reports.	Capacity will be installed in 2018 to report on this matter

⁴ <http://panosmedia.org/fr/programme/femmes-occupez-les-medias> (in English: <http://panosmedia.org/en/program/women>)

During 2017, a four-country assessment of WCSOs' use of traditional and social/new media allowed PIWA to better tailor its training and assistance strategy according to WCSOs practices. The study observed that most of the WCSOs in the four countries do not have a communication strategy towards traditional media nor have recently produced any written documents; some generate videos or radio products (especially in Senegal). Although most of them hold various social media applications (Facebook, Tweeter or WhatsApp), they occasionally use them, not necessarily as communication tools.

femomedia

Following the training session provided to the 15 CSOs in Senegal, their representatives ensured social media coverage of the elections by tweeting from the voting bureaus; they also mobilised their networks and other women's right organisations, such as UNWOMEN.

The activities carried out under outcome 2 have achieved tangible results in accordance to the project's indicators regarding the use by WCSOs of professional and citizen media. Beyond these results, the training sessions created a dynamic of collaboration between WCSOs (especially in Niger). Furthermore, the installation of the media observatories in each of the country has allowed to increase the awareness raising on the relevance of media coverage of women's rights, and develop a new or renewed relationship between WCSOs and media practitioners. However, the sustainability of these results requires much more efforts to assist the organizations develop useful communication and media strategies.

Outcome 2.1. Women civil society's capacities to effectively use traditional and/or new media to voice their concerns, monitor violence, and potentiate their advocacy work regarding women's rights, in particular women's political participation and gender-based violence, is strengthened

Outcome	Indicators	2017 results
Outcome 2.1	2.1.1. By 2020, in each country, number of women's rights organizations that had one or several of their staff successfully trained to use traditional and/or new media to voice their recommendations, concerns, and opinions regarding women's rights	58 (14 in Senegal, 15 in Mali, 15 in Côte d'Ivoire, and 14 in Niger) – represented by one member each
	2.1.2. By 2020, number women's rights organizations in each country that have established and implemented an effective communication strategy	To be worked with the trained WCSOs in 2018

In each country, one training session was organized for WCSOs on the use of traditional and social media, except in Senegal where 2 sessions were held. An average of 15 CSOs per country participated for a total of 58. After the training workshop, a technical assistance and some community management were provided to allow WCSOs to organize radio debates, live tweets and participatory blogs. The workshop showed immediate results in terms of WCSOs radio productions and debates, tweeter activities (particularly in Senegal), blog activities (especially in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger).⁵ In Senegal, the Hashtag “#femomedia” is a noteworthy example of the changes of capacity the workshops triggered. It was used to monitor the legislative elections. Through more than 500 tweets, WCSOs reached 489,474 persons.

Social Media: the Youth at the school of the elders!

Who could ever think that the elders could teach social media to the youngest, given the general fact in West Africa that the elders usually are conservative and resist to using social media? But it did happen! In Senegal, during the training session, one of the 2 elder women was so convinced about the use and relevance of social media that she started using it, and teaching the other participants how to tweet.

The training revealed that most of WCSOs don't have any communication strategy, nor permanent staff dedicated to communication. As a consequence, some of the persons assisting to the training (older staff) did not necessarily have the appropriate profile, and had a limited knowledge and interest for social media. The absence of communication strategy is also linked to their lack of coherent advocacy strategies: WCSOs might develop punctual advocacy activities according to projects' objectives but not based on a programmatic planning. This situation is to be taken into account for OC3.

⁵ In Senegal, the 13 trainees organized 18 radio debates and round-tables, in partnership with 9 local radio stations spread out in various regions of the country, around issues such as “The vote of the young women”; “The women issues in the candidates programs”; “The parity in the newly elected parliament”, etc. The potential audience of these radio programs is estimated at 6 million listeners (67% outside Dakar). After the workshop, all the 15 participants had opened their Tweeter account (1 only before the workshop). The elections day (July 30, 2017), they monitored the elections through 500 tweets they sent (Hashtag #femomedia). In October, 7 articles (2,500 words) were produced by the trainees on the political participation of women. In Côte d'Ivoire, a participatory blog (<http://femmesetmediaci.over-blog.com/>) was created by the participants. They succeeded to produce 21 articles (2,500 words) both about VAW and political participation on their blog, with 365 visitors. In Niger and Mali, a participatory blog was also set up (<http://femmemedianiger.over-blog.com/>) and (<http://femmemediamali.unblog.fr/>). In Mali, 7 articles were produced (with 74 unique visitors) and, in Niger, 8 articles were produced (with 75 unique visitors).

Ensuring a more intense and regular activity of WCSO on social media remains a challenge, and will require of a closer and stronger support, via a more systematic community management. On the other hand, developing the use of traditional media, especially the radio, involve to build a better link between WCSOs and radio communities. This opportunity will be provided in the 2018 Work Plan, where the work community radios will become a central goal.

Outcome. 2.3. Women civil society organizations interact with professional media to promote a better coverage of issues related to women's rights, especially to women's political participation and violence against women

Outcome	Indicators	2017 results
Outcome 2.3.	2.3.1. Regular reports produced by operational national media observatories in each country of the intervention on women's rights, in particular political participation of women and gender-based violence	4 reports (one in each country) 3 public conferences
	2.3.2. Number of and participation to the "Club Radio Citoyens" debates organized on women's rights issues	This will be initiated in 2018 with the community radios

The four Media Observatories on women's issues were successfully launched, and triggered a strong interest among various stakeholders (state institutions, media actors and WCSOs). The first meetings allowed to (i) share and amend the observatory missions, tasks, and the operating modalities; (ii) validate the tool to analyse the production; and (iii) to identify the next steps of the Observatories.

In Senegal, Niger and Mali,⁶ the Observatory's members were carefully selected among WOM's main stakeholders.⁷ They proved to be extremely involved and committed to their duties, scrutinizing the media contents produced, criticizing and advising journalists on how to improve their contents. They also made recommendations to increase the scope and the influence of the Observatories in the future.⁸

Following the Observatory meetings, public conferences were held in Niger, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire (one in each country). These events congregated a diversified public (media practitioners, CSOs, state civil servants, opinion leaders, etc.) to discuss the coverage by the media of specific topics regarding women's rights. Prominent women's rights activists and researchers and/or key media practitioners introduced the conference. The conferences benefitted from good media coverage. They strengthened the cooperation between the media and the WRCOS, and raised public awareness (through media coverage) on women's rights.

A media institution requesting active involvement in WOM in Mali!

During the launch of the Mali National Observatory on December 16th, 2017, gathering 45 participants, Ms. Ramata Diaouré, the General Secretary of "Maison de la Presse", which is a federative media institution / structure, recommended the organisation of Public Conferences in Mali, and that "Maison de la Presse" be a co-organiser of the events. This demonstrates the commitment from the media and the relevance of the project in Mali.

It is undeniable that the Observatories fill a void in the media landscape of the four countries. They contribute to encourage the media to pay more attention to the ethical and gendered-balanced coverage of women's rights. The

challenge reside now in maintaining the dynamics of cooperation and interaction of the Observatories. The organization of regular "Public conferences" could contribute to maintain these dynamics.

Outcome 3: Open, tolerant and informed dialogues

Outcome	Indicators	2017 results
Outcome 3. In Senegal, Mali, Niger and Côte d'Ivoire, women civil society	3.1. Between 2017 and 2020, number of high level dialogues between women civil society organizations and relevant decision makers of public institutions successfully carried out	

⁶ In Côte d'Ivoire, the Observatory will convene early 2018 to examine media productions early 2018.

⁷ Are members of the Observatories : in Mali, the *Maison de la Presse*; in Côte d'Ivoire, *La Maison de la Presse* and *l'Union des Radios de Proximité* (URPCI – Union of Community Radios); in Senegal, *L'Association de la Presse en Ligne* (the Association of On-Line Press) and *le Comité d'Observation des Règles d'Ethique et de Déontologie* (the Ethic and Deontology Committee, an auto-regulatory organism).

⁸ The day after the initial meeting in Senegal, three articles were published by journalists in the press (in "*Soleil*", "*L'Observateur*" and *Press.Afrik.com*) to inform the implementation of the Women and Media Observatory.

<p>organizations and media are jointly engaged with decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders (religious and community opinion leaders) in open, tolerant and informed dialogue about women's rights, with a particular emphasis on women's political participation and gender-based violence</p>	<p>regarding the implementation of international obligations on women's rights, in particular women political participation and gender-based violence</p> <p>3.2. Between 2017 and 2020, number of encounters that were successfully carried out between women civil society organizations and influential (religious, political, and/or community) opinion leaders on women's rights and freedom of expression</p>	<p>One in Senegal</p>
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Activities on OC3 initiated during the last trimester of 2017, as the result of the work developed under OC1 and OC2. Although the activities related to OC3 were just at their onset, some encouraging results can be presented.

The first meeting took place in Senegal, on December 19, 2017. In partnership with the “*Association des Juristes Sénégalaises*” (AJS), PIWA organized a dialogue on the promotion of women's political participation between WCSOs, the media, state institutions (Ministry of Women, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of the Youth) and religious leaders. The objective of this meeting was to define the role of the various stakeholders notably the religious leaders and state institutions towards the various forms of women's participation. The dialogue brought together 39 participants, and constituted an opportunity to identify religious barriers to the promotion of women's rights, to raise awareness on women's rights, and to discuss the importance of the interaction between CSOs, media and religious leaders.

Mobilising the religious leaders beyond expectations!

Getting the leaders' interest in discussing women rights promotion is not so obvious in Sahelian countries where they are very conservative. But, in Senegal, PIWA managed to engage them. This is demonstrated by their interest and motivation to engage in discussions until 3 hours after the scheduled end of the public conference. The religious leaders were so keen on the topics of the dialogue they requested to be represented in the National Senegal Observatory. This has actually guided our strategy to include religious in the new orientations of the Observatories, and to shift the strategy towards religious leaders.

Joint actions between CSOs, media, and religious leaders were identified to promote women's citizen participation: the set up an exchange platform bringing together CSOs, ODBs, media, state institutions, youth and religious leaders to periodically exchange on the promotion of women's rights; the development of religious arguments and a preaching guide for women's rights, including women's citizen participation; the organization of media broadcasts to popularize the religious argument for women's rights. The challenge resides in translating these recommendations into an action plan to be implemented in 2018.

In the other countries, the active participation of State institutions and opinion leaders (including religious leaders) in various activities developed under OC2 herald their openness in being part of the dialogues that will be organized in 2018.

Lessons learned and objectives for 2018

WOM theory of change is still valid and does not have to be modified. Some strategies might be modified based on the project accumulated experience. It is clear from now that national media observatories need to be reinforced as they constitute key actors for the furthering and sustainability of the planned changes.

Outcome 1: Inclusion of gender and women's rights perspective in media contents and institutional policies

The training of the journalists provided various lessons:

- (1) When closely coached, the journalists could significantly improve the volume and the quality of the media contents related to the women's rights.
- (2) The participation of media editors in the training workshops revealed their interest, and allowed to identify and to find a response to new constraints in covering women's rights issues.
- (3) The mentorship mechanism should be reviewed:
 - a. The mentoring system appears to be heavy to run;

- b. The grid for content analysis should be simplified;
 - c. The training should focus on “in-depth reporting” rather than on “investigative journalism,” a technique that the targeted journalists do not yet handle.
- (4) To improve the quality of gender sensitive journalism, it is necessary to involve more closely and regularly women’s rights organizations in the media content production process.

PIWA’s strategy for 2018 will be geared towards increasing the quality and quantity of media contents on women’s rights, taking advantage of contextual opportunities in each country. It will focus on (i) improving the mentoring and training system to increase the quality and quantity of media contents (an increased number of mentors will be supervised by a journalist organization); (ii) continuing to feed the platform and promoting its use among media practitioners; and (iii) working with media institutions to improve the gender policies and practices.

Outcome 2: Effective use of the media by WCSOs and teenage women

Training workshops are key to raise awareness of the WCSOs about the potentialities of the social media in their work. They also participate in furthering the cooperation between the organizations.

However, the level of awareness, interest in and commitment to the use of media are not homogenous within each country and among the WCSOs communities: only half of the trainees (7-8 on 15) continued to produce regularly on the social media. There are also some disparities between countries: the WCSOs in Côte d’Ivoire proved to be very active in participating on their blog, posting more articles (21) than the number of participants (15), and producing 3 times more than the WCSOs in the other countries. In countries such as Mali and Niger, where internet connections are poor, the use of social media are costly. In these countries, more priority should be given to the use of the traditional media (community radios, for example).

On the other hand, in Senegal, live tweet sessions proved to be a very efficient tool both in terms of ownership by the WCSOs and in terms of impact. This tool could be expanded to other countries, with the understanding that it is best used during punctual events.

In 2018, it is clear that the training for WCSOs should be divided in two, and directed at two different types of personnel: on traditional media for managerial staff; on social media for younger staff. Finally, PIWA will work with WCSOs to develop their advocacy strategies (under OC3), and support them (financially and technically) to develop common actions of communication.

Regarding the Media Observatories, it appears that participants expressed more ambition for the Observatories than PIWA did. They suggested the extension of its mandate to scrutinize also the contents produced by the WCSOs on social media. The feasibility of the idea would have to be considered by the WOM management. Furthermore, the tools elaborated to scrutinize the media have proved to be working: understandable and usable by the CSOs. In that sense, the Observatories have started to contribute to the WCSOs media literacy, as well as the media training, through workshops.

The membership diversity of the Observatories has allowed to focus on certain unseen or underestimated aspects of gender inequality. For example, the young women members of the Observatories pointed out to generational unbalance in the media coverage of women’s rights. This generational perspective will be integrated in the journalists training.

Outcome 3: Open, tolerant and informed dialogues

The dialogues carried out in Senegal and in Niger clearly exposed the need for the CSOs to refine their common advocacy strategies. It also evidenced that there is a demand, as well as an opportunity, to include more directly the moderate religious leaders in the dialogue, and to clarify and address common objectives to promote women’s rights. It contributed to expunge some misunderstandings about the religious interpretation of the promotion of women’s rights and girls’ education. Moreover, it revealed a genuine openness and even eagerness of WCSOs and religious leaders to share more information: on women’s rights for the religious leaders; on religious arguments for WCSOs.