

**WHO
MAKES THE
NEWS?**



Iceland

Global Media Monitoring Project 2015 National Report



Acknowledgements



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GMMP 2015 is co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change, in collaboration with data analyst, Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), South Africa.

The data for GMMP 2015 was collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and church groups.



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UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

National report by

Valgerður Jóhannsdóttir



With support from



Preface

Global Context

- As newsroom staff around the world went about their day on 25 March 2015, hundreds of volunteers located in over 100 countries gathered to monitor their news media as part of the Fifth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP).
- The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. It began in 1995 when volunteers in 71 countries around the world monitored women's presence in their national radio, television and print news. The research revealed that only 17% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about – were women. It found that gender parity was 'a distant prospect in any region of the world. News was more often being presented by women but it was still rarely about women.'¹
- Seventy countries participated in the Second GMMP in 2000. This and all subsequent GMMPs were coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). The research found a relatively static picture: only 18% of news subject were women, a statistically insignificant change over the 5-year period.²
- The fourth GMMP in 2010 attracted the participation of 108 countries. Some progress in women's presence in the news was evident.³ Women made up 24% of the people in the news. While this 3% increase in the preceding five years was statistically significant, the overwhelming results showed women's continued near invisibility in the news. Only 13% of all stories – focussed specifically on women. Women were rarely central in stories that comprised the bulk of the news agenda such as politics, government and the economy. Women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic. 44% of people providing popular opinion in the news were women – a 10% increase from 2005. As newsmakers, women were under-represented in professional categories. The fourth GMMP found that the sex of the journalist made a difference in whether or not women made the news: there were more female news subjects in stories reported by female journalists (28%) than in stories reported by male journalists (22%). In a pilot monitoring of news online, 76 news websites in 16 countries and 8 international news websites were also monitored as part of the GMMP in 2010. The results showed only 23% of news subjects were women – indicating that women's invisibility in traditional media was mirrored in news presented online.
- The First GMMP and, as will be seen, the Fifth GMMP reveal that the world reported in the news is mostly male. Twenty years since the first GMMP, the challenges of news media sexism, gender stereotyping and gender bias are proving to be intractable across time, space and content delivery platforms. At the same time, there exist a few examples of successes towards gender-just, gender-fair media.

¹ *Global Media Monitoring Project, Women's participation in the news*. National Watch on Images of Women in the Media (MediaWatch) Inc. 1995

² Spears, George and Kasia Seydegart, Erin Research. With additional analysis by Margaret Gallagher. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*. 2000

³ Macharia, Sarah, Dermot O'Connor and Lilian Ndangam, World Association for Christian Communication. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*. 2010

National context

- Iceland has for a long time been high on lists of the most equalitarian countries in the world. In the latest World Economic Forum report which ranks countries by gender gaps Iceland is number one.⁴ All the same women are still a minority in positions of power in both the private and the public sector and the job market is more gender segregated than in the other Nordic countries.⁵
- Research on gender and media in Iceland is rather limited and fragmented. The first on gender representation was presented in 1990. The findings showed that in the first five years of Icelandic TV news, no women were ever interviewed. They slowly started to appear in 1970, and in 1986 women accounted for 13% of those interviewed in the TV news. In 2001 the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture published a report on the gender situation in Icelandic media and the main findings were that that women were grossly underrepresented in all kinds of media content, or 32%. In TV news women were 27% of those interviewed. The Ministry of Culture published another report in 2005 and it showed that little had changed. Around 19% of interviewees in the private TV station Channel were women and 25% in the Public Broadcasting Company, RÚV.⁶ Researchers in Iceland took part in the Global Media Monitoring Project for the first time in 2010. The main results were that women accounted for 28% of all news subjects, which was above the overall average in the study of 24% but lower than in the other Nordic countries. The study showed that 33% of the news in Icelandic news media was reported by women, compared with just over half in Sweden, 40% in Finland and 30% in Norway and Denmark. The average in the GMMP study was 37%.⁷
- In 2011 a new Media Act was passed in Iceland and according to it media companies are obliged to report to the Media Commission, an independent administrative committee under the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, about gender portrayal in the content produced, as well as the number of women and men employed and their positions. The Media Commission is also required by law to publish a report on the media market, including the gender situation. As of yet these are just words. The law was passed in 2011 but no report has yet been published.⁸
- It is important to monitor the way women and men are portrayed in the news and not least to be able to track changes over time and to compare the situation in Iceland to the wider world. That is the reason why we take part in the Global Media Monitoring Project, as well as wanting to be a part of a global network committed to researching and sharing knowledge about gender in the media

Executive Summary

- **Who are in the news?** News in the Icelandic news media is dominated by men. Only one in five of those interviewed or spoken of or read about were women. In print, radio and television women are 18% of news subjects and 21% in Internet news. Furthermore these numbers show a substantial decline in the number of female news subjects since the GMMP 2010 with 28% woman and 72% men.
- We monitored 186 stories and in them 188 new subjects were identified. The small sample size does of course limit the analysis and only allow us to present findings in the largest categories.
- The female news subjects are not equally visible across the major news topics, but our findings do not indicate that women are less likely than men to appear in traditional 'hard news' topics like for

⁴ The World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Index 2014, access at <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/rankings/>, September 1. 2015

⁵ Rafnsdóttir, G.L., Einarsdóttir, Þ. & Snorrason, J.S. (2014). "Gender quota on the boards of corporations in Iceland" in *Gender quotas on company boards* (eds. Marc de Vos and Phillippe Culliford). Cambridge: Intersentia, pp. 147-156.

⁶ Jóhannsdóttir, V., & Einarsdóttir, Þ. (2105) „Gender Bias in Media: The Case of Iceland.“ *Stjórnsmál og stjórnsýsla*, 11(2).

⁷ Árnadóttir, E., Jóhannsdóttir, V., & Einarsdóttir, Þ. (2010). "Konur og karlar í fjölmiðlum: Ísland í alþjóðlegri fjölmiðlavöktun." *Þjóðarspeggillinn 2010. Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum XI*, pp. 35-45.

⁸ Jóhannsdóttir, Valgerður. 2015. "Women in Journalism: The Situation in Iceland." *Nordicom Information* 37 (2):33-40.

example politics. The within gender difference in all medium combined shows that of all the stories with women news subjects 23% are about politics, but 16% of the news with men as news subjects.

- Gender (in)equality was definitely not on the news media's agenda in Iceland on March 25th 2015. Stories with reference to gender (in)equality or human rights in general and stories with women as a central focus so were few it's not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions based on so few examples.
- Women reported 31% of the news and men 69%. Women reporters were much more likely to have women news subjects in their stories than their male counterparts.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN ICELAND

On the domestic site **March 25 2015** was a rather quiet, typical news day and no one story or topic dominating. The main story of the day was in the foreign news and the crash of the Germanwings airplane featured prominently in all the media. The dismissal of the British Top Gear presenter, Jeremy Clarkson, was also big news, especially on the Internet. Domestic top news were for example on labour disputes, layoffs in the Transport Authority Office, structural changes in the Icelandic Developmental Agency and disputes about where to build a new national hospital.

THE CONTEXT

The Icelandic news media landscape is characterised by more diversity than might be expected in a country of 320,000 inhabitants. The public broadcasting company, *RÚV* has two radio channels and one TV. Other media company are privately owned. One company, *365 Media*, is by far the biggest and runs several radio and TV stations, as well as an online news site, *visir.is*, and the country's most read newspaper, *Fréttablaðið*, which is a free paper, delivered to people's homes. The other national, daily newspaper is *Morgunblaðið*, Iceland's oldest surviving newspaper, and the same company also runs the most read online news site in the country, *mbl.is*. *Vefpressan* (the Webpress) runs several websites and recently acquired the tabloid paper *DV*. There are several local papers and news websites, but local media has always been weak in Iceland.⁹ News sites, independent of the old, traditional media, also play an increasingly prominent part in the provision of daily news. There are several TV and radio stations operating but only the two mentioned above, *RÚV* and *365 Media* have news desks. Newspaper reading and TV viewing has been declining in the past year, as more and more readers migrate to the Internet. There are several online news sites and more people read news online than in the newspapers.

Many journalists were laid off after the financial crisis in 2008, which hit Iceland especially hard, and although the country is recovering members of the journalist unions (there are two unions, one public and one private) are still fewer than they were in the years before the crisis. There are now 587 journalists in the two unions, 16% fewer than in the peak year 2006. There are however proportionally more women than ever before or 43%, according to the latest figures from Statistics Iceland.¹⁰

Media monitored

Newspapers: *Morgunblaðið* and *Fréttablaðið*. There are two other national newspaper, *DV* (Iceland's only tabloid paper) is only published twice a week and the other *Fréttatíminn* is a weekly and neither were published on the monitoring day.

TV: *RÚV*, the public broadcasting company, news at 19:00 and 22:00 and *Stöð 2*, news at 18:30.

Radio: *Bylgjan*, main news 12:00, and *RÚV* main news at 12:20.

Internet news: *ruv.is* (the public broadcasting company), *mbl.is* (affiliate of *Morgunblaðið*), *visir.is* (*365 media*) *dv.is* (affiliate of the tabloid paper *DV*) and two online only news sites, *eyjan.is* and *kjarninn.is*, both independent of traditional media.

The monitors: Ten women took part on the monitoring day. 186 stories were monitored and in them 188 new subjects were identified. The small sample size does of course limit the analysis only allow us to present findings in the largest categories.

⁹ Harðarson, Ólafur Þ. 2008. "Political Communication in Iceland " In *Communicating politics : political communication in the Nordic countries*, edited by Mark Ørsten Jesper Strömbäck, Toril Aalberg, 63-82. Göteborg: Nordicom, Göteborgs universitet.

¹⁰ Statistics Iceland (2015). "Konur aldrei fleiri í hópi blaða- og fréttamanna." April, 16, 2015. Retrieved October 30, 2015 from <http://www.hagstofa.is/utgafur/frettasafn/midlun/blada-og-frettamenn-2014/>

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

- **Topics in the news:** News in the economic topic category were most common both in traditional media and online as seen in figure 1. Economy was also the most common topic in the Icelandic part of the 2010 GMMP, but the interest in economic news comes as no surprise as the country is still dealing with the aftermath of the financial crisis in 2008.

Table 1: Major topics in the news. Iceland GMMP 2105

Politics and Government	16%
Economy	33%
Science and Health	11%
Social and Legal	12%
Crime and Violence	5%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	23%
Other	0%

THE NEWS

The people in the news are mainly men. In all medium combined in Iceland only one in five of those interviewed, spoken of or read about were women. If the Internet is excluded, as it was not included in the 2010 analysis, the proportion of women is 18%, as seen in table 2. This is significantly less than in GMMP 2010 when it was 28%.¹¹

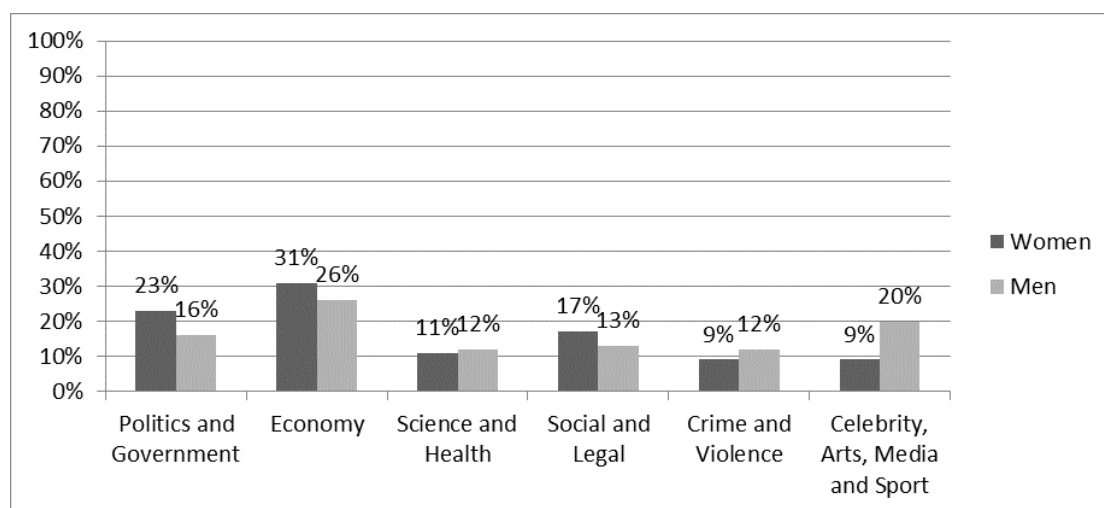
Table 2. Overall presence of women and man as news subjects by topic. Iceland GMMP 2015

	Print, Radio, Television			Internet, Twitter		
	Female	Male		Female	Male	
	%	%	N	%	%	N
Politics and Government	35%	65%	20	9%	91%	11
Economy	16%	84%	31	32%	68%	19
Science and Health	27%	73%	15	0%	100%	7
Social and Legal	15%	85%	13	33%	67%	12
Crime and Violence	0%	100%	5	19%	81%	16
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	5%	95%	19	14%	86%	14
Other	0%	0%	0	100%	0%	1
Overall Female subjects	18%			21%		

¹¹ Árnadóttir, E., Jóhannsdóttir, V., & Einarsdóttir, Þ. (2010). "Konur og karlar í fjölmiðlum: Ísland í alþjóðlegri fjölmiðlavöktun." Þjóðarspekillinn 2010. Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum XI, pp. 35-45.

- Many studies have shown that women are much less than men, news subjects in so called hard news, that is news about politics, economy and crime.¹² That does not seem to be the case in the Icelandic news media in 2015, nor was it the case in 2010. Although only around one in five of those interviewed, spoken of or read about in the news media are women, they are for example news subjects in 35% of political news in traditional media and 32% in economic news online (table 1 above). When we look at the within gender difference in all medium combined we see that of all the stories with women news subjects 23% are about politics, but 16% of the news with men as news subjects. As seen in figure 1 women are more likely than men to appear in news stories about economy, whereas men are more likely than women to appear in the celebrity, art, media and sport news.

Figure 1. Percentage of stories by topic within gender. Iceland GMMP 2015



- The Icelandic news media used mostly sources in public positions and business person. Of the 103 news subjects in traditional media, 27 were politicians, 10 government officials and 17 business persons. Of those women were 35% of politicians, but only 10% of the officials and 6% of the business people. There were 13 sportspersons news subjects and they were all men. The occupation of the remaining 36 news varied and it is not possible to draw any conclusions from so few numbers.
- Nearly half of the 103 news subject, or 46, had the function of a spokesperson in the news stories, as seen in table 3 and of those there were fewer women acting as spokespersons then their overall presence in the news would indicate. There were no eye witnesses or popular opinions in the news, but women were half of the few news subject of personal experience, or three out six. Although that is in line with findings in previous GMMP studies further research with a larger sample is needed before any conclusions are drawn.

Table 3. Function of female news subjects in news stories. Iceland GMMP 2015

Function	%	N
Subject	20%	40
Spokesperson	13%	46
Expert or commentator	20%	10
Personal Experience	50%	6

¹² Macharia, Sarah, Dermot O'Connor and Lilian Ndangam, World Association for Christian Communication. *Who makes the news?* Global Media Monitoring Project. 2010

- Only one news story was found that identified a news subject as a victim and survivor of discrimination, one story about a survivor of a car accident and only a couple where the news subject was identified by family status. That is very seldom done in the Icelandic press and only when it has a direct relevance for the story. The same applies to the age of news subjects. It's not the custom to include the age of people interviewed or whom the news is about unless it is a part of the story.

WHO DELIVERS THE NEWS?

- It is not just the people in the news that are mostly men, but also the people that bring us the news. In Iceland, women reported slightly less than a third of the news stories in 2015 or 31% compared to 33% in 2010. Women are 43% of members of the two Icelandic Journalist Unions, but that is not reflected in the news delivery. Presenters and announcers are so few that only reporters are included in table 4.

Table 4. Women and men reporters, by scope. Iceland GMMP 2015

Scope	Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N
Local	4%	1	8%	4
National	87%	20	78%	40
Sub-Regional	0%	0	0%	0
Foreign/International	9%	2	14%	7
	100%		100%	
OVERALL	31%		69%	

- The GMMP studies in the past have shown that women are less likely to report news about politics, economy or crime and violence, but as seen in table 5 that does not seem to be the case in Iceland 2015, nor was it the case in the 2010 study. Women journalists were more likely than their male colleagues to report about economics and politics for example.

Table 5: Percentage of women and men journalists by topic. Iceland GMMP 2015

	Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N
Politics and Government	26%	6	16%	8
Economy	35%	8	29%	15
Science and Health	4%	1	14%	7
Social and Legal	22%	5	10%	5
Crime and Violence	4%	1	4%	2
Celebrity, Arts, Media, Sports	9%	2	27%	14
Other	0%	0	0%	0

GENDER AND THE NEWS

- Women reporters were far more likely than their male colleagues to have women news subjects in their stories. Women were interviewed, spoken of or read in one third (33%) of the stories women reported, but only 8% of the stories men reported included women news subjects. That is very different from the GMMP 2010 results on Icelandic media, when there was no significant difference between female and

male reporters in this respect. It's not possible to draw any conclusion based on just this one study as to whether this is a real change or not.

- Gender (in)equality was definitely not on the news media's agenda in Iceland on March 25th 2015. Stories with reference to gender (in)equality or human rights in general were non existing and stories with women as a central focus so few it's not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions based on so few examples. We could not find any stories challenging gender stereotypes either, nor ones that reinforced stereotypes.

GENDER TRENDS IN INTERNET NEWS

- Online news is becoming increasingly important as a source of news. We monitored 6 Internet news sites that are the most read in the country. In total 91 Internet stories were coded or almost half of the total number of news stories. Twitter is however not as widespread as Facebook in Iceland and we were not able to code a sufficient number of Twitter news to meet the criteria set by GMMP. The following result are therefore only based on news from online sites, not twitter accounts.
- Economic news were not quite as prominent online as in traditional media (see table 1, p.6), but still the largest topic categorie in Internet news as well. There is more news on crime and violence online than off line, but on the whole there is no great difference between „old“ and „new“ media when it comes to topics in the news.

Table 6. Main topics in Internet news. Iceland GMMP 2015

Politics and Government	13%
Economy	27%
Science and Health	9%
Social and Legal	18%
Crime and Violence	14%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	18%
Other	1%

- Just over half of the Internet stories, 48 of 91, were shared on Facebook, but less than a third on Twitter. As seen in table 7 the topic of the news stories shared on Facebook and Twitter reflects the topic of Internet news in general, except that it seem more likely that Social and legal stories are shared on Facebook and less likely that economic news are shared, but there are more news in the Celebrity, Art, Media and Sport category shared on Twitter, than their number would indicate and fewer crime stories.

Table 7. Main topics in Internet new and shared on Facebook and Twitter. Iceland GMMP 2015

	Internet	Facebook	Twitter
Politics and Government	13%	15%	14%
Economy	27%	23%	29%
Science and Health	9%	8%	5%
Social and Legal	18%	25%	18%
Crime and Violence	14%	13%	5%
Celebrity, Arts and	18%	15%	29%

Media, Sports		
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News subjects in the digital world

- Women's near invisibility in traditional news is carried on in Internet news. Although women news subjects are 21% online, compared to 18% in print, radio and television they are still grossly underrepresented in all major topics, as seen in table 8.

Table 8. Overall presence of women and man as news subjects on the Internet, by topic. Iceland GMMP 2015

	Female	Male	Not known
Politics and Government	9%	91%	
Economy	32%	68%	
Science and Health	0%	100%	
Social and Legal	33%	67%	
Crime and Violence	18%	76%	6%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	14%	86%	
Other	100%	0%	

- Women news subjects were just as likely as men to be directly quoted, but they seem to be younger than men news subjects. More than half of the news subjects, 50 out of 81, were in the age group 34-49 and 50-64 years. Women news subject were overrepresented in the age group 34-49 or 35%, but in the age group 50-64 years all the news subjects were men.

Delivering the news in digital spaces

- Women reporters in Internet news, just as in traditional media, were far more likely than their male colleagues to have women news subjects in their stories. Women were interviewed, spoken of or read in 45% of the stories women reported online, but only 7% of the stories men reported included women news subjects. It is necessary to keep in mind though that in nearly a third of online stories the gender of the reporter is not known.
- Gender (in)equality was not on the agenda in Internet news any more than in print, radio or television. News with reference to gender (in)equality or human rights in general and stories with women as a central focus were so few it's not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions based on so few examples. We could not find any stories challenging gender stereotypes either, nor ones that reinforced stereotypes.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In Iceland, as in other Nordic countries, there is political consensus that women and men should enjoy the same rights, obligations and possibilities in society. It is often argued that the news media simply reflect societies in

which men have considerably more power than women in most areas of life. Iceland has been at the top of the overall rankings of the Global Gender Gap Index since 2008 and women's proportion in decision-making positions in general and their participation in public life have been gradually increasing.¹³ However, the representation of women in Icelandic media is still far from accurately reflecting the position of women according to the Global Gender Gap Index.

The GMMP findings show that women account for only 1 in 5 of the people interviewed or reported on by Icelandic news media and that women's overall presence in the news has declined compared to the last GMMP study in 2010, when it was 28%. The proportion of women as news subjects is also considerably lower than in other Nordic countries. The news media thus does not reflect the reality but rather distort it. The GMMP findings also indicate that well known this gender bias in traditional news media is replicated online.

Women are 43% of the members of the two Icelandic Journalist Unions and they outnumber men in journalism education. When it comes to reporting the news however the opposite is true. Only 31% of the news in the 2015 GMMP findings for Iceland were reported by women. In 2010 the proportion was 33% and the difference is not significant, but it's obvious that women share is not growing.

ACTIONS IN THE POST-2015 ERA: A five-year plan

For suggestions on actions which could be undertaken to improve the inclusion of women in the media's news agenda, please see the regional European report of GMMP 2015, and the global report of GMMP 2015 on www.whomakesthenews.org.

In connection with this report, the national coordinators from the five Nordic Countries have decided to make a Nordic report which goes further into detail with the findings and will discuss the various examples of Best Practice from the Nordic countries. The report will be released in 2016.

¹³ Rafnsdóttir, G.L., Einarsdóttir, Þ., & Snorrason, J.S. (2014). 'Gender quota on the boards of corporations in Iceland', in *Gender Quotas on Company Boards*, Marc de Vos and Phillippe Culliford (eds.). Cambridge: Intersentia, pp. 147–156.

Annex 1. Methodology

Each participating country was assigned a specific number of newspapers, radio and television newscasts, online news sites and twitter feeds to monitor based on the national media density. This was done to ensure global results represented the distribution of the world's news media, while respecting the need to balance results from smaller countries with those of larger countries. The number and selection of media outlets monitored in each country reflects the density and diversity – audience, ownership, language – of media in each country.

Efforts were made to ensure a uniform understanding and application of the methodology was practiced across the world. Clear instructions on how to code were provided. Some regional and national coordinators benefited from face-to-face or virtual training while others and the broader global teams of volunteers developed skills in monitoring through online self-administered tutorials. In one region, national coordinators were trained by the regional coordinator via teleconference. In some countries, national coordinators provided advance training to volunteer monitoring groups.

In each country monitors coded the most important television and radio newscasts of the day in their entirety. For newspapers, 12 to 14 stories appearing on the main news pages – defined as the pages devoted to national, international and, in some cases, regional news – were coded. Country teams could opt into the online and twitter news monitoring based on their knowledge of the importance of these channels for news delivery to local audiences.

The quantitative research captured statistical data on news topics, women and men in the news, the types of news stories in which they appeared, and their function in the news. Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) in South Africa was responsible for managing and processing the monitoring data.

A full discussion of the methodology, including considerations on reliability, accuracy and limitations, is contained in the global report *Who Makes the News? The Global Media Monitoring Project 2015*.

Annex 2. List of Monitors

Valgerður Jóhannsdóttir, adjunct lecturer in Journalism at the University of Iceland and country coordinator for Iceland.

Þorgerður Einarsdóttir, professor in Media Studies at the University of Iceland

Hrefna Rós Matthíasdóttir, MA student

Katrín Ágústa Johnson, MA student

Kolbrún Hrund Sigurgeirsdóttir, MA student

Rakel Magnúsdóttir, MA student

Rebekka Blöndal, MA student

Sandra Guðrún Guðmundsdóttir, MA student

Tinna Mjöll Karlsdóttir, MA student

Unnur Ólafsdóttir, MA student

WACC



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

WACC
308 Main Street
Toronto
ON M4C 4X7
Canada

Tel: +1 416 691 1999
Fax: +1 416 691 1997
gmmp@waccglobal.org
www.waccglobal.org
www.whomakesthenews.org

National coordinator – Iceland
Valgerður Jóhannsdóttir, adjunct lecturer
Department of Political Science
University of Iceland
Saemundargotu 2, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland
Gimli – nr.188
Tel +354 525 4229 – vaj@hi.is