

**Final Regional Event**  
Towards Greater Gender Equality:  
The Role and Image of Women in the Southern Mediterranean Audiovisual Sector

Instituto Cervantes de Casablanca

**Concept Note**

**Context**

The **SouthMed WiA** (2017-2019) project, co-funded by the European Union, addresses issues related to the perpetuation of gender-based stereotypes and the under-representation of women in the audiovisual sector of seven Southern Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia.

The project emerged from the observation of persistent gender inequality and under-representation of women in the film sector, both on screen and behind the camera, in Arab societies. The main goal of SouthMed WiA is to strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders and to contribute to sustainable development and cultural diversity by enhancing the image of women in audiovisual products and by increasing the participation of women in the audiovisual and cinema industry, with the ultimate aim of positively influencing widespread cultural attitudes and public opinion. The SouthMed WiA activities have included:

- Support to **8 co-operation projects** developed by CSOs and SMEs based in the Southern Mediterranean.
- **Coaching and training** of sub-grantees and other audiovisual professionals, in particular women, to help them increase their skills in different relevant areas, such as pitching, access to funding and co-production, marketing and distribution.
- **Outreach activities** on gender equality among audiovisual professionals on the role of women in the sector in the Southern Mediterranean to raise the awareness both of pertinent stakeholders and the general public.
- **Research** on the current situation in the Southern Mediterranean about women's role in the audiovisual sector, to collect reliable figures and data regarding creation, production and distribution, leading to: an **informative handbook** on gender-related opportunities in the audiovisual sector, **curricula development guidelines** addressed to film schools and curriculum developers, a **collection of evidence** about women's role in the film sector.
- Launch of the **SouthMed WiA network** of women professionals in the audiovisual sector.

**Overview of the Final Regional Event**

The SouthMed WiA Final Regional Event will take place in Casablanca on 11 and 12 July 2019, hosted by the Instituto Cervantes. The event will present the project's results and **the 8 sub-granted projects** that have contributed to achieve its objectives in the Southern Mediterranean.

The audiovisual sector plays a key role in contributing to build more gender-equal societies. It represents not only an essential factor for economic growth and women's inclusion in the labour market but also a primary source for information and entertainment, with the ability to influence and potentially change family life, social attitudes and cultural beliefs.

The SouthMed WiA Final Regional Event has been conceived to tackle this dual role, designing a programme that includes two panels: the first addresses the issue of gender equality in the audiovisual industry from a professional point of view; the second, focuses on the image of women that the sector conveys and its influence in shaping cultural and social representations. Each panel will be followed by two working groups, with both the panellists and the sub-grantees, to discuss the topics tackled in the plenary sessions. The working groups will also give sub-grantees the opportunity to discuss with the invited speakers the results of their own projects, to share opinions on the challenges faced and to network for possible future collaborations. Each working group will appoint a spokesperson who will be in charge of collecting the main points discussed and writing a résumé document to be shared with all the participants. The Final Regional Event will also be the occasion for the official launch of the SouthMed WiA Network of women professionals in the audiovisual sector in the Southern Mediterranean.

## Acknowledgements

The SouthMed WiA project is co-funded by the European Union under the Med Film regional programme. The SouthMed WiA Consortium is grateful to the Instituto Cervantes de Casablanca for having accepted to host the SouthMed WiA Final Regional Event and to Union for the Mediterranean and the Agencia Española de Cooperación al Desarrollo for their collaboration.

## Final Regional Event

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Instituto Cervantes de Casablanca

### Programme

Thursday, 11 July 2019

09:00 - 10:00

#### Opening session

María Jesús García González, Director, Instituto Cervantes de Casablanca  
Mercedes Giovinazzo, Director, Interarts  
Alberto Carnero Fernández, Consul General of Spain in Casablanca  
Calin Ilie, Political Advisor, EU Delegation to Morocco

10:00 - 11:30

#### PANEL 1

##### *Gender equality in the audiovisual sector in the Southern Mediterranean: a pending issue for the profession*

Addressing the inequalities that women face in the audiovisual sector is an issue for concern. Indeed, these inequalities not only mirror the challenging social and political environment in which women evolve but also contribute to sustain and reproduce it. Although there is a widespread commitment towards achieving gender equality in the audiovisual sector, there is still a significant under-representation of women at all levels of the industry, especially in the Southern Mediterranean region, despite the fact that women and men graduate from film schools in almost equal percentages and that women's films perform well in festivals and awards. What are, therefore, the barriers, challenges and hurdles that still affect women working in the audiovisual sector in the Southern Mediterranean? The experts in this panel are invited to address this question, bringing about their professional experience both in Europe and in the Southern Mediterranean countries, and engaging in a discussion on how greater representation of women in the sector would impact on the promotion of equality and tolerance in SouthMed societies.

#### Speakers

##### **Khadija BOUJANOUI**

Financial Director and Equality Committee, Soread 2M – Morocco

##### **Karin OSSWALD**

President, Festival Films Femmes Méditerranée – France

##### **Laila AOUDJ**

Director, Rencontres Cinématographiques de Béjaia - Algeria

#### Moderator

Paola Parri, Deputy Secretary General, Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators, COPEAM - Italy

11:30 - 12:00

*Transitions to workshops (coffee available)*

12:00 - 13:30

### Working Group Theme 1

*Women in the audiovisual sector: opportunities, challenges and hurdles for the professional development of women.* Existing measures or tools, existing policies and regulatory bodies, training and educational opportunities, capacity-building programs, strategic approaches.

Moderator: Interarts, with École Supérieure de l'Audiovisuel et du Cinéma de Gammarth, and European Women's Audiovisual Network

### Working Group Theme 2

*Opportunities for professional cooperation and development with and by women.* Added value of international cooperation, funding opportunities, co-production initiatives, distribution frameworks (film festivals, audiovisual markets...).

Moderator: Culture and Media Agency Europe, with Screen Institute Beirut and Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators

13:30 - 14:30

Lunch

14:30 - 15:45

### PANEL 2

*Enhancing the image of women in audiovisual products to guarantee sustainable development*

The media, both traditional and new, have a crucial influence in society because they contribute to shaping social beliefs and can potentially play an essential role in promoting gender equality. At the same time, media have a considerable responsibility in disseminating and reinforcing gender stereotypes. There is an on-going perception that, despite progress made in recent years, broadcasting media do not always provide a fair and balanced representation of men and women. Gender stereotypes influence the public's perception of gender roles and the absence of gender balance reduces the role and experience of both genders and can be a real obstacle to equal opportunities. How to avoid them? How to show diversity? Experts in this panel will analyse how the media can contribute to change the audiences' social and cultural attitudes and perceptions, by portraying reality with its "diversities" as enriching factors and thus challenge traditional gender roles and break down cultural barriers.

**Panelists** **Rahma BENHAMOU EL MADANI**,  
President, Cinéastes non Alignées – France/Morocco

**Khedija LEMKECHER**  
Film director and activist – Tunisia

**Carlota ALVAREZ BASSO**  
Co-director, Festival de Cine por Mujeres - Spain

**Moderator** Isabel Castro Martínez, Board member, European Women's Audiovisual Network, EWA - France

15:45 - 16:15

Transitions to workshops (coffee available)

### Working Group Theme 3

16:15 - 17:45

*The image of women in audiovisual industry: the necessary fight against stereotypes.* Storytelling and creative process, gender-based roles, audience development and engagement.

Moderator: Screen Institute Beirut, with Culture and Media Agency Europe and École Supérieure de l'Audiovisuel et du Cinéma de Gammarth

### Working Group Theme 4

*Women in audiovisual in the Southern Mediterranean: An opportunity for networking.* What the network should offer (action plan and future activities), sustainability of the network (how to build a strong basis; need to have a legal structure).

Moderator: European Women's Audiovisual Network, with Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators and Interarts

Friday, 12 July 2019

09:30 - 10:30

#### Recto/Verso

The SouthMed WiA documentary - Q&As

Noura Nefzi and Hamadi Bouabid

École Supérieure de l'Audiovisuel de Gammarth - Tunisia

10:30 - 12:00

Feedback from the 4 Working groups

12:00 - 12:30

Coffee Break

12:30 - 13:00

Launch of the SouthMed WiA Network:

Women in Audiovisual in the Southern Mediterranean

Isabel Castro Martínez, Board member, European Women's Audiovisual Network, EWA - France

13:00 - 13:30

Closing session

Iman Kamel, external evaluator of the SouthMed WiA project

Fatiha Hassouni, Head of Sector Gender & Women Empowerment, Union for the Mediterranean

Mercedes Giovinazzo, Director, Interarts

13:30 - 14:30

Lunch

Afternoon

Restricted meetings

SouthMed WiA Network & Evaluation of the sub-granted projects