

From The Desk Of Executive Producer -

IAWRT Long Documentary 2016 - *Women Making News*

June 9, 2016

Dear IAWRT members,

I am happy to have been selected as the Executive Producer for the IAWRT Long Documentary 2016 : ***Women Making News***. The theme picked by the international board is very timely and I would like to share with you a vision statement on how I see this film being shaped.

To make this project a success we would like to cast the net wide and invite proposals from Africa, Philippines, Nepal, Canada, Afghanistan, Norway, USA, Bangladesh, Sweden, India and various other countries where we have IAWRT chapters and members.

I would like to see four or five women directors take their lens up-close to riveting stories from their region exploring what drives women journalists to do their jobs against heavy odds. The 10-12 minute films from each country will weave into one longer version of 50 minutes.

To be a part of this exciting collaborative film project, you must send in your proposals by July 7, 2016. Each proposal should include one or two strong story ideas from your region. It should be accompanied by a show reel of your past work in documentaries or current affairs programming and your CV.

Your proposal must be accompanied by a budget outlining how the money will be utilised from production to rough cut delivery on a hard disc. Ideally we would like five local contributions - budget USD 4000 each. Should we decide on four films, the budget for each will then be USD 5000. The total budget for the local contributions is USD 20,000.

Filming will have to be done on HD format. The tech specs and list of deliverables will be sent later to the finalists.

Please look around you and the media situation in your region and send us your strongest pitches so you can be part of this global collaborative film project as a director from your country.

IAWRT's Long Documentary Committee and I, as the EP for this project, look forward to receiving your ideas and submissions in the coming days. Together, let us come out with a meaningful and sensitive film on a subject close to all our hearts.

Warm regards,

Nupur Basu

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India.*

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WHERE TO SEND

Please send your proposals and budget to Nupur Basu and copy them to the Long Documentary Committee 2016 headed by Ananya Chakraborty, IAWRT Vice President, along with Iphigenie Marcoux Fortier and Elizabeth Miller.

Executive Producer, Nupur Basu, nupbasu@gmail.com

Iphigenie Marcoux Fortier at iphigenie@lesglaneuses.org

Elizabeth Miller at elizabeth.miller@sympatico.ca

Ananya Chakraborti ananyachakraborti@ymail.com

TIMELINE:

June 9 – Call to go out for film proposal to IAWRT members

July 7 – Deadline to receive film proposals

July 8 to July 20 – The EP and Long Documentary Committee select the final proposals

July 21 to July 25 – Financial disbursements to selected directors

July 26 to September 30 – Filming and rough cut delivery

October 1 to November 20 – Final cut edit at my end in India

Delivery of film to IAWRT by November 30, 2016

MY VISION:

IAWRT Long Documentary 2016 - *Women Making News.*

I recall Samira Sitaël, Manager, news department@ 2 M, in the IAWRT biennial conference at Morocco saying: “*My name is Samira- but I think, what if it was Samir? I have been threatened. But I am not*

going to change my sex! There are times, however, that society accepts us as journalists first and then a woman.”

Samira Sitael's experience is not exclusive to women journalists in North Africa. It finds echoes the world over. Other than encountering prejudice based on their gender, women journalists are also discriminated against in areas like - the nature of assignments allotted to them, breaking through the proverbial editorial 'ceiling' and issues of safety in the workplace and in the field.

In an extremely polarised world the daily struggle of women journalists is getting accentuated. There is gender conflict within newsrooms and in the world outside. Reporting in conflict zones has already claimed the lives of many women reporters and photographers in Afghanistan, Brazil, Pakistan, Syria and other hotspots around the world.

The execution in Raqqa of Ruqia Hassan by ISIS in January 2016 shocked the world. The fifth journalist to be killed by ISIS, this time the target was a woman citizen journalist who was openly critical of them.

In India, in February 2016, Malini Subramaniam was attacked by non-state players and intimidated for reporting on police atrocities against tribal communities in Central India. Accused of being 'sympathetic' to the Naxalites, her car was stoned, her husband and domestic help detained and grilled for hours in the police station and her landlord forced to evict her. Malini had to finally leave the city and move out with her family - such was the level of intimidation.

In Bangladesh a woman blogger was brutally attacked and her husband, also a blogger, was killed. She now lives in exile in the US.

Increasingly targeted by both state and non-state actors, women journalists are taking huge risks to bring news to their readers and viewers in mainstream and digital platforms. Sometimes the price they end up paying is just too high.

Conflict, gender and media have become a deadly cocktail claiming the lives of many a female working journalist. In fact the agencies looking at press freedom have noted that there has been an increase in the numbers of women journalists killed in recent years.

While both men and women journalists get killed in conflict situations and wars, there are increasing attacks on women journalists for chasing stories about corruption, poverty, mafia, politics and environmental destruction. Tongam Rina, from North East India, was shot at for writing against the mining mafia. She addressed the 2015 IAWRT Biennial in Delhi after recovering from her injuries and returning to the newsroom. Ilang Ilang, IAWRT board member from the Philippines, had similar stories to share from her country at the same conference.

Muddying the pitch is also the mounting issue of censorship that is being sought to be imposed on the media by both state and non-state players in different scenarios. In 2015 UNESCO came out with a survey titled: *Building digital safety for journalism: a survey of selected issues*. It revealed that women journalists were more likely to face negative and threatening responses online in comparison to their male colleagues as they were subject to 'double attacks' both as professionals and as women.

The Committee for Protection of Journalists (CPJ) has just released its latest report on Gender and Media on April 27 titled: *Journalists at risk from sexual violence, gender based discrimination*. In a series of essays by women journalists and editors the report takes a close look

at the intersection of gender and press freedom from a variety of perspectives.

In searching for our protagonists and stories, we should try and keep all these aspects in mind so that we can bring a rounded story on women journalists to our viewers in a century truly dominated by the media. ■