

## MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN MEDIA EDUCATION



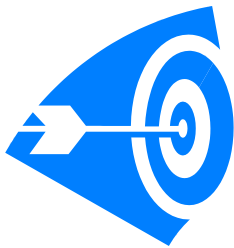
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**Centres of Excellence  
For Gender in Media Education**



Future generation of broadcasters at a 16 days cyber dialogue, City of Johannesburg. Photo by Gender links

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### **Objectives**

The main objective of the GIME *COEs* process is to contribute to the SADC Gender Protocol targets of gender equality in the media through embedding gender in journalism and media training. The COE process will assist institutions of higher learning offering journalism and media education and training mainstream gender in the relevant department and its work.

## Media provisions in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

Alliance logo

Ensure gender is mainstreamed in all information, communication and media policies, programmes, laws and training in accordance with the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport.

Encourage the media and media-related bodies to mainstream gender in their codes of conduct, policies and procedures, and adopt and implement gender-aware ethical principles, codes of practice and policies in accordance with the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport.

Take measures to promote the equal representation women in the ownership and decision-making structures of the media, in accordance with Article 12.1 that provides for equal representation of women in decision-making positions by 2015.

Take measures to discourage the media from:

- Promoting pornography and violence against all persons, especially women and children;
- Depicting women as helpless victims of violence and abuse;
- Degrading or exploiting women, especially in the area of entertainment and advertising, and undermining their role and position in society; and
- Reinforcing gender oppression and stereotypes.

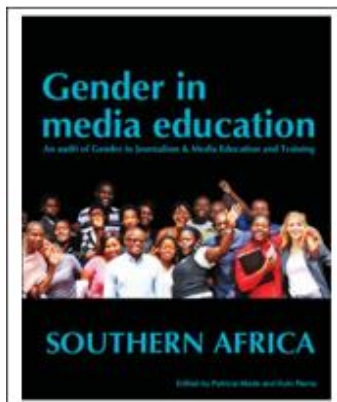
Encourage the media to give equal voice to women and men in all areas of coverage, including increasing the number of programmes for, by and about women on gender-specific topics that challenge gender stereotypes.

Take appropriate measures to encourage the media to play a constructive role in the eradication of gender-based violence by adopting guidelines which ensure gender-sensitive coverage.

The Gender Protocol also calls for the mainstreaming of gender in all media laws, policies and training. It urges the media to give equal voice to women and men; challenge gender stereotypes; and ensure balance and sensitivity in all coverage, especially that relating to gender violence.

## Background to the COE project

Potentially having a huge role to play in this “liberation of the mind”, the media has more often than not been part of the problem rather than of the solution. While the media has set itself up as the watchdog of the rest of society, it does not always take kindly to being “watched”. The result has been an unfortunate antagonistic relationship between gender activists and the mainstream media.



In 2010, GL undertook the Gender in Media Education (GIME) research in 25 public institutions that offer journalism and media education in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The research took place within the context of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development with its 28 targets to be achieved by 2015. These include urging the media and other institutions in the public

and private sectors to achieve gender equality 2015.

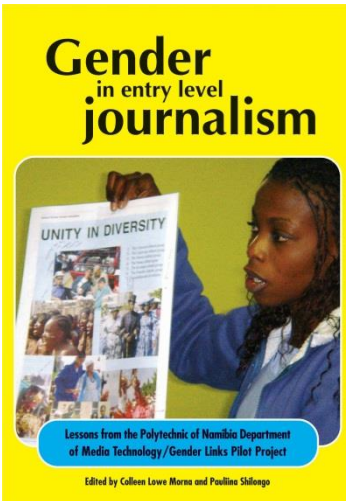
Key findings of the GIME research include:

- ***There are very few institutions with policies or other special measures to achieve gender equality.*** Seven (28%) of the 25 institutions in the sample have stand-alone gender policies.
- ***Almost half of the institutions have sexual harassment policies.*** Of the total number of institutions 44% have sexual harassment policies.
- ***Males comprise the majority of the academic staff:*** Some 62% of the academic staff in the departments of journalism and media education and journalism training at the universities are males, compared to 38% in the case of females.
- ***But females are the majority of the students:*** Female students comprise 61% of the students in the departments of journalism and media education and training are females and 39% are males.
- ***The ratio of female to male staff and students is inversely proportionate:*** As can be seen from the previous two findings, the levels of female staff at 62%, students at 61% and male staff at 38% and students at 39% is in direct opposition, suggesting females do not become teachers although they comprise the majority of learners.
- ***Gender is considered in curriculum policies and processes at institutional or departmental level:*** According to the data gathered, 46% of the institutions in the sample consider gender in curriculum review processes.
- ***There are very few institutional structures to ensure that gender is included in curriculum:*** While 46% of institutions state that they consider gender in curriculum only three (16%) of the institutions has a committee or individual responsible for gender in the curriculum.
- ***Media and journalism students receive limited theoretical grounding in gender:*** Very few institutions in the region offer core courses on gender, or gender and the media.
- ***Gender-specific modules have been developed at some institutions:*** The School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) at the University of Dar es Salaam has a module on *Gender and Media* within its programme.
- ***Gender missing in student and staff assessments:*** Gender is not incorporated as a standard in any systematic way in the journalism and media education and journalism training departments' assessments of courses.
- ***Academic research on gender, media and diversity issues could be broadened and deepened:*** While there are examples of students' theses and special projects on gender and media issues, as well as projects on women's representation and gender stereotypes in the media, gender and the media has not become an area of academic research and scholarship among the lecturers within the institutions' media education and journalism training departments.

### **Rationale**

The GIME COE process is therefore a practical attempt to address the gender gaps through a better-informed and strategic approach that involves mainstreaming gender in journalism and media education and training.

GL will work with institutions of higher learning through sustained interventions that bring together curriculum review and development; policy development; capacity building; specific training in gender and media literacy; training courses for trainers and monitoring and evaluation.



The GIME COE process will cover the key areas explored in the GIME research:

- Institutional policy framework
- Curriculum development and course content
- Teaching and learning
- Prescribed texts, readings and learning materials
- Assessments
- Research and publications

The media is one of the most important yet challenging areas of work for advancing gender equality. As “formal” or legislated discrimination against women falls away, the key challenge confronting society is how to change mind-sets hardened by centuries of socialisation and cemented by custom, culture and religion.

Two other key pieces of gender and media research that point to the need to engage with institutions of higher learning are the Glass Ceilings: Women and men in Southern African media (2009) and the 2010 Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS). The low representation of women in the media industry and as sources in media content requires strategic interventions. One important intervention is to ensure that gender is integrated into all aspects of journalism and media education and training.

The GIME COE project borrows from the Media COE project where GL is working with 108 media houses to mainstream gender in both institutional practice and editorial content. It also borrows some of its aspects from the Local government COE process that has a target of 300 municipal councils in the 10 countries that GL works in. These centres of excellence work on gender mainstreaming at local level. The GIME COE process will follow a similar design though customised for institutions of higher learning. Although, the COE stages are generic they can be adapted to a specific situation based on progress made in gender mainstreaming as well as institutional dynamics.

The strength of the COE process lies in that it is embedded in the institution and has high level buy in from decision-making structures. The process is innovative and involves the students, lecturers and so many other opportunities can grow from that.

### **Global context: Global Alliance on Media and Gender**

UNESCO and partner organisations have recently formed the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG) following the 2013 Global Forum on Media and Gender. This membership- based alliance recognises the key role that gender in media training plays in mainstreaming gender in the media. GAMAG has identified media education as one critical area, together with gender in mainstream media, gender in media regulation among other critical areas.

## **LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE: THE PON PILOT PROJECT**

The model for gender mainstreaming in entry level journalism training at tertiary level is demonstrated by the Department of Media Technology at the Polytechnic of Namibia (PON) in Namibia. Journalism and media education and training at PON is situated within the Department of Media Technology which is in the School of Communication, Legal and Secretarial Studies. The department offers a three-year qualification, the National Diploma: Journalism and Communication Technology. In 2009 the department introduced two new qualifications, a Bachelor's and a Bachelor (Honours) in Journalism and Communication Technology.

When PON's Department of Media Technology (DMT) first opened to students in 2002, it was already participating in one of the first projects of its kind in the region to mainstream gender into the new curriculum of an entry-level media education and journalism programme. The project 'Gender in entry level journalism', undertaken by PON and GL between 2002 and 2004, also provides valuable insights and steps on how gender can be mainstreamed into media education and journalism training at entry-level institutions<sup>1</sup>.

The PON/GL pilot project was designed from the outset to cover the three full years of the programme. It commenced in 2002 when the PON introduced its three-year diploma programme in Journalism and Communication Technology. While the curriculum had already been developed and approved prior to the commencement of the project, it has considerably influenced the teaching methods and objectives of the courses.

The PON project evolved organically, based both on the general needs identified by the staff of the department and GL's experience. The project is a practical and well documented example of how gender can be mainstreamed into media education. The fact that its success can now begin to be measured in the approach of former students who are now editors affirms the most important premise of mainstreaming gender in media education: that this has a profound impact on the way that journalists practice their craft.

In retrospect, the pilot project would have started with a gender policy and curriculum review, and placed greater emphasis on sustainability. However, the goodwill and commitment of the head of department and rector have made it possible to move rapidly on a new phase with the support of UNESCO.

This model is promising in that both PON and the University of Namibia (UNAM) are involved and this is linked to the UNESCO Centres of Excellence initiative that both institutions are part of. They are selecting their own course offerings for gender mainstreaming and driving the process with the support of GL. The process puts policy and curriculum review upfront. Sharing these experiences with others in the region through the proposed Community of Practice will help to ensure accountability and peer learning.

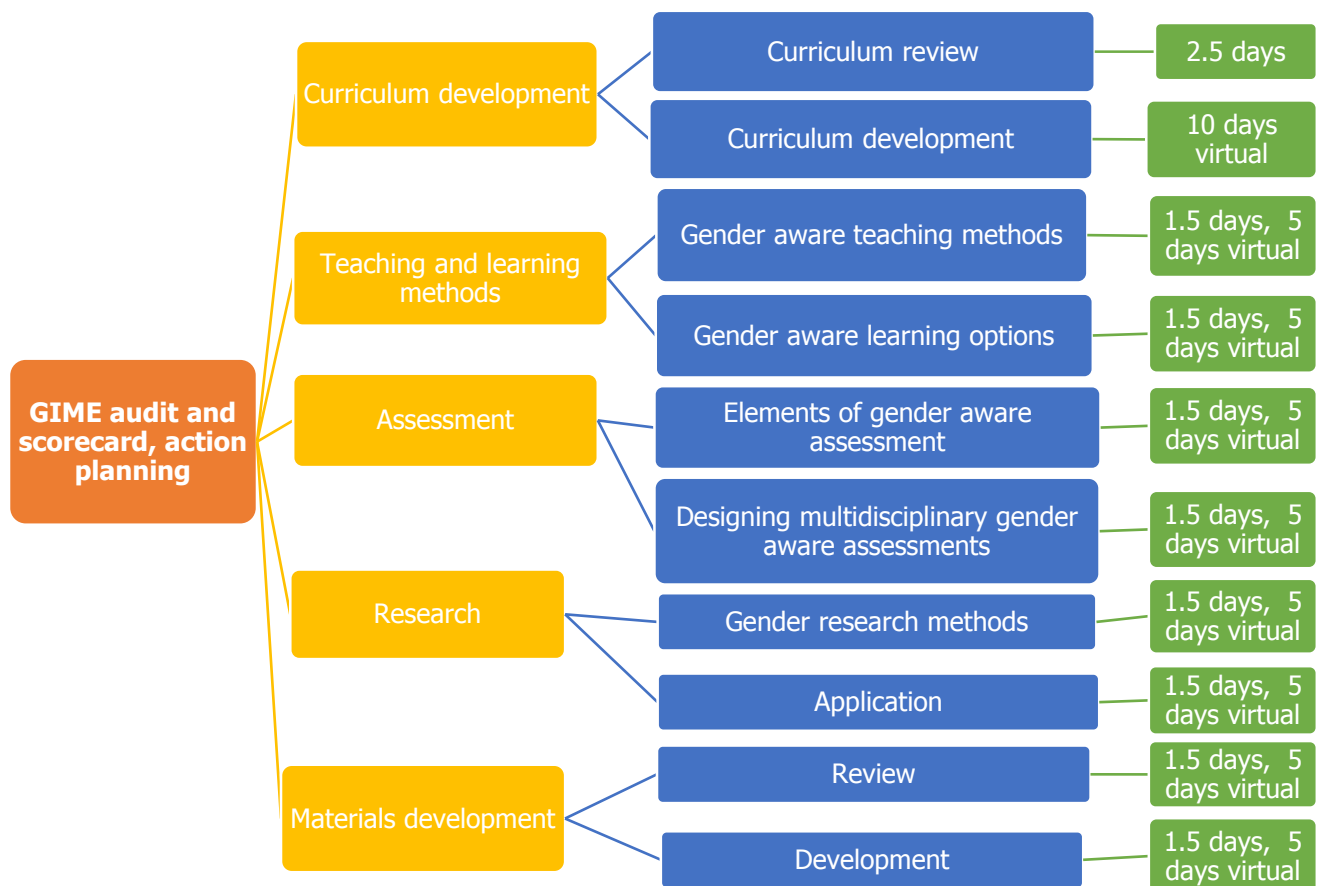
The most important lesson from the PON project is that gender mainstreaming is a process, not an event. This process can and must be strengthened through deliberate interventions, of the kind that should flow from the GIME audit.

## Outline of what GIME process

Gender Links will offer media training institutions a modularised gender-mainstreaming package that draws from the 2010 Gender in Media Education (GIME) audit. This research pointed to the need for a more systematic approach to gender mainstreaming with includes working with management, training personnel as well as students.

GL is proposing a flexible model that will take into account context specific needs and possibilities thereby offering adaptability to the situation on the ground and existing interventions and progress made in gender mainstreaming. This project is aware that media training institutions are at different stages of gender mainstreaming.

The GIME process will constitute the following steps:



## **Outputs**

The overall outputs of the COE process are:

- At least seven training institutions with gender mainstreamed into teaching curriculum and assessments.
- Baseline data on gender mainstreaming for all training institutions.
- Qualitative reports on impact of the project.
- Gender and media research projects.
- Entries for the SADC gender Protocol@work summit and awards.

## **Outcomes**

The expected results include:

- Sustained and systematic mainstreaming of gender in media education and training.
- Trainers who understand and appreciate the significance of mainstreaming gender in curriculum.
- Media training institutions with a quantitative and qualitative overview of their performance.
- Synergy between the media and GIME COEs processes
- Gender is mainstreamed in journalism and media education training in institutions of higher learning.