# PROMOTING GENDER SENSITIVITY IN SOUTH AFRICA MEDIA HOUSES




Petronell Ngonyama, aspiring journalist shoots a video at a Gender and Media Diversity Centre consultative meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa.
*Photo by Zotonatenanina Razanandratefa*

STEP IT UP
FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA

GENDER LINKS
FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

# Table of contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Foreword | | 2 |
| Acknowledgements | | 3 |
| 1 | Introduction | 4 |
| 2 | Understanding key gender concepts | 9 |
| 3 | Gender in media content | 22 |
| 4 | Normative frameworks supporting gender sensitivity in the media | 34 |
| 5 | Gender in media content and media institutions | 37 |
| 6 | Gender sensitive media ethics | 42 |
| 7 | Creating gender sensitive content in the media | 45 |
| Annex A: Southern Africa Protocol on Gender and Development | | 49 |
| Glossary of terms | | 50 |

# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **BDPA** | Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action |
| **CEDAW** | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| **GBV** | Gender Based Violence |
| **GL** | Gender Links |
| **GIZ** | German Development Corporation |
| **GSIM** | Gender Sensitive Indicators for the media |
| **NGO** | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| **IFJ** | International Federation of Journalists |
| **IPS** | Inter Press Service |
| **SADC** | Southern African Development Community |
| **SABC** | South African Broadcasting Corporation |
| **UNWOMEN** | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| **UNESCO** | The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation |

# Foreword

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains one of the biggest challenges and obstacles to development in South Africa with rape, domestic violence and intimate-partner violence being particularly prevalent. The crisis of GBV and femicide in South Africa is well documented and reflects a society that is saturated in patriarchy, unequal gender dynamics and daily gross human rights violations against women and children.

Prevention interventions challenge the deeply rooted inequalities and social norms that perpetuate men's control and power over women and reinforce tolerance for violence against women and girls. The German Development Cooperation (GIZ) is implementing a regional programme, the 'Partnerships for Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls in Southern Africa Programme' (PfP). The main objective of the programme is to strengthen multi-stakeholder approaches that join governmental, civil society and private sector efforts to prevent violence against women and girls. In South Africa, PfP is supporting the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBV and femicide which is multi-sectoral, coherent strategic policy and programming framework to ensure a coordinated national response to the crisis of GBV and femicide.

As part of this national framework, it is important to acknowledge that harmful social norms and stereotypes play a crucial role in perpetuating the current GBV crisis in South Africa. Media and the creative industries remain a stronghold of shaping norms and stereotypes through storytelling, images and audio-visual representations of men, women and gender non-conforming people. The power of the images and stories portrayed can be harmful or potentially play a critical role in confronting the scourge of GBV if gender aware storytelling becomes a central consideration.

It is against this background that the PfP programme and UN Women South Africa jointly started the 'Step it Up for Gender Equality in South African Media' (Step it Up) project. The project aims to achieve behaviour change within the media and creative industries to create more gender sensitive, un-stereotyped, equal and positive change-driven content as well as creating a safe and equal production environment behind the scenes. In order to achieve this behaviour change, the project has provided a platform for media and related stakeholders to self-examine, explore and reconstruct their role in shaping societies' gender norms positively.

The Step it Up project convened an Advisory Group comprising of government, civil society and media industry actors, for guidance on supporting the media and creative industry to actively work towards eradicating GBV. One of the Advisory Group's findings was that, in order to create meaningful change in the sector, it is necessary to provide gender sensitivity training to media practitioners to capacitate the sector to effectively drive change. It is our hope, as the Step it Up project, that these trainings will empower news media practitioners to reflect and take on the roles and responsibilities that come with the influence they hold.

# Acknowledgements

Gender Links (GL) is deeply indebted to GIZ for funding the development of the news media training materials as well as the training for media practitioners. Communications for Social Change Manager, Tarisai Nyamweda and Gender Links Executive Director Kubi Rama compiled the manual and Luxolo Matomela Technical Advisor: Partnerships for Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls in Southern Africa Programme (PfP), GIZ, reviewed the manual.

GIZ and GL convened an Experts Group stakeholder consultation to design the training manual and thanks to the participants for their valuable contributions.

GL convened training workshops between June - July 2021using a version of this manual. GL thanks the trainers and journalists for their participation and insights. This training manual is part of a wider project on the Step It Up for Gender Equality in the South Africa media.

# CHAPTER 1
# Introduction

If we are to truly confront the scourge of Gender-Based Violence in South Africa, we need to get to the root of the problem, we need to interrogate the causes and not just look to alleviating the symptoms. Violence emanates from deeply rooted biases, norms and stereotypes that cause structural psycho-social unequal gender dynamics. We need to challenge and begin to change these norms and behaviours through high level prevention efforts. What we consume across media platforms informs how we think about ourselves and society at large in terms of gender. News media plays a critical role in how we can prevent GBV.

Within this framework, this media training manual is developed as part of the key interventions for the UN Women and GIZ *Step It Up for Gender Equality in South African Media (Step It Up) project*. The aim of the Step It Up project is to motivate South African media and entertainment industry towards behaviour change leading to more sensitive portrayal of women and gender, sensitive reporting on GBV and overall a more positive impact on societies norms and standards around gender and violence. The project uses research, facilitation of dialogue and self-reflection, capacity building, voluntary commitment and influencing policy and regulation to achieve this change.

This initiative on *Promoting gender sensitivity in South Africa media houses* complements one of the priority areas of the Step It Up campaign which is to develop and implement training for news and entertainment media practitioners. The objective is to enable and support media practitioners to engage with their own role in shaping societal norms, standards and stereotypes through the content they are producing in radio or television. In addition, news media practitioners will be sensitised on sexual harassment and other practices that lead to unsafe and unequal working conditions.

This project will strengthen and build on the work already carried out by GIZ, UN Women and other civil society organisations to raise awareness and contribute towards ending GBV using the media as a priority partner in the fight to end GBV in South Africa. This training initiative is a follow up to the research "Gender, Diversity and GBV in South African Television", which Gender Links (GL), GIZ and UN Women conceptualised, edited and has launched at various fora.

GL will hold training sessions for media practitioner's in South Africa using this training manual. The media training to be led by Gender Links seeks to build capacity of media practitioners on gender sensitivity in different aspects of news media production.

The manual and the subsequent training serve to multiply the impact of the efforts initiated through Step It Up project by reaching a wider audience and media constituency on the importance of gender sensitive reporting.

It is intended as a practical and ready to use tool. It will help to amplify the Step It Up project advocacy, capacity building and dialogue with the media through the development and provision of practical tools for media professionals to ensure more gender sensitive content production and ensure a safe working environment.

## Background

Mass media plays a crucial role in shaping public attitudes, reactions and everyday decisions. It plays a key role in providing information and elevating the understanding

of what is happening in the community. The media can help citizens understand and make informed decisions about their lives. It can serve to highlight the everyday lived experiences of women men and gender non-conforming persons. With such potential the media can help to change the narrative about how different sections of society are viewed

This can only happen in a gender sensitive and aware media environment. By serving as a vehicle for communication the media can help communities forge new paths that can lead to change in the community.

## *What does gender sensitivity have to do with the media?*

Media practitioners' gender prejudices and biases are one of the major obstacles to the diverse portrayal of women and their voices in the media. Journalists and editors are socialized as men and women, long before they choose journalism as a career. This socialization influences how the media reports on, portrays and provides access to women.[1] IPS notes that it has become increasingly clear that the gender biases of journalists and editors creeps into the way they gather information, interview sources and report on news and issues.

Journalists may not necessarily have a particular gender bias of their own doing. Christina Chan Meetoo notes there are many factors come into play in bringing about gender biases in the media. Chan Meetoo cites the following:

- the individual's upbringing, life experiences and socialisation,
- the policy and editorial line of the media house,
- the economic pressures leading to cost-cutting and thus favouring less expensive forms of reporting with little or no verification,
- the competition for eyeballs leading to sensationalist stories with cheap angles, the limited availability of on-the-job training and coaching for young journalists but also for senior journalists to keep abreast of social developments.

Taking all the above in consideration, we thus need to fill the gap in terms of awareness and knowledge about gender issues in general and also understand how to avoid gender biased reporting and ensure there is more attention to gender balance in the news.

Therefore, gender sensitivity training for the media is important. It helps journalists and editors to understand the attitudes, prejudices, biases and socialization that often come through in media messages and allows them to recognise and analyse the imbalance of women's voices, as compared to men's voices, in the media. Gender training provides skills and techniques for journalists and editors to analyse facts, issues and data from a gender perspective.[2] Editors and journalists require gender analysis skills and knowledge to be able to recognise the gender dimension of all stories.

Training is also a key recommendation in both the 2020 Southern Africa Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS), the most comprehensive study on gender in editorial content in the Southern Africa media, and in the 2019 Gender Diversity and GBV in South African Television.

Training, like policy, is one of the most effective ways to begin to change attitudes and practice. For the media, gender and media training can occur at various levels including through continuous, in-service training where media managers and journalists learn on-the-job.

Capacity strengthening and training helps journalists, editors and media managers to

1 Inter Press Service. Gender HIV/AIDs and Rights: A training manual for the media
https://allafrica.com/download/resource/main/main/idatcs/00010846:ecc2c60a3ff1f56e79bfed25462c2dda.pdf
2 Gender sensitization manual on media reporting on gender-based violence

concretely understand that gender does not add additional work, nor is it an add on. Gender sensitivity provides the media with the skills to see all sides of the stories; to bring in the voices and perspectives of more than just men in positions of power and formal authority; to delve deeper through news-gathering into the differential impact of news and issues on women, men and gender non-conforming persons; and to reporting -depth and analytically on many of complex issues.[3]

It is therefore important to strengthen the already existing capacity of the media to be aware of the gender biases inherent in their work and in the final media product, and to work towards the objective of keeping a gender lens on in their coverage of news and issues.

Research conducted by activist organisations that monitor and analyse media as well as academics, point to the fact that news is predominantly told from a male perspective. According to UNESCO, many projects examining gender representation in the content of news media focus exclusively on news reports (and, in some cases, only those reports that appear on the front and general news pages of daily newspapers or primetime news bulletins on broadcast media). A more holistic picture may emerge if different forms of news & current affairs media (including periodicals) and different types of coverage (reportage, opinion/comment/analysis, feature articles, documentaries, etc.) in different sections/ segments of the media (including special focus pages/programmes on sports, business, health, civic/environmental issues, etc.) are taken into consideration.

This manual therefore attempts to expand its focus to not only include broadcast news media journalists but include produces editors line managers who may produce content such as current affairs programme.

# Purpose of this manual

The manual aims to promote gender sensitive media practices in South Africa television and radio. This is done by providing background information, guidelines, quick facts and a variety of exercises and case studies that will keep the user engaged. It is envisaged that the media practitioners who use this manual will be prompted to go through processes of self-reflection and identify gaps that are in media practices and be enabled to change their practice and approach to reporting. By seeking to strengthen the reporters' skills in reporting, the manual ultimately contributes to positive social change through production of content that is gender sensitive and responsive.

## *Who is the manual for? Primary and secondary target groups*

The main target group for this handbook are reporters, producers, station managers working across all media including radio and television media from public, private and community media in South Africa media houses. It serves as a tool that media practitioners can use to strengthen gender aware and sensitive reporting. Journalism and media students, academics, civil society can also use the handbook to get a grasp on key gender and media issues in political news coverage. The trainers will use this guide to assist journalists, producers, station manager in their understanding of mainstreaming gender sensitivity in news content, learn what to look out for in news coverage and go beyond the obvious and improve their stories.

## *How to use the manual?*

### What you will find in each chapter

The manual is designed to be interactive and draw on the journalist experiences, observations and knowledge of the media,

[3] Made, P. and Ndlovu, S. (eds) 2011. Making every voice count: A handbook for Gender in the Media Centres of Excellence. Gender Links Johannesburg.

to ask questions rather, to give a guide on how best to achieve gender sensitivity in news coverage.

It is divided into different modules that are split into different subsections.

The material serves as a guide and additional materials and resources can be used to support examples and case studies given in this manual.

**Table 1: Outline of the modules**

| Module | Areas covered in this module |
|---|---|
| Understanding key concepts on gender | • Understanding gender<br>• Defining key terms<br>• Sex and gender<br>• Gender roles and expectations, gender perceptions<br>• Institutional (family, church, state) influences on gender<br>• Gender stereotypes, sexist practices and gender bias and discrimination<br>• How gender stereotypes are conveyed through language and visuals used |
| Gender and the media | • Media representation of women<br>• Media's role in society<br>• Role of media in promoting gender equality in and through the media<br>• Gender discrimination and stereotypes in the media<br>• Sexual Harassment<br>• Gender sensitivity in stories<br>• Gender analysis checklist |
| | • Status of gender equality and the media globally region, country - overview and key data<br>• News sources in the media<br>• Breadth, depth and angles of coverage in news coverage |
| Normative frameworks | • Instruments supporting gender equality in the media<br>• SADC Gender Protocol<br>• Beijing Declaration |
| Gender in media content and media institutions | • Code of conduct<br>• Gender policies in media institutions<br>• Sexual harassment in the media |
| Gender sensitive Journalism ethics | • Define media ethics<br>• Gender dimensions of media ethics<br>• Importance of a gender sensitive code of ethics |
| Creating gender sensitive content | • Gender sensitive editorial practices<br>• Exploring how biases can be overcome through sensitisation<br>• Importance of language<br>• Using gender disaggregated data |
| Annex A Checklist on promoting gender sensitivity in the media | • Ensuring gender sensitivity in reporting checklist |
| Glossary of terms | • Explaining terms used in the handbook |
| Resources | • Publications used to inform |
| Notes | • Space for notes for the participants |

**Table 2: The symbols used throughout the text include:**

| | |
|---|---|
|   | **Exercise:** The reader will be asked to engage in a number of exercises. For examples, they might be presented with hypothetical but relevant scenarios to test possible options and approaches. The objectives of the exercises are to get the readers to reflect on how they might approach an issue. |
|  | **Checklist:** This is an action-oriented handbook that ends with questions to help apply the learning. This is the main "take away" from the handbook, with practical application to everyday reporting that will enhance depth, insight and analysis. |
|   | **Definitions:** The meaning of key terms. |
|   | **Discuss:** Whether in the newsroom, a training class or alone, solutions and insights come through discussion. There is no wrong or right way, but there are certainly better and worse ways of doing things. Discussion leads to better solutions. |
|   | **Quick facts:** Facts today will change tomorrow. The manual consists of facts that can easily be looked up by the reader as and when needed. These quick facts where help to explain current realities and prompt us to think about how we can approach things differently. |
|  | **Reflect:** Reflection is one of the most powerful tools of learning. We learn the hard way, and we learn the fun way. Often it is the hard lessons that stick. Conflict reporters have already learned many lessons. Reflecting will help to hone these skills. |
|   | **Story ideas:** Each chapter ends by prompting reporters to share story ideas sparked by the discussion in the chapter. |

CHAPTER 2

# Understanding key gender concepts

## Objectives

The overall objective is to strengthen journalists understanding of key gender issues and concepts

### Specific objectives

- To increase sensitivity to gender issues by creating a better understanding of sex and gender concepts.
- Discusses biases.
- Influence of gender bias stereotypes.
- Explore gender stereotypes that abound in society of which media editorial content and output reinforce.
- Examine how myths, stories, proverbs, sayings, and other social institutions create, maintain, and reinforce gender stereotypes.
- Examine the concepts of patriarchy and gender why they are critical to journalism and development through.
- Identify strategies for challenging and changing gender role stereotypes.

## Learning outcomes

- Participants understand representation.
- Participants are able to identify gender stereotypes and biases.

## Introduction

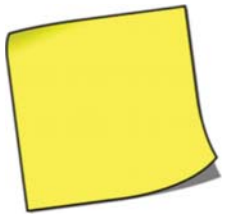
For media practitioners to practice gender sensitive reporting it is important for them to have an understanding of different key gender concepts and how these come to play in their everyday reporting. Inter Press Service advises that it is important for journalists and editors to increase their gender awareness and use a gendered analytical framework that enables them to implement change through news gathering.

This module will help reporters, producers, managers and editors to understand that using a gender lens in their approach to choosing angles, editing and producing can assist to help identify the glaring gaps and biases that maybe embedded in news content.

## Sex and Gender




Write the following roles on cards: Soldier; growing a beard; general; guerilla; breast feeding; pilot; leader; member of parliament, councilor, refugee; displaced person; mediator fire fighter; doctor; nurse; politician; aid worker; voice breaking; ambulance driver; rape survivor; mother; father; giving birth; menstruating; fighter; bomber; cook; messenger; spy.

| Roles associated with women/girls | Either or | Roles associated with men/boys |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |

Pin up three headings on the wall - boys/men; girls/women; and either or. Pin up each card where it fits best. Look at the cards under each category.

1. Is that where they fit? Can or should they be moved? Why?
2. Which roles are strictly associated with women or men? Why?
3. Which is the largest category in the end? Why?
4. Why do we struggle to envision women in certain roles and men in others?




**Gender**, as opposed to **sex**, is the way in which society assigns attributes and social roles to men and women. In almost all societies around the world the roles, functions and characteristics attributed to men have been accorded greater value than those of women. **Gender inequality** creates power imbalances in society and limits the human potential of both men and women (see table below).

**Table 3: Reproductive and Socially Constructed Roles of Men and Women**[4]

| | WOMEN | | MEN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| REPRODUCTIVE ROLE | Gives birth to children | Biologically determined | Fathers children | Biologically determined |
| EXAMPLES OF SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED ROLES | | | | |
| IN THE HOME | Care, nurture children | Socially determined - limits women's role to the home; unremunerated | Protect, provide | Socially determined; limits men's caring and nurturing role |
| IN THE WORK PLACE | Care work- domestic workers, secretaries, nurses, primary school teachers | Extension of role in the home; limits women's management and leadership roles; more poorly paid jobs | Leadership and management roles - in politics, business; security (police, defence, foreign affairs) | Extension of social construction; exacerbates gender imbalance in power, economic clout |
| IN THE PERSONAL SPACE | Humble, submissive, emotional, caring | Limits ability to be assertive, break into new roles | Aggressive, ambitious | Limits ability to be humane and caring; to express emotion |

*Source: UNWomen and African Union . 2017. Handbook for Reporters on Women, Peace and Security: Ensuring gender-responsive reporting in conflict affected countries in Africa*



[4] UNWomen and African Union . 2017. Handbook for Reporters on Women, Peace and Security: Ensuring gender-responsive reporting in conflict affected countries in Africa.




**Sex-** describes the biological difference between men and women. Men produce sperm; women become pregnant, bear and breastfeed children.

**Gender-** describes the socially constructed differences between men and women, which can change over time and which vary within a given society from one society to the next. Our gender identity determines how we are perceived and how we are expected to behave as men and women.

**Gender non-conforming-** refers to people who do not follow other people's ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on the female or male sex they were assigned at birth.

**Gender bias-** refers to gender-based prejudice; assumptions expressed without a reason and are generally unfavourable.

**Gender relations-** describes the social relationships between women and men. These are socially constituted and do not derive from biology. Biological differences are permanent - with the rare exception of those who undergo sex changes. Gender relations are dynamic. They are shaped through the history of social relations and interactions. They vary over time and place and between different groups of people. They may also be impacted by other factors, such as race, class, ethnicity and disability.

**Gender mainstreaming-** incorporation of gender issues into the analysis, formulation, implementation, monitoring of strategies, programs, projects, policies and activities that can address inequalities between women and men.

**Gender discrimination-** refers to any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms which prevents a person from enjoying full human rights.

**Gender identity-** an individual's internal sense of their gender which could be 'man' or 'woman' or any of a number of other genders, including agender, gender fluid, gender non-binary or genderqueer amongst others. A person's gender identity does not always match their biological or assigned sex.

**Gender binary-** an understanding of gender that reduces gender to two opposing and completely separate gender identities - 'man' and 'woman'.

**Gender non-binary-** often used as a term for any gender identity that does not conform to the gender binary.

**Gender fluid-** a gender identity that varies over time. A gender fluid person may at any time identify as a woman, man, or any non-binary identity, or a combination of identities.

**Reproductive work** comprises the child bearing/rearing responsibilities and domestic tasks undertaken by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the maintenance of the work force (husband and working children) and the future workforce (infants and school going children).

**Productive work** comprises work done by both women and men for payment in cash or kind. It includes both market place production with an exchange value, and subsistence/home production with an actual use value, but also a potential exchange value. For women in agricultural production this includes work as independent farmers, peasant's wives and wageworkers.

1. Is this not just a natural division of labour?
2. What are the economic differences between the roles assigned to men and those assigned to women?
3. What is the political difference in the roles assigned to men and women?
4. What is the social difference in the roles assigned to women and men?
5. What is meant by a stereotype? How do stereotypes lead to discrimination?




No individual exists in a little box like this. It is possible for men to raise children, and for women to lead nations. It's also possible to be caring and to be ambitious; to be emotional and to be strong.




The effect of the roles that women are assigned is to make them inferior to men in almost every way, in almost every country:

- **Economically**, the work that women do in the home is unpaid, and most women's work in the community is voluntary. When women do enter the "formal economy" they earn, on average, almost half what men earn because "care work" is not as valued in our society as work that involves "control".
- **Politically**, whether in the home, community or in the nation, women are glaringly absent from decision making. This makes a mockery of concepts of equal participation, citizenship, democracy, responsive governance etc.
- **Socially**, women are often minors their whole lives, answerable first to their fathers, then to their husbands, and later in life even to their sons, and their brother-in-laws.
- **Gender based violence:** The ultimate expression of any difference in power relations is violence. This kind of violence is even more frightening than others because it is often socially condoned. The man is expected to be strong and assertive and in control - to the point of being violent. The woman is expected to suffer in silence. She is frequently blamed and blames herself for any breakdown in relationships.

***Gender mainstreaming*** is "an attempt to take gender equality into the mainstream of society… Gender mainstreaming involves the reorganisation of policy processes because it moves the attention of gender equality policies to everyday policies"[5]. Gender mainstreaming recognises that all issues have an impact on women, and that all policies need to be guided by a gender perspective.

Six years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, there have been considerable legislative gains for women; as well as improvements in access to education. Although in Africa as a whole there has been a decline in the proportion of girls enrolled in schools over the last decade, in Southern Africa there has been a significant closing of the gender gap in enrolment both at primary and secondary level. A number of Southern African countries - notably South Africa and Namibia - have progressive constitutional provisions for gender equality; indeed, more progressive than in many of the older democracies whose constitutions were crafted at a time when gender justice was hardly regarded as integral to democracy.

What we are seeing globally - a trend reflected in our region - is increasing ***equality of opportunity*** for women. But this is not translating into ***equality of outcomes***. The world over, women are still a tiny proportion of those in decision-making positions; and of those who own property, capital, land, technology and all the other means of wealth creation.

So where is the bottleneck? Blatant discrimination still exists. But increasingly, the issue before us is one not of formal legislative restrictions, but rather of deeply ingrained

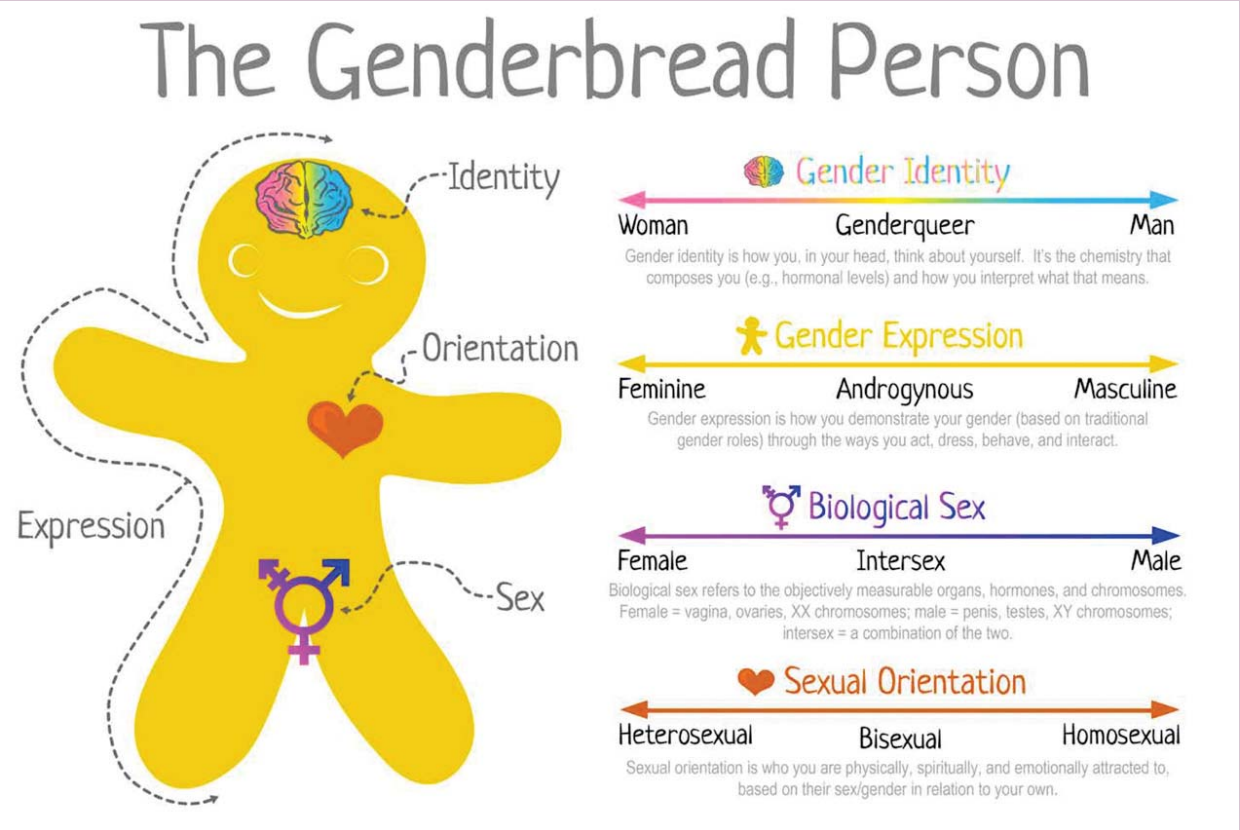
[5] Council of Europe. 2004. Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices. Final report of activitiesof the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming (EG-S-MS) Strasbourg. Accessed 30 June 2021 from https://rm.coe.int/1680596135

customs, practices, traditions and stereotypes that bar women from realizing their full, or ***substantive equality***.

To take a few examples: in many countries in our region, there are no legislative barriers to women owning land. Yet, as a result of age-old traditions and practices, women only own a tiny proportion of the land. Women may own houses. Yet in reality, almost all family houses are registered in the names of men. Women may become members of parliament. Yet when we close our eyes and imagine a politician, how many of us think of a woman? The answer is: very few, because in our minds, in our psyche, power takes a masculine form.

The ultimate expression of any power imbalance is the violent assertion of one party over the other. The last decade has witnessed unprecedented attention to the issue of ***gender-based violence*** that had been regarded in many countries as a private matter - outside the ambit of the state. Women's rights are increasingly recognised as integral to human rights. Rape in countries wrought by conflict has been recognised as a weapon of war in international law. Yet gender-based violence has hardly abated.

***Fact sheet: Sexual orientation and gender identity***[6]




Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else. For many people, their gender identity often corresponds to their biological sex. A person who identifies as transgender has a gender identity that does not correspond to their biological sex. Gender expression relates to how a person chooses to communicate

6 International HIV/AIDS Alliance. 2015. Sexual and reproductive health and rights, and HIV 101 workshop guide . Accessed 30 June 2021 https://hivlawcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Workshop_Guide_Sexual_and_Reproductive_Health_and_Rights_and_HIV_2015.pdf

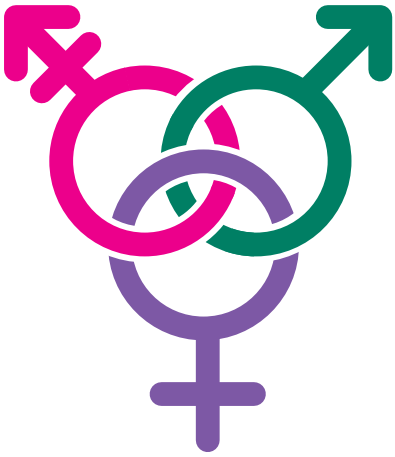
their gender identity to others through clothing, hair, styles, mannerisms and so on. This communication may be conscious or unconscious. While most people's understandings of gender expressions relate to masculinity and femininity, there are countless combinations that may combine both masculine and feminine expressions, or neither, through androgynous expressions.

Sexual orientation describes whom we are romantically attracted to and love. A person's gender identity does not predetermine their sexual orientation. It is important to understand that these are all on a continuum and they are all fluid. This means that anyone could begin life at one point on a continuum and, depending on their circumstances, choices and bodies, they could change (or not) and move between the extremes on either side.

For example, there could be two people A and B who were born female (biological sex), have a masculine gender expression, and identify as bisexual (loving and desiring both sexes). Person A might live their life expressing this, while person B might grow up to realise that they were born in the wrong body and would rather be male (biological sex). Person C might have grown up to identify as heterosexual, but may change to find others of the same sex attractive and perhaps even try out a homosexual relationship.

People who change from one side of the gender identity continuum to the other are known as transgender. People who change from one side of the biological sex continuum to the other are known as transsexual (undergoing hormone replacement and/or surgery). People who are intersex are born with ambiguous genitalia, and often the doctor or parents decide for the infant which sex they should be. This choice could be wrong; therefore, intersex people are advocating against doctors or parents making the choice for infants.

In order to counter the gender norms that are assigned to 'males' and 'females', there is also a movement to bring up children in a gender 'neutral' manner. This means not making distinctions between boys' and girls' clothes, colours, toys and activities (for example, blue for boys, pink for girls; cars for boys, dolls for girls; football for boys, playing house for girls).



A question that may be raised is that if sex and sexuality are all fluid, then could we change people of homosexual orientation to heterosexual orientation? However, the key point here is that all of these points on the continuum are related to self-identification rather than labels that can be applied to us by others or by us to others. Just as you cannot force a person to fall in love with someone, you cannot force a person who identifies as homosexual to fall in love with or desire someone of the opposite sex, or vice versa.




# TEST YOURSELF!

**Table 4: Sexual Diversity attitudes survey**

| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | It is possible to be a different gender from you were born into | | | | |
| 2 | Homosexuality is unAfrican | | | | |
| 3 | Homosexuality is unGodly | | | | |
| 4 | Gays are responsible for the spread of HIV/AIDS | | | | |
| 5 | Homosexuality is a sickness can be cured | | | | |
| 6 | Lesbians are trying to become men | | | | |
| 7 | Lesbians can be made to like men | | | | |
| 8 | You can either be homosexual or heterosexual | | | | |
| 9 | Transgender people use the wrong toilets as an excuse to target people | | | | |
| 10 | People who dress outside of the sex in which they were born are putting themselves in danger | | | | |
| 11 | It is deceiving if someone appears to be female who is born male | | | | |
| 12 | All transgender people are gay | | | | |
| 13 | You are either born a man or a woman | | | | |
| 14 | When a baby is born, and has indeterminate sex organs, it is the right decision to make a corrective surgery immediately | | | | |
| 15 | Gay marriages are immoral | | | | |
| 16 | We need stronger laws to protect our children from LGBTI people | | | | |
| 17 | Police should protect us from LGBTI people who want to flaunt themselves in public | | | | |
| 18 | People who are attracted to the same sex should be outlawed | | | | |
| 19 | Same sex couples should not be permitted to be parents | | | | |
| 20 | Women with high levels of testosterone should not be allowed to compete in sport | | | | |

*Source: Gender Links LGBTI Survey*

## Stereotypes

Women are generally portrayed in a limited number of roles. Sexualised images of women are rife, and women tend to be defined in terms of their physical appearance, not abilities. When they are not being portrayed as sex objects, women are most often shown as victims of violence and homemakers[7]. Although the stereotypes of women as care-givers (such as the selfless mother so popular in advertisements) have more positive connotations, they are nevertheless stereotypes, which certainly do not reflect women's complex experiences and aspirations.

There is also an increasing realisation that gender stereotyping is as problematic for men as it is for women. *Boys to Men: Media Messages About Masculinity*[8], a study

7 Spears, G. and Seydegart, K. 2000. Who Makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2000.
8 Children Now. 1999. "Study shows that media reinforces gender straitjacket".

published in the USA, highlights the fact that young boys are being bombarded with media images of aggressive, violent males, and raises questions about the media's construction of masculinity. As with gender stereotypes of women, boys are being offered a very limited definition of what it means to be a man in most instances, the afore mentioned traits create an environment for toxic masculinity to flourish. The use of stereotypes reflects and sustain socially endorsed views of gender.

## What are stereotypes




**Stereotypes:** "Unduly fixed mental impression" (Oxford English Dictionary)

Gender stereotypes are socially constructed beliefs about men and women. They are constructed through sayings, songs, proverbs, the media, religion, custom, culture, education, drama etc. A gender stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by, or the roles that are or should be performed by women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans. Harmful stereotypes can be both hostile/negative (e.g., women are irrational) or seemingly benign (e.g., women are nurturing). It is for example based on the stereotype that women are more nurturing and that child rearing responsibilities often fall exclusively on them.[9]

Below are some common stereotypes:
- Men (big boys) don't cry,
- A black man is always a suspect
- Women love money
- A person living with HIV is promiscuous
- Men are abusers




In pairs or in small groups take about half an hour to brainstorm and come up with examples of messages about women and men that are flung at us every day through the news media.

1. Proverbs, idioms and sayings, for example "the great woman behind the great man."
2. Songs (sing a few lyrics from well-known songs), such as "Stand by your man."
3. Soap operas, drama and popular culture (act out a scene from Generations, for example).
4. Custom, culture, religion, like the rituals for marriage, *lobola*, the father "giving away" the bride etc.
5. Education, for example school textbooks, the characters they use, and what they do.
6. Back in your big groups, categorise the examples using to the framework below:

| Source | Example | What is said about women | What is said about men |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

7. Identify strategies for challenging and changing gender role stereotypes.

[9] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Gender stereotyping . Accessed 30 June https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/GenderStereotypes.aspx

## Language

Gender-sensitive language is gender equality made manifest through language. Gender equality in language is attained when women and men - and those who do not conform to the binary gender system - are addressed through language as persons of equal value, dignity, integrity and respect.

There are number of different ways gender relationships can be expressed with accuracy, such as avoiding the use of language that refers explicitly or implicitly to only one gender and ensuring, through inclusive alternatives, the use of gender-sensitive and inclusive language.

Male domination in society reflects in language. In English, the words "he", "mankind", and "the man on the street" are used to refer to all people. While some argue that it is the norm in English to refer to people in general as male, and that this usage includes women, the reality is that the language developed in a society where women were considered inferior and subordinate to men. Language excluded women because women were largely confined to the private sphere of the home, while men operated in the public sphere of political and economic activity[10].

Structures of many societies have been based on assumptions of sex-biased roles, which are entrenched in the use of language. To be truly equal, women and men must be seen and heard to be equal. This means eliminating language that misrepresents, excludes or offends women. Careful use of language and images in the media will give a more accurate reflection of your audience or readership, and this can positively affect people's consciousness over time.[11]

While many of the traditional sexist uses of language in the media, such as referring to women by their first names (or their husbands' names - as in Mrs John Smith) have largely fallen away, language has the power to exclude, and to reinforce patterns of power in society.

Using gender-sensitive language can make it easier to see important differences between the needs of women and men and challenge unconscious assumptions people have about gender roles in society. To be truly equal, women and men must be seen and heard to be equal. This means eliminating language that misrepresents, excludes or offends women.[12]

### How stereotypes manifest in language

Avoid using words which imply a gender connotation to describe an aspect of a person or object. It is especially important to avoid doing this where the gendered term is used as an insult. These expressions normally paint the feminine as the negative.

Describing something as feminine is used as an insult, often to mean weak or ineffective. Using language in this way is sexist.

### Examples

Below are some examples adapted from the European Institute of Gender equality: Do not employ gender stereotypes to describe the way something is or the way the action is done.

- *Gender-discriminatory language:* Paul's ladylike handshake did not impress his new boss, who believes sales-people need a firm handshake.
- *Gender-sensitive language:* Paul's weak handshake did not impress his new boss, who believes sales-people need a firm handshake.
- *Gender-discriminatory language:* You throw like a girl.

[10] Spender, D. 1985. Man Made Language.
[11] UNESCO, 2012
[12] https://kq.freepressunlimited.org/themes/gender-equality/gender-in-media-content/gender-sensitive-reporting/

- *Gender-sensitive language:* You do not throw well.
- **Gender-discriminatory language:* The team taking part in the charity obstacle course who were scared of the cold water had to man up and dive in at the first obstacle.
- *Gender-neutral language:* The team taking part in the charity obstacle course who were scared of the cold water had to be tough and dive in at the first obstacle. In particular:

Fair, accurate, and inclusive language use is also important in expanding public awareness and understanding of LGBTQ people. Below are some terms that can help guide practitioners when speaking about LGBTI people adapted from GLAAD.

## Terms to avoid[13]

| OFFENSIVE | PREFERRED |
|---|---|
| "homosexual" (n. or adj.)<br>Because of the clinical history of the word "homosexual," it is aggressively used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to suggest that people attracted to the same sex are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered - notions discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please avoid using "homosexual" except in direct quotes. Please also avoid using "homosexual" as a style variation simply to avoid repeated use of the word "gay." | "gay" (adj.); "gay man" or "lesbian" (n.); "gay person/people"<br>Please use gay, lesbian, or when appropriate bisexual or queer to describe people attracted to members of the same sex. |
| "homosexual relations/relationship," "homosexual couple," "homosexual sex," etc.<br>Identifying a same-sex couple as "a homosexual couple," characterizing their relationship as "a homosexual relationship," or identifying their intimacy as "homosexual sex" is extremely offensive and should be avoided. These constructions are frequently used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to denigrate LGBTQ people, couples, and relationships. | "relationship," "couple" (or, if necessary, "gay/lesbian/same-sex couple"), "sex," etc.<br>As a rule, try to avoid labelling an activity, emotion, or relationship gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer unless you would call the same activity, emotion, or relationship "straight" if engaged in by someone of another orientation. In most cases, your readers, viewers, or listeners will be able to discern people's sexes and/or orientations through the names of the parties involved, your depictions of their relationships, and your use of pronouns. |
| "sexual preference"<br>The term "sexual preference" is typically used to suggest that being attracted to the same sex is a choice and therefore can and should be "cured." | "sexual orientation" or "orientation"<br>Sexual orientation is the accurate description of an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/ or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and queer people, as well as straight men and women (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style). |

[13] GLAAD. 2016. Media Reference Guide 10th Edition . Accessed 30 June 2021 https://www.glaad.org/sites/default/files/GLAAD-Media-Reference-Guide-Tenth-Edition.pdf

| OFFENSIVE | PREFERRED |
|---|---|
| "gay lifestyle," "homosexual lifestyle," or "transgender lifestyle"<br>There is no single LGBTQ lifestyle. LGBTQ people are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrases "gay lifestyle," "homosexual lifestyle," and "transgender lifestyle" are used to denigrate LGBTQ people suggesting that their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (see Transgender Glossary of Terms) is a choice and therefore can and should be "cured" | "LGBTQ people and their lives" |
| "admitted homosexual" or "avowed homosexual"<br>Dated terms used to describe those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. The words "admitted" or "avowed" suggest that being attracted to the same sex is somehow shameful or inherently secretive. | "out gay man," "out lesbian," or "out queer person"<br>You may also simply describe the person as being out, for example: "Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico." Avoid the use of the word "homosexual" in any case (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style). |
| "gay agenda" or "homosexual agenda"<br>Notions of a so-called "homosexual agenda" are rhetorical inventions of anti-LGBTQ extremists seeking to create a climate of fear by portraying the pursuit of equal opportunity for LGBTQ people as sinister (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style). | "Accurate descriptions of the issues (e.g., "inclusion in existing non-discrimination laws," "securing equal employment protections")<br>LGBTQ people are motivated by the same hopes, concerns, and desires as other everyday Americans. They seek to be able to earn a living, be safe in their communities, serve their country, and take care of the ones they love. Their commitment to equality and acceptance is one they share with many allies and advocates who are not LGBTQ. |
| "special rights"<br>Anti-LGBTQ extremists frequently characterise equal protection of the law for LGBTQ people as "special rights" to incite opposition to such things as relationship recognition and inclusive non-discrimination laws (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style). As such, the term should be avoided. | "equal rights" or "equal protection" |

*Source: GLAAD. 2016. Media Reference Guide 10th Edition.*

1. Discuss any other ways stereotypes manifest in language including in local languages. How can these be countered?
2. Does your house style restrict the use of some words that may be deemed insensitive?
3. What do they encourage you to use?



## Strategies for challenging and eliminating gender stereotypes and barriers




In groups discuss the following questions:

- What assumptions and values related to being woman or a man or male in your society are you most proud of and make you feel valued? Why?
- What assumptions and values related to being female or male in your society do you most dislike and make you feel under-valued? Why?
- Which of these would you most like to change? Why?
- Discuss one way in which you have already challenged or changed one assumption or value related to being male or female.

Are there any strategies that you can identify to break away from cultural norms and values related to what is deemed masculine *vis-a-vis* what is deemed feminine and how this might affect their personal, home, and work lives.

### Checklist[14]



- Avoid using "he" as a generic pronoun, unless the gender of the subject is known and is relevant to the context. The pseudo-generic he or his, when referring to both a female and a male excludes the female. To be inclusive, use both he and she, and consciously balance pro-noun use by sometimes reversing their order. For example: Instead of "If a student studies hard, he will succeed", use "If a student studies hard, he or she will succeed. If a student studies hard, she or he will succeed. Students who study hard will succeed".

- Avoid using "man" as a generic noun, as if men represent the whole human race. The use of the word man to represent both women and men excludes women, and it minimalises their contributions and their worth as human beings. For example, to make language more inclusive use "humanity, human beings, people" instead of "mankind", "artificial materials" instead of "man-made materials"; use "the best person for the job" instead of "the best man for the job", etc.

- When describing a job or career both men and women might perform avoid using term that specifies gender and replace gender-specific words with gender-neutral wording order to avoid associating men and women with certain professions. For example: chairman/chairwoman vs. chair, coordinator, moderator, presiding officer, head, chairperson; businessman/business-woman vs. business executive, manager, businessperson, policeman/policewoman vs. police officer; mailman vs. postal worker, letter carrier, etc.

- Seek alternatives to language that omits, patronizes, or trivializes women, as well as to language that reinforces stereotyped images of both women and men. For example: Don't use terms like "the little lady" or "better half" when you are referring to someone's spouse, or wife. Avoid the use of exaggerated language such as "Blonde beauty wins song contest!", "Mother of three elopes with lover", "Woman driver crashes into fence", "Maria is a career woman", "Spinster", etc...

- When referring to men and women, make sure they are addressed in the same manner. For example, instead of saying "Mr Smith and Mary Jones" refer to them as "John Smith and Mary Jones" (using both of their first names) or "Mr Smith and Ms Jones" (using titles, rather than names), instead of "The reading list included Jane Austen, Joyce, Proust, and Virginia Woolf", use "The reading list included Austen, Joyce, Proust, and Woolf (or Jane Austen, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Virginia Woolf)"

[14] Ramsak, A. 2017 Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Reporting Accessed 30 June 2021 Available at http://www.ekvilib.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/en_GUIDELINES_FOR_GENDER_SENSITIVE_REPORTING.pdf

- Use courtesy titles that promote gender equity. For example: Instead of Miss, Mrs, use Ms.

- Describe a woman as her own person, and not in relationship to someone else. Try to avoid forms of address that depict a woman as the mere appendage of her husband, which trivializes women or render them invisible. For example, instead of saying "Mary Smith, who is married to John Smith", say "Mary Smith, who is a writer" or instead of "The steward seated Mr. Clinton and his lovely wife Hillary", use "The steward seated Mr. and Mrs. Clinton".

## Stereotypes in visuals

Images and other visuals are often embedded with stereotypical images of women and men. It is the journalists' responsibility, editors, producers to ensure this imagery which often may have subtle stereotypes does not affect news content. Practitioners must always make sure they do not enforce or reinforce gender stereotypes. Showing women and men in all their diversity to ensure equal representation to avoid stereotypes. Often times, visual images, sound effects and so on used in media content tends to be stereotypical, objectify and sexualise women. It is therefore important to be mindful of the visuals used for different content in all content produced.

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority suggest the following actions to help promote gender sensitivity:

**Actions**[15]

Check if the visuals used compliment the content.

Always evaluate the relevance of the images to the verbal texts.

Make sure that the use of sound effects attributed to men and women on the radio and TV should be as gender sensitive as the use of verbal language and use them in a way to challenge the gender stereotype.

**Reflect**



Think of a time in your media house were stereotypical images of women and men have been shown? Was there any outrage from within the media or your audiences?
What could have been done better to improve portrayal of the people shown in the images and video footage.

**Tips:**

- Be mindful that images showing women are not focusing on their bodies rather related action to the content.
- Always think of other alternatives for sound effects and create a new normal than following existing normative trends.

[15] Addis Ababa. Accessed 20 June 2021 . Available at https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20africa/attachments/publications/2020/gender%20and%20media%20guideline%20-%20english.pdf?la=en&vs=3854

CHAPTER 3

# Gender in media content

The chapter has the following specific objectives and learning outcomes:

## Objectives

- To introduce participants to the gendered messages conveyed in the media.
- Explore gender stereotypes and which media editorial content and output reinforces.
- To examine the representation of women and men in the media.
- To analyse how women are generally portrayed and represented in the media, and especially identify the patterns of gender inequality and discrimination.
- To reflect on ways in which the media can adopt a gender-transformative approach towards representing men and women.

## Learning outcomes

- Understanding the dichotomous representation of women and men in media content.
- Identify stereotype within media content.




**Media monitoring: Finding women and men in news content**

- Making use of recent main news bulletin in your media houses count the number of news sources and the number of reporters and camera persons that appear in the bulletin.
- Also determine in what capacity the women and men in the bulletin speak, e.g. spokesperson, main subject, eye witness, expert.
- Classify the stories that appear in the bulletin as gender aware, gender blind or subtle stereotypes or blatant stereotypes.

| Newsroom | Number of women | Function/ role | Number of men | Function/ role | %Women |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

1. What proportion of women and what proportion of men are represented as sources?
2. Is there a marked difference in the proportions of women and men in as news sources?
3. What does this difference tell us about media representations of women and men news sources?
4. What is the difference, if any, between the roles that women and men play as seen in the media?
5. Now look at the two last columns. What are the main messages that you have noticed about men and women that are transmitted to us every day through the mainstream media etc.?
6. Compare these with the messages that others have found. Do you all agree?




Choose at least one example of gender aware reporting from the monitoring you have just done. What makes this story gender- aware? How would you define gender-responsive reporting?




"**Gender-responsive reporting** means a journalist must ensure they are not perpetuating stereotypes, and must give voice and space to issues affecting women. The best gender-responsive coverage also addresses subjects that have traditionally been side lined, it portrays women as having something to offer and as more than just objects, and it challenges male stereotypes".[16] It recognises that the role of the media is not just to reflect what is, but what could be".[17]

**Table 6: Gender and Media Classification**

| 1. Blatant stereotype | 2. Subtle stereotype |
|---|---|
| Articles or images in which women are presented in stereotypical roles such as victims or sex objects. | Articles or images that reinforce notions of women's domestic and men's more public roles in ways that make this seem normal, e.g. a mother's agony, rather than parents' agony over a child. |
| Articles or images in which men are presented in stereotypical roles such as strong entrepreneurs or leaders. | Articles in which women are referred to according to personal relationships that have no relevance to the story; e.g. a woman minister is referred to as the wife of someone. |
| 3. Missed opportunities / Gender-blind (GB) | 4. Gender-aware |
| Articles in which there is a lack of gender balance (and therefore of diversity) in sources, resulting in only one perspective being given on an issue. | **4A.** Articles and images that challenge stereotypes and prompt debate on topical gender issues from a human rights perspective, such as women pilots or men care givers. |
| Articles that lack a gender perspective in every day issues such as elections or the budget, depriving these stories of new and interesting angles, such as how cuts in grants affect poor women. | **4B.** Articles that have a gender balance of sources; demonstrating different perspectives/impact on women and men including through use of gender disaggregated data; for example, how many women and men receive certain types of grants; what they use them for and why cuts may have different kinds of impact. |
| | **4C.** Gender specific: Articles that concern inequality between women and men; structures, processes; campaigns to advance gender equality such as glass ceilings in certain types of occupation. |

*Source: Gender Links. 2011. Making Every Voice Count Reporting Southern Africa manual*




Take a random selection of news items and classify them according to the Gender and Media (GEM) classification into gender blind, subtle stereotypes, blatant stereotypes and gender aware reporting. What do you understand by these terms?

16 Ndlovu, S and Nyamweda, T, 2015. Whose News, Whose Views? Gender and Media Progress Study Southern Africa. Gender Links. Johannesburg.
17 Gender Links, 2003. Here is the News: Where are the women? Where are the men? Gender and Media Baseline Study, Southern Africa, Johannesburg.




**Gender blind:** News items or stories that could have been enriched and expanded by including a wider range of sources and viewpoints, or by shedding light on different implications for women and men. For example: a story about new legislation on divorce that includes only male news sources; a story about national unemployment that fails to consider its differential impact on women, men and families. News and stories often refer to 'people' as though they are a homogenous group. In many of these references there is a hidden assumption that 'people' are male. Gender blind stories include those whose range of sources is limited only to men or only to women (thus conveying the idea that this topic is of relevance just to one half of the population).

**Subtle stereotypes:** News articles or stories that reinforce traditional roles of women and men (e.g. a successful woman who is 'nevertheless a good wife'). Or stories that convey stereotyped beliefs, such as that women are emotionally fragile (e.g. more women are entering the professions, 'but this is accompanied by an increase in smoking and alcohol abuse').

**Blatant stereotypes:** News articles or stories that convey blatant gender stereotypes._ There may not be a large number of these, and they may be more prevalent in some media than in others. But when they do occur, they should be easily recognisable. To take just a few examples - news articles or stories which use language or visual images that denigrate women; that trivialise women's achievements; stories that admonish women, that glorify or justify male violence; that ridicule men in 'non-traditional' roles (e.g. male caregivers).[18]

**Gender aware:** Articles and images that challenge stereotypes and prompt debate on topical gender issues from a human rights perspective, such as women pilots or men care givers. This category also consists stories that have a gender balance of sources; demonstrating different perspectives/impact on women and men including through use of gender disaggregated data; for example, how many women and men receive certain types of grants; what they use them for and why cuts may have different kinds of impact. Stories in this category also look at stories that concern inequality between women and men; structures, processes; campaigns to advance gender equality such as glass ceilings in certain types of occupation.

**A gender specific story-** is a story on the media's agenda which deals with the power relations between women and men, gender equality and inequality between women and men and vice versa, the human right of women in relation to men and vice versa and the stories which deal with the resources and or voice by women and men.

## Stereotypes in visuals




Although there are gender stereotypes abound in advertisements, entertainment and in news, the media has made some progress. For example, women are beginning to be presented in traditionally male- dominated terrain as leaders in the public sphere. The media's coverage can redefine women's roles in society, thus changing the narrative on how women have been traditionally seen. The gender-imbalanced picture of society can reinforce and perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes. It is clear that the media must change how it reflects the world - but who can change media itself?

[18] Inter Press Service. 2001 Gender HIV/AIDs and Rights: A training manual for the media. Rome . Accessed 30 June 2021 Available at https://www.who.int/hiv/topics/vct/sw_toolkit/gender_hivaids_rights.pdf

The media plays a very significant role in shaping public perceptions about women and men, therefore it is important that reporting avoids any form of gender stereotypes, which often limit and trivialize women and men, as well as presenting an inaccurate view of the world and its possibilities. Furthermore, the use of stereotypes reflects a mental block not only in terms of what society may expect from women and men, but also - more seriously - in terms of what women and men may expect from themselves.[19]

UN Women argues that "the phenomenon of gender stereotypes needs to be countered and fought in multiple areas: in languages and vocabulary, laws, school curriculums and practices, mind-sets of people, justice systems, media and education, in different organizations and public authorities, in enterprises, and in individuals."[20]

According to Gender Links, challenging stereotypes in news stories may mean overturning common assumptions about women and about men - in relation to attributes, areas of expertise and competence, interests, and so on. For instance, a journalist may choose to include female experts in a story about national economic policy, or fathers in a story about playgroups for pre-school children.

However, stories may challenge stereotypes in ways that are more complex. For example, a report on voting preferences may dispel the perception that women are politically uninformed.

A story on working conditions may undermine the stereotype of men as being driven by ambition. Stories that challenge stereotypes will often go beyond the taken-for-granted reporting framework in terms of news angles, perspectives and points of view included.

Media can challenge stereotypes in various ways including the following:

1. Seeking more than one source and including sources that are often absent in the news, such as rural women. Although women can equally bring new perspectives to the content produced, women's voices are hardly consulted. Women are made invisible by the media's omission of their voices and their concerns from the mainstream discussion.
2. Portraying women in their non-traditional roles, such as women in leadership positions, and women in traditionally male industries such as mining.
3. Selecting stories that are often absent from the news agenda. The media sets the agenda of what becomes news. The media is a business that is driven by profit, like any other and the major concerns are on the bottom line. Therefore, often-developmental issues are not viewed as newsworthy. Furthermore, gender equality and women's empowerment are also not viewed as newsworthy.
4. Writing opinions and analytical pieces that highlight women's issues and be the informed voice that speaks on behalf of women and girls.

Chan Meetoo (2013), in her article on gender sensitive reporting encourages journalists to take care to ensure that their reporting does not discriminate on the basis of gender. She recommends set of questions to be used for testing for discrimination based on gender may include the following:

- Would I report this element if it was a man?
- Would I use the same adjectives and expressions if it was a man?
- Would I present the elements of the news story in the same order if it was a man?

[19] amsak, A. 2017 Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Reporting Accessed 30 June 2021 Available at http://www.ekvilib.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/en_GUIDELINES_FOR_GENDER_SENSITIVE_REPORTING.pdf

[20] UN Women. (2011, July 13). Countering Gender Discrimination and Negative Gender Stereotypes: Effective Policy Responses. Available at: http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2011/7/countering-gender-discrimination-and-negative-gender-stereotypes-effective-policy-responses

- Would the pictures used be of the same type if it was a man? For instance, am I trying to focus on parts of her body?

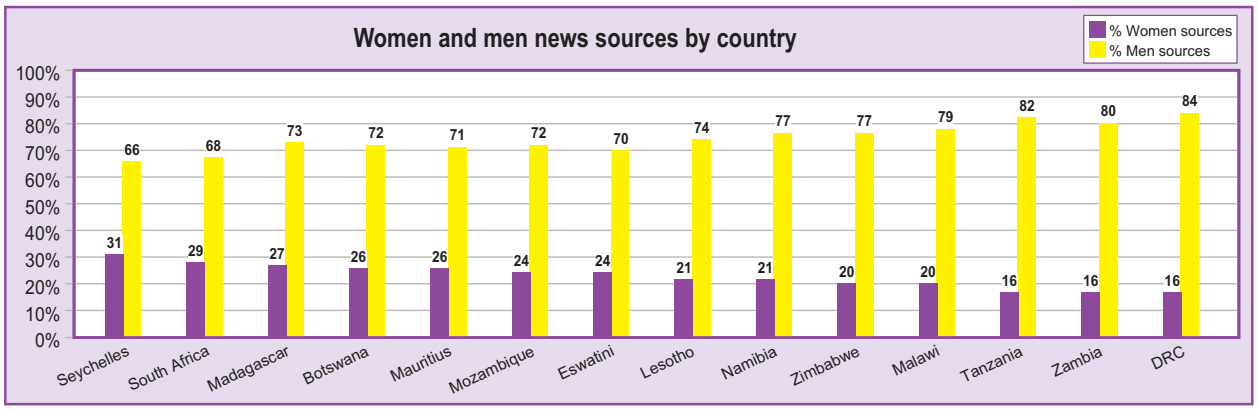
News Headlines may be another way in which stereotypes are peddled or where the highlights of the story are delivered in a gender insensitive way. "Headlines are intended to capture in a nutshell what stories are about, as well as be clever and eye catching. While accepting these imperatives, it is also a fact that gender stereotypes are pervasive in headline writing - and their effect is often more far reaching than the story itself."

The placement of stories in news programmes may also be another way where news is not looked at through a gender lens. For example, "fashion and food sections are aimed mostly at women, and most often reflect women protagonists; while sports and business sections are aimed primarily at, and mostly reflect men. Critical gender stories seldom make the top news stories often buried within news bulletin. This may suggest a lack prioritisation of this issue.

## Who makes the news

Study the graph below from the 2020 Regional Gender and Media Progress Study.

**Figure 1: Women and men sources in Southern Africa**




*Source: Gender Links. 2020. Gender and Media Progress Study*

- Which countries have the highest and lowest proportions of women's voices in the media? What are the percentages?
- How does your country perform compared to other countries?
- What do these figures tell us about who makes the news in the region as well as in your country?
- What could be the reason of such figures in the regional and in your country in particular?
- What can the media do to improve women's voices and perspective in news media content in your country?

The GMPS findings, as well as other content analyses at the regional and national level have clearly identified gender gaps. "Women do not set or influence news agendas and as such, public discourse formation in South Africa is still dominated by men."[21] The news is told largely through the voices and views of men.

Who speaks and who does not speak in and through the media remains one of the key issues for gender and media advocacy as the GMPS 2 findings show: Women's views and voices are marginalised in the world's news media.

[21] Ndlovu, S and Nyamweda, T. 2016. Whose News, Whose Views Gender and Media Progress Study. Gender Links Johannesburg.

## Role of the media

Media practitioners' perception of their role in news gathering production and dissemination is important




1. Write two (2) examples of what you see as your role as journalist in society.
2. Put the cards up on the wall or a board and walk through the various answers with the group.

The media can play a transformative role to help achieve gender equality in societies by creating gender-sensitive and gender-transformative content and breaking gender stereotypes. The media can also be transformative by challenging traditional social and cultural norms and attitudes regarding gender perceptions both in media content as well as in the media house day to day practices.

As an agenda setter, media has the capacity to lead the way towards gender equality through gender sensitive and gender transformative content. For this the media need coherent policies, rules, and mechanisms on all levels, starting with national media policies and media industry self-regulation.

A study carried out by Ylva Rodny-Gumede which gauges perceptions of the power held by women and men journalists in South Africa with regard to influencing news agendas and news content, and ascertains whether there are any noticeable differences in how female journalists perceive their role in society, and the way in which they frame and cover stories *vis-à-vis* their male counterparts notes that there are gender differences in how male and female journalists articulate their own role.

Rodny-Gumede notes that while male journalists put emphasis on a watchdog role, female journalists put the emphasis on engagement with particular communities, and argue for the news media to open up to previously neglected groups in society. There seems to be a greater awareness as well as willingness among female journalists to recognise marginalised communities, which are to a great extent made up of women and children.[22]

## Gender sensitivity in reporting Gender Based Violence




1. Identify key flaws in reporting on GBV you have seen or heard being used while reporting on violence against women.
2. Write down the imbalances in news reporting when we investigate and report about Gender Based Violence.

The media plays a critical role in not only raising awareness of GBV but also in counteracting myths and negative attitudes that may perpetuate violence. However, reporting on issues such as Gender Based Violence remains a challenge as it is often considered a private matter. "Media coverage of such incidents usually lacks gender awareness, with media enforcing and reinforcing GBV stereotypes through the messaging carried in its content. Much messaging around GBV in media texts remains inadequate, simply focusing on court reports and ignoring the gender dimensions of news stories. This leads to lack of breadth and depth in covering GBV stories."

[22] Y, Rodyny Gumede. 2015. Male and female journalists' perceptions of their power to influence news agendas and public discourses, Communication: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research, 41:2, 206-219, DOI: 10.1080/02500167.2015.1066409To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/1.1080/02500167.2015.106640

A study carried out by Gender Links on Gender, Diversity and GBV in South Africa Television in 2018 found the following:

- ✓ Women are heard more than men on GBV in TV news as women comprised 67% of sources in TV news on GBV.
- ✓ Stories on where to get support are still sparse, except in children's programming: Only 16% of TV news stories on GBV mentioned where to go for help. On the other hand, 67% of children's stories on GBV mentioned where to go for help. This reflects greater concern with help and support for children compared to women.
- ✓ There is very little focus on prevention: The breakdown of GBV topic categories shows that prevention constitutes 5% of GBV coverage in the news and 29% in children's programming. This is of concern, considering the potential powerful role of TV in spearheading prevention campaigns.

Below is a case study from the research which highlights the importance of having a diversity of sources in news reporting.

**Case study: Diverse sources make for more sensitive coverage of GBV**

Two case studies from the monitoring, one in which the reporter consulted one male source only, and another in which the reporter consulted a diversity of sources, illustrate why sources matter. On 14 January 2019 the SABC 3 News at 9 bulletin reported a story about the police believing they had arrested a serial killer and rapist who had been terrorising residents of eMbalenhle in Mpumalanga for the past four years. The story relies on one source - the police officer. A woman standing next to the police officer is not identified and says nothing.

*More on this case study can be accessed on this link: http://genderlinks.org.za/barometernewsletter/gender-based-violence/suspected-mpumalanga-serial-killer-nabbed/*

In contrast, a story aired on the same channel on 27 December 2018 shows three men appearing in the Taung Magistrate's court in North West accused of raping a 12-year-old girl. In keeping with ethical principles, the girl (who is a minor) is not shown. Instead, the reporter spoke to a variety women and men including the girl's mother and a male community leader expressing outrage and advocating that the man to take a stand in ending GBV. Women and men in the focus group discussion commended the sensitive handling of the story especially showing the offenders but not the victim. A male respondent said the media must expose the criminals and also the punishment given to those who perpetrate violence to send out a strong deterrent message. Another male respondent concurred: "We live in a broken society. It is disgusting to be seeing cases of this nature. We need to know more about this. It tells us that women are not safe and are vulnerable." All male respondents said this kind of behaviour must not be allowed to be normalised. A female respondent said, "Honestly it's sad it's hurtful, for me I would say it's hurtful for that innocent 12-year-old youth, she would have committed suicide but she saw that her family was standing beside her."

*More on this case study can be accessed from http://genderlinks.org.za/countryevents/gender-and-media-diversity-centre/three-accused-of-raping-a-12-year-old-girl*

The study recommends the following as some of the ways which can improve gender sensitivity in reporting on GBV:

- Diversification of sources and programming: Just as South African TV has made rapid strides in reflecting racial and ethnic diversity in its content, the same needs to be achieved for sex and gender identities.
- Creative ways of covering and challenging gender roles, norms and GBV will go a long way towards promoting gender equality.
- Collaboration with relevant institutions: The media across all genres should strengthen collaboration with government departments, civil society organisations, and activists towards challenging gender stereotypes and raising awareness on GBV. Media houses covered in this monitoring are encouraged to engage with GL on the specific findings for their media houses and use these to inform internal policies and procedures.
- In-depth reporting and content creation: Audience fatigue on GBV can be challenged with new and innovative approaches that centre personal experiences and triumphs, shifting the narrative from victims to survivors.
- Highlight the structural drivers of GBV-GBV is not an isolated incident but rather works within a larger patriarchal context with several structural drivers.

## Reporting on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

***What is IPV***

IPV is a type of domestic violence against a spouse or intimate partner. It does not include other relationships in domestic settings, e.g. family members.

Despite evidence of the pervasiveness of intimate femicide, this is often an overlooked topic. The media portrays the issue as an individualised problem happening in the private realm instead of placing it within the context of a widespread social issue.

When covering IPV providing context on domestic violence and intimate femicide is more than providing information on the "where, what and how" of the incident.

It is important to provide information on the underlying drivers of GBV which often leads to intimate femicide for example drivers of GBV including patriarchal gender norms, and/or substance abuse of both perpetrator and victim.

Position IPV in the broader context of GBV as a social issue to avoid the perception that it is a once off occurrence and not the end point of a long history of abuse that has occurred over time, which is often the case in most IPV incidences. Remember event-focussed reporting distracts people from seeing the bigger picture of the issue and how it can be controlled or solved.

**Interviewing survivors of GBV**

Knowing how to engage survivors in news reporting is important. Media practitioners must take a survivor centred approach when reporting on GBV. This is an approach that seeks to empower survivors by putting them at the centre of the healing process. The golden rule of interviewing is to let the people who are closest to the story tell their story. Health officials, experts and NGO workers will be able to give lots of solid facts and strong background to strengthen the story, but the people directly and most affected should be the main voices in the story. Place yourself in the shoes of the survivors and show compassion when approaching for interview.

Below are some tips suggested by Sonke Gender Justice in their Reporting on Gender-Based Violence Guide for journalists and editors. to help journalists before, during and after interviewing survivors of violence:

## Before interviewing

### *1. Research*

Inform yourself about the impact GBV has on survivors and trauma they may be experiencing. This will aid in your compassion and sensitivity when interviewing them.

### *2. Build trust*

Spend time with your interviewee before the interview. The more of a relationship you have with the interviewee, the more comfortable they will be, which will allow for a better interview.

### *3. Format*

a. Schedule the interview in a safe space that is pre-approved by the survivor.
b. Ensure that there is enough time and that the interview is not rushed.
c. Take the time to review your process with the survivor.
d. Allow the survivor to bring a support person to accompany them during the interview.
e. Prepare a comfort kit for your interviewee, including tissues and water.

### *4. Check your assumptions*

Be aware of the assumptions you take into the interview. Do not approach the interview with negative assumptions, e.g. they are making it up, they could have prevented it, to observe before an interview, during and after an interview, and when conducting an interview on that is broadcast on radio or television. This is followed by examples of types of questions to ask. they should be over it by now. Recovering from trauma is a process and takes time. Be mindful and compassionate about this.

### *5. Crisis numbers*

Ensure that you have crisis numbers on hand for the interviewee. While they have agreed to be interviewed, they may be triggered by the memories. However, do source additional numbers that are relevant and specific to the interviewee's potential needs and area or province.

### *6. Expectations*

Have an open conversation with the interviewee about your expectations and the information you need and provide them with some sample questions of what you might ask. This will prepare the interviewee and will allow them the space to inform you of their boundaries. You may need to then adjust your questions accordingly.

### *7. Informed consent*

It is vital that the interviewee is made fully aware of the consequences of being interviewed, including:

a. The intended publication.
b. That they will remain anonymous (unless they give express permission otherwise.

## During an Interview

### *1. Show compassion*

Retelling a story of experiencing GBV can be difficult and traumatic. Be compassionate and understanding, and do not shame or blame the survivor for the violence perpetrated against him/her. Panic attacks are common symptoms of trauma and may arise during the interview.

### *2. Body language*

Be aware of your body language during the interview. Allow enough space between yourself and the interviewee to make them feel comfortable.

### *3. Touch*

Do not touch the interviewee, unless they have given you permission to do so to comfort them. If you touch them without permission, they might feel triggered or uncomfortable.

### *4. Acknowledge different experiences*

No two survivors are the same. Experiences of GBV differ from person to person and are shaped by race, class, gender, sexuality, disability and other social locations. The interview provides a space in which to explore these intersectionalities, which are important to frame your article in. It is important to honour each person's individual experiences and to be aware that there is no right or wrong way to act during the interview.

### *5. Respect boundaries*

Survivors have the right to choose how and when they want to tell their story, as well as what they are willing to tell. If a survivor is uncomfortable answering a question, do not probe for more information.

***6. Stay on topic***

Do not add questions that veer from the initial pre-interview discussion on expectations and sample questions. If you are going to ask difficult questions, explain why you are asking them, e.g. "I am going to ask you about the incident. I am doing this because I want to ensure the accuracy of my article and do justice to your experience."

***7. Identification***

A. Ask how the survivor would like to be identified, i.e. Survivor, victim, person who experienced violence etc.
B. Ask if would they like to remain anonymous, be identified by pseudonym or their real name. This will have been established during the informed consent process.
C. Ask what words they use to describe the violence perpetrated against them, e.g. Rape, sexual assault etc. Ensure that the editor is aware of these factors and why it is important not to change them.

***8. Use of photos***

Do not take photos of the interviewee unless they have given their written and informed consent. The use of stock photography that portrays violence in an indelicate way, such as a photo of a woman with a black eye or bleeding, should generally also be avoided. This just adds shock value and is a reminder of what violence looks like, as many people have experienced this.

***9. End the interview well***

Ask the interviewee if they would like to add anything else and ensure that you bring the conversation back to the present and to things the interviewee finds safe.

**After the interview**

***1. Respect privacy***

Principled, ethical journalism means respecting the privacy of the interviewee and their family. As such, you need to be careful of 'jigsaw identification' when granting anonymity. This is when audiences are able to piece together details, such as the location, clothing or age of the survivor, even though you don't name them specifically.

***2. Be impartial***

It is your responsibility not to judge or discriminate. Stay away from implying that the survivor was to blame by mentioning clothes worn, the survivor's appearance or their level of inebriation. While you may want to add 'colour' to your story, this can unintentionally lead to the onus of blame being taken away from the perpetrator and placed on the survivor.

***3. Follow up***

a. Make yourself available for contact after the interview.
b. Before sending the article to the editor, allow the survivor to review it to ensure that their story is accurately captured.
c. If they feel uncomfortable with something and want it edited or removed, do so.
d. Remind them of support crisis numbers that are available to them post-interview.

To remedy some of these challenges, Sonke Gender Justice also suggests the use of more sensitive language. "The use of correct language is critical when reporting on GBV, otherwise it could lead to stigmatisation, secondary victimisation and further trauma for the survivor. Coverage of issues related to GBV can be improved through the careful and nuanced use of language. Over time, this has the potential to influence social attitudes and to curb rape culture."

Here are some of the language **do's** and **don'ts** when it comes to reporting on GBV:

**DO** use the descriptor that an interviewee prefers, e.g. "Survivor". Many people prefer the term "survivor" because it conveys agency and resilience.
**DO** use neutral language when describing a survivor sharing their story, e.g. "shares", "tells" or "reports". This implies that the survivor is speaking the truth.
**DO** use language that places the accountability for sexual abuse with the perpetrator. E.g. "He raped her" (for legal purposes you may have to add the word "allegedly" when applicable).

**DO** use language that accurately conveys the gravity of the sexual assault.
**DO** use language that portrays the violence and non-consensual nature of sexual assault. E.g. "Sexual assault"; "oral rape".
**DO** use language that conveys that sexual assault is violence, not sex. E.g. "Rape"; "sexual assault"; "oral rape".
**DO** use language to make the perpetrator the subject of the sentence and assign the verb to them. I.e. "The perpetrator forced the survivor to perform fellatio against her will."
**DO** use "sex work" and "sex worker". This avoids moral judgement and treats the selling and buying of sexual services as a work matter with implications for labour law and occupational health and safety rights.

**DON'T** default to the descriptor "victim" unless this is the wording an interviewee prefers. Many people feel "victim" has negative connotations.
**DON'T** use phrases such as "the survivor admits/confesses" to describe a report of sexual abuse. This language implies responsibility or shame on the part of the survivor.
**DON'T** use language describing the abuse as belonging to the survivor. E.g. "Her rape" - this removes the perpetrator's accountability DON'T use language downplaying the violent nature of the sexual assault. E.g. "The survivor was unharmed"
**DON'T** use euphemistic language to describe sexual assault. This is vague and lessens the seriousness of the act. E.g. "Forced sex"; "sex scandal"; "private parts" Avoid needlessly including salacious details of the assault. Only include specifics if there is a valid need to do so.
**DON'T** use language that describes sexual violence as sex, not violence. E.g. "Oral sex"; "sexual activity"; "non-consensual sex"; "forced sex".
**DON'T** use language to make the survivor the subject of the sentence and assign the verb to them. I.e. "The victim performed fellatio against their will."
**DON'T** use "prostitution" or "prostitute". This historically refers to shameful acts and carries negative connotations linked to inaccurate information.

Sonke Gender Justice has also developed a checklist for journalists and editors to help guide them to be more gender sensitive when reporting on GBV it can be applied to, but not limited to, headlines, interviews, article content, imagery and social media posts.

### Checklist when Reporting on Gender-Based Violence

- ✓ Take into account the 'Importance of Language'
- ✓ Ensure that survivors, especially those from marginalised communities, are included and given the space to speak on the issue.
- ✓ Speak to a diversity of sources, especially GBV experts. Don't focus solely on police, legal or perpetrators' voices.
- ✓ DO include up to date, reliable statistics and interrogate the validity of these within your article. We may want to use popular statistics that add shock value, but these are often incorrect. Africa Check is a great resource and produces useful factsheets with accurate information. For some of these, see the footnotes below 18, 19, 20, 21. DO provide context! Position your article and interview within the context of patriarchal gender norms, intersectionality, and the larger problem of GBV.
- ✓ DO provide information on local support services in your article for the reader to access AND following your interview with a survivor.
- ✓ DO take into account and reflect on your own position as interviewer and reporter relative to the identity of the people whose stories you are telling, e.g. a white cis-gendered person writing about black LGBTQIA persons.

- ✓ DO use trigger warnings appropriately. Only use these if the content of your article is explicit in nature and may potentially trigger secondary traumatisation in another survivor.
- ✓ DO cross-check your facts and information in research and other documents.
- ✓ DON'T report details that could put the survivor at further risk, e.g. names, photos, unless specific consent is given.
- ✓ DON'T make public the names or any identifying features of child victims.
- ✓ DON'T make public the names of reported perpetrators of sexual offences until they have pleaded in court. This is according to Section 154 of the Criminal Procedure Act.
- ✓ DON'T use headlines and taglines are sensationalist or false, such as "sex scandal" or "controversy". DON'T focus on the survivors' clothing, addictions, sexuality, employment, past relationships or their drinking behaviour.
- ✓ DON'T focus on facts that make perpetrators appear to be 'unlikely' rapists, e.g. "upstanding citizen", "star athlete", "volunteer in the community". This suggests bias towards their innocence.
- ✓ DON'T suggest that the difference in power between the survivor and perpetrator is an attempt to tarnish the image of a public figure or a revenge stunt by a 'jilted ex-girlfriend'.
- ✓ DON'T assume that all survivors are the same, be it in their experience or their reactions.
- ✓ DON'T use stock photos that portray violence in an indelicate way, such as a photo of a woman with a black eye. This just adds shock value and is a reminder of what violence looks like as many people have experienced this themselves and know what it looks like. Rather use photos showing the context in which the abuse occurred, e.g. a photo of the crime scene.

CHAPTER 4

# Normative Frameworks supporting gender sensitivity in the media

## Objectives

- Introduce the key provisions of the SADC Gender Protocol on Media and Information, Beijing Declaration as guiding instruments.
- Raise awareness on the relevance of these provisions to the operations of media houses in South Africa.
- Assess knowledge of the media participants on the policies and protocols that promote gender sensitivity in the media.

## Learning outcomes

- Participants will have a clear understanding of the media provisions of the different policies and their applicability to their individual media houses as well as how they can use these instruments to guide media practices.

## Introduction

The media like all other institutions, must comply with the national and regional laws, policy commitments and protocols on gender equality and women's human rights. As much as the media are watch dogs they should also be watched and gauged on their compliance. It is thus important for the media practitioners at all levels to have full understanding and knowledge of the national laws and policies on gender equality and women's rights as well as commitments that the country has made and be able to play their part in championing these

There are several international conventions and declarations that provide a rights-based framework for gender and media as well as a basis for the role the media should and can play in promoting women's human rights and gender equality.

**Table 7: International, African and Sub-Regional Instruments for Gender equality in the media**

| Instrument | Year | General provisions |
|---|---|---|
| **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** | **1979** | "State parties shall take all appropriate measure... To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the ideas of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women." |
| **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Section J 1** | **1995** | Encourage the participation of women in the development of professional guidelines and codes of conduct or other appropriate self-regulatory mechanisms to promote balanced and non-stereotyped portrayals of women by the media. |
| | | Promote research and implementation of a strategy of information, education and communication aimed at promoting a balanced portrayal of women and girls and their multiple roles. |
| **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Section J 2** | | Encourage gender-sensitive training for media professionals, including media owners and managers, to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women in the media. |

| Instrument | Year | General provisions |
|---|---|---|
| | | Promote the concept that the sexist stereotypes displayed in the media are gender discriminatory, degrading in nature and offensive. |
| | | Develop, consistent with freedom of expression, professional guidelines and codes of conduct and other forms of self-regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women. |
| | | Promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities through media campaigns that emphasize gender equality and non-stereotyped gender roles of women and men within the family. |
| **Southern Africa Protocol on Gender and Development** | **2008 revised 2015** | 1. States Parties shall enact legislation, and develop national policies and strategies including professional guidelines and codes of conduct to prevent and address gender stereotypes and discrimination in the media. |
| | | 2. States Parties shall ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all information, communication and media policies, programmes, laws and training |
| | | 3. States Parties shall 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 |
| | | 4. States Parties shall take measures to promote the equal representation of women in the ownership of, and decision making structures of the media |
| | | 5. States Parties shall take measures to discourage the media from:<br>(a) promoting pornography and violence against all persons, especially women and children;<br>(b) depicting women as helpless victims of violence and abuse;<br>(c) degrading or exploiting women, especially in the area of entertainment and advertising, and undermining their role and position in society; and<br>(d) reinforcing gender oppression and stereotypes. |
| | | 6. States Parties shall 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 and that challenge gender stereotypes. |
| | | 7. States Parties shall 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. |
| **African Union's Agenda 2063** | **2015** | The medias potential to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment GEWE is mirrored in the African Union Agenda 2063 which speaks of "critical enablers of African transformation" including ownership of the African narrative and brand to ensure that it reflects continental realities aspirations and priorities and Africa's position in the world"[23] |

[23] African Union Commission, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2015). Accessible at: http://www.agenda2063.au.int/en/home




### Media provisions

- Do you think these are realistic for individual journalists and their media houses to adhere to in order to promote gender sensitivity in media content? Please elaborate.
- Which of these areas cited have been the focus of your media house to improve gender equality? Give examples.
- Which issue(s) have not been the focus of your organisation? Give examples?
- To ensure a gender sensitive and aware environment and newsroom culture. Which issues would your organisation prioritise and Why?

The media was identified as one of the Critical Areas of Concern in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) and in the lobbying and advocacy on the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The SADC Protocol on Gender goes further than the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development(SDGD) which "encouraged the mass media to disseminate information and materials in respect of the human rights of women and children." It contains wide-ranging provisions to measure progress as detailed above. Media houses have been encouraged by both the Protocol and the Beijing Declaration to promote sensitivity in their media houses.




What are the key media laws and policies that ensure gender is mainstreamed in content and in institutional practice within your institution?

CHAPTER 5

# Gender in media content and media institutions

## Objectives

This module aims to:

- Discuss the status of women in the media.
- Discuss some of the barriers to women's advancement in the media.
- Discuss practices that may create unsafe and unequal working conditions in the media.

## Learning outcomes

At the end of this module:

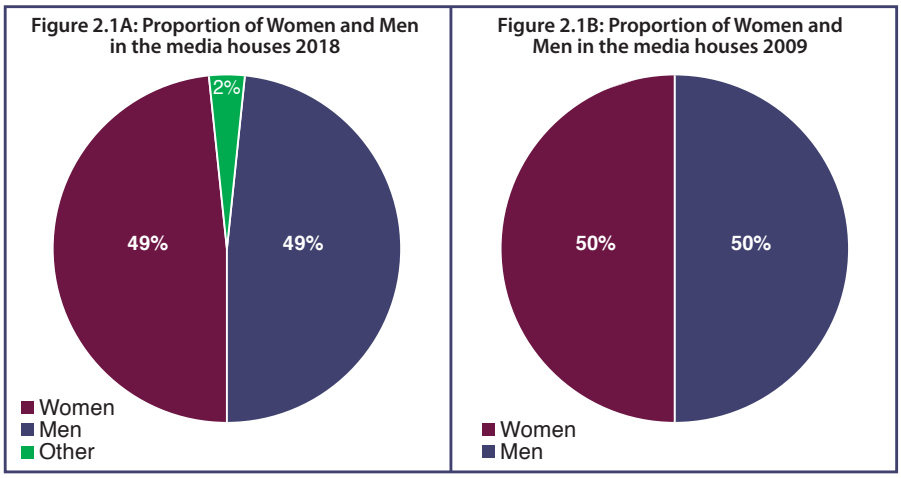
- Participants gain an understanding of key gender and media issues.
- Participants have an understanding of the importance of main-streaming gender in institutional practice.

Gender Links in partnership with South Africa National Editors Forum (SANEF) and Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) in 2018 conducted a research on the composition of women in the media under the title *Glass Ceiling: Women in South Africa Newsrooms*. The study sought to undertake a follow up comprehensive survey on where women and men are in the media industry, especially decision-making and ownership structures, institutional culture and practices. The research also sought to probe the gendered dimensions of ICTs in the media. Working closely with SANEF, GL audited newsrooms by taking the numbers, occupational levels and earnings, and analysing their gender dimensions undertake a follow up comprehensive survey on where women and men are in the media industry, especially decision-making and ownership structures, institutional culture and practices.

According to the International Women's Media Foundation, a ***glass ceiling*** is an invisible but real barrier to advancement of women in the workplace, where they can be blocked by sexism, sexist practices, sexual harassment, pregnancy, patriarchal views and prejudices, in hiring and promotions as well as salary disparities with men.




**Figure 2: Women and men in South Africa media houses**



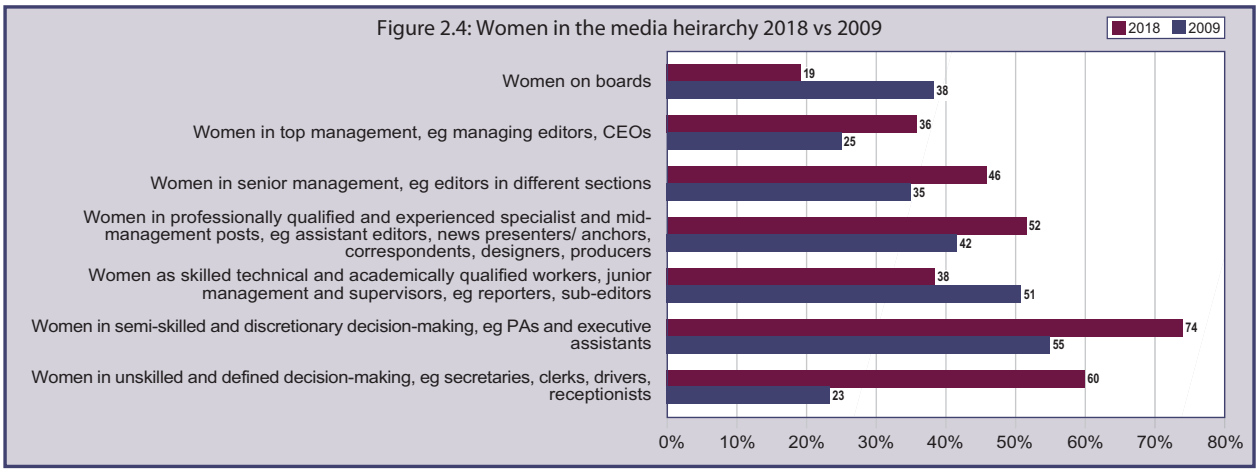

*Source: Glass Ceiling 2018 research Gender in South Africa media houses.*

South African news media have reached near gender parity in terms of the representation of women in the media. However, the question is whether this close to 50/50 representation in the media is translating into women having equal power

to influence news agendas, and increased gender sensitivity and awareness in the media. Furthermore, the level of participation and influence of women in the media also has implications for media content: women media professionals are more likely to reflect other women's needs and perspectives than their male colleagues.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that not all women working in the media will be gender aware and prone to cover women's needs and perspectives; and it is not impossible for men to effectively cover gender issues. However, a critical mass of women and men working in the media can help to view the world through a gender sensitive lens and transform content as well as practices to become gender sensitive.

**Figure 3: Women in different occupational levels**




*Source: Glass Ceiling 2018 research Gender in South Africa media houses.*




**Study the graph above**

Where are women and men positioned?

How often do we see women in key positions?

Does sex have anything to do with the roles women and men occupy in the media?



**Reflect** on the roles that women and men have in your media house.

Do women and men play stereotypical roles.

What strategies can be used to change the prevailing trends to enable an equal working environment.




According to the GMPS 2015 the media remains unfriendly to women especially regarding the environments in which they have to work: long, irregular hours that force upon them the dual roles of juggling the domestic and professional responsibilities.

The research recommends that there is need for more work to be done to adopt gender sensitive policies that can create women friendly work environments that can allow more women to progress in the industry and to break the medias glass ceiling once and for all.

Creating gender sensitive work environments also means having work environments in which all people feel safe from practices that may hinder their effective participation in the workplace such as sexual harassment.




**Sexual Harassment** is undesirable behaviour not solicited or reciprocal (sometimes of a sexual nature or connotations), against people in position of minor control and

power or circumstances. Some basic characteristics of sexual harassment are that:

- It is often assumed to be common and natural behaviour.
- Can include an implicit or explicit discriminatory action.
- Low level and embarrassing attitude.
- Can be perceived as inoffensive but this kind of behaviour is confirmed by a more serious and insidious attitude.
- This violation is often not isolated.

UNESCO notes the following as the impact of sexual harassment

Consequences of sexual harassment[24]

- Intimidating.
- Embarrassing.
- Humiliating.
- Frightening.
- Women feel like they do not really have power.
- Women can predict the next sexual harassment situation.
- Nobody believes her accusations.
- Women accused of having no sense of humour.
- Women feel guilty for having been sexually harassed.

Secondary Consequences

- Lack of self-esteem and confidence.
- Reduction of profession career prospects.
- Changing work and difficulties of finding another work,
- Stress, tiredness, dependency, etc.

The 2018 Glass Ceiling research noted that Sexual harassment is a daily reality for women in the media, but is not prioritised. In the research 87% of media houses said they had sexual harassment policies, compared to 82% in 2009. Almost all media houses (91%) reported dealing with sexual harassment cases. Countless first-hand accounts in the report attest to sexist attitudes and practices at work and in the field. Respondents agreed that race, growing audiences, reaching new audiences and beating competitors are a much higher priority at the moment than gender.

In 2018, The SABC set up a commission of inquiry into sexual harassment. The case study below shows some action taken by the SABC to tackle sexual harassment in the media house.

**Case study: SABC urged to act swiftly against perpetrators of sexual harassment**

The SABC has suspended alleged perpetrators who were identified in its Commission of Inquiry into Sexual Harassment.

Those implicated include the alleged "sex-for-jobs" perpetrators, who have been served with requisite notices to afford them an opportunity to make written submissions as to why they believe the preliminary suspensions should not be made final.

Some of those implicated are managers at the public broadcaster.

The Commission's report also identified additional employees who may have been complicit by either aiding or abetting sexual harassment, through their act of omission or commission. "The SABC is in the process of formulating charges (against those complicit) in line with HR policies and legislation," the broadcaster's spokesperson Neo Momodu said.

The SABC believes it has sufficient grounds to investigate further and has consequently issued suspension notices to the alleged

[24] UNESCO 2001. Gender Sensitive Reporting Manual.

perpetrators confirming their suspensions, pending a disciplinary inquiry", she concluded.

The commission also found that the SABC was complicit in some cases, accusing the broadcaster of being oblivious to infringements of its sexual harassment policies.

It is currently unclear how many alleged perpetrators have been suspended, and which positions of management some of them hold.

Chaired by Barbara Watson, the commission recommended that the disciplinary processes be reheard in all the cases it had investigated.

Watson's commission also revealed that the public broadcaster's sexual harassment policies did not meet international standards, and needed to be reviewed.

Among the commission's other finding was that a strong perception existed that human resources personnel and senior managers colluded and that most senior managers had a serious lack of knowledge and understanding of human rights statutes, gender relations and issues of power relations between men and women.

At a media briefing in November, Watson said that "It was disturbing that none of the cases which have been reported have had the perpetrator being held to account." The SABC board approved her recommendations for execution.

**Questions**

- Comment on how this sexual harassment issue was handled.
- In your media house are there any policies that promote gender sensitivity including in institutional practices.
- How can these be strengthened?

Below are some practical ways adapted from International Federation of Journalists on increasing awareness on sexual harassment in the media:

**Combating sexual harassment**[25]

Create awareness about sexual harassment at the workplace, and the need to combat it. This can be done through posters, handouts, pamphlets, bulletins, notices, badges (something like 'Zero tolerance Zone for sexual Harassment').

Ensure that the workplace has a policy to deal with sexual harassment at the workplace, and has set up a Complaints Committee as required by law.

Ensure that sexual harassment is listed as 'misconduct' in the media organisations policies and codes of conduct

Lobby to ensure union representation on the Complaints Committee, to counter any trends towards anti-labour practices.

Conduct workshops to promote gender sensitivity amongst staff.

Support anyone who complains about sexual harassment, and assist them to in pursuing justice

[25] International Federation of Journalists, 2009: A handbook on gender equality in journalism.

Ensure all complaints are taken seriously and given due focus and investigated promptly and fairly and that all parties involved will be treated with respect and sensitivity.

Ensure that survivors who come forward are not subjected to secondary victimisation.

Some practical actions that media houses can make to promote equality of women and men in the media include as suggested by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority and UN Women include:

- Ensure gender parity in higher editorial positions by regularly reviewing and analysing the presence of women in higher positions.
- Make a gender conscious decision when professional development opportunities come for journalists and other media professionals in the institution.
- Hold regular gender and media workshops and trainings for employees to ensure all employees are equipped with enough knowledge.

**Tips:**

- Always be alert if the editorial policies protect women's rights in the institution.
- Make sure that women are included in the committees that approve employment and promotions.
- Ensuring enough female professionals are being represented.
- Having a clear quota for gender equality.

CHAPTER 6

# Gender sensitive media ethics

## Objectives

This module seeks to define media ethics, and provides an outline of the key principles of journalism, including examples of ethical guidelines.

- It also seeks to assist media practitioners acquire a sense of gender sensitive media ethics.
- Identify and apply the gender dimensions of media ethics when undertaking their work;
- Identify ways of addressing ethical dilemmas and challenges that might confront them in the process of news reporting and management.

## Learning outcomes

Practitioners will be enabled to define media ethics and provide examples of the ethical guidelines and principles which are crucial in reporting.




1. Has your media house developed a code of ethics code of ethics?
2. What does this code of ethics say about gender sensitivity in the media apart from the caution to avoid discrimination and offence on the basis of 'race, colour, age, sex, religion, social origin, marital status, physical or mental disability'.

Lavinia Mohr the former World Association of Christian Communicators (WACC) General Secretary notes that "We know that quality journalism is ethical journalism, and that ethical journalism includes full and fair representation of the actions, opinions, concerns and aspirations of women around the world." Therefore, it is important to look at media ethics in line of gender sensitivity.

### What are media ethics?

**Ethical principles of journalism**[26]

The Ethical Journalism Network has come up with some Five Core Principles of journalism which include the following:

**Truth and Accuracy:** Although journalists cannot always guarantee the 'truth', getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of journalism. Journalists need to strive for accuracy ensuring that all the relevant facts have been checked. If a reporter cannot corroborate information, they should mention this.

**Independence:** Journalists must be independent voices; and should not act, formally or informally, on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural. Journalists should declare to our editors - or the audience - any of our political affiliations, financial arrangements or other personal information that might constitute a conflict of interest.

**Fairness and impartiality:** Most stories have at least two sides. While there is no obligation to present every side in every piece, stories should be balanced and include context. Objectivity is not always possible, and may not always be desirable, for instance in the face of brutality or inhumanity. However, impartial reporting builds trust and confidence. Humanity Journalists should do no harm, and should aim to ensure that what they publish or broadcast is not hurtful and detrimental to the lives of others.

[26] Ethical Journalism Network (2017), The Five Principles of Journalism. The Ethical Journalism Bulletin, London: The Ethical Journalism Net-work, http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/who-we-are/5-principles-of-journalism

**Accountability:** The professional ethics of journalists requires that they should hold themselves accountable. When a reporter commits errors, they must correct them and our expressions of regret must be sincere not cynical.



Using your understanding of the key principles and standards of ethical journalism detailed above, share some positive as well as negative case studies from your media houses where using following media ethics worked for the best and on the other hand share instances where news stories had unintended negative consequences.

### Gender aware reporting and media ethics practical guide

Below are some ethical and gender considerations that journalists can take to promote gender sensitive and ethical reporting.

**Table 8: Ethical and Gender Considerations**[27]

| ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS | GENDER CONSIDERATIONS |
|---|---|
| SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE | |
| Inform yourself continuously | Are you up to date on gender debates/ issues? |
| Be honest, fair and courageous | Do you give women and men equal voice? |
| Give voice to the voiceless | Do you consciously seek out the voices of women? |
| Hold the powerful accountable | When asking policy related questions do you consider the different impact on women and men? |
| ACT INDEPENDENTLY | |
| Guard the role of a free press in an open society | Do you see giving equal voice to women and men as intrinsic to press freedom? |
| Seek out and disseminate competing perspectives | Do you treat women as a homogenous group? |
| Refrain from associations and activities that may compromise your integrity/damage your credibility | Do any of the associations you belong to exhibit or condone sexist behaviour? |
| Individual responsibility/collaborative effort | Are you willing, and have you cultivated allies in your organisation for challenging gender biases in reporting? |
| MINIMISE HARM | |
| Compassion for those affected by your actions | Do you consider the secondary violence that women in powerless positions may experience when deciding how to write the story? Do you discuss this with them, and find ways around it? |
| Treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect | Do you treat women subjects/sources exactly as you would treat men subjects/sources? |
| Balance harm and discomfort with alternatives that maximize the goal of truth telling | Do you use a story on gender violence not just to highlight the plight of the individual concerned, but the underlying issues? |

*Source: African Union and UN Women. 2017. A Handbook for Reporters on Women, Peace and Security.*




What is the relationship between media ethics and gender aware reporting? Is there a contradiction? Do the two go hand in hand? Do they reinforce each other?

[27] African Union and UN Women. 2017. A Handbook for Reporters on Women, Peace and Security: Ensuring gender-responsive reporting in conflict affected countries in Africa.

While reporters and journalists can be as careful and ethical as possible, the fact remains that their copy gets handled by numerous other people who edit their words, decide where the story is placed and write the headline that goes above it. The power lies in the hands of the news editors.

By showing care and sensitivity in their writing, journalists limit the possibilities of their copy being re-angled in a manner they would not like or having a sensational headline assigned to their stories. They also, by implication, guard their own reputations. These same principles apply equally to photographs.

Below is a case study of how Tanzania developed their media gender code of ethics.

**Case study: The Tanzania Media Gender Code of Ethics**

Tanzania is one of the few countries in Southern country which has deemed developed a specific gender code of ethics for journalism, which was been adopted by stakeholders in 2009. The Media Council of Tanzania thus has a Media Gender Code of Ethics which is meant to be read together with its Professional Code of Ethics for Journalists. This code starts by providing a useful definition of terms such as discrimination, gender stereotyping, negative gender portrayal and sexist language. The main sections cover the following:

**Accuracy and fairness:** equal space for men and women, more gender specific coverage to challenge stereotypes, training for journalists and continuous learning on gender issues.

**Balance, credibility and impartiality:** diversity regardless of social standing, involvement of women in production of gender related programmes.

**Accountability:** holding all policy makers accountable for gender mainstreaming.

**Gender stereotyping:** avoiding identification of sexual violence, exploitation of women and children as helpless or deserving victims, degrading women, gender oppression and stereotyping, glamourising violence against women, depiction of sexual acts.

**Language:** use of sexist language, over-simplification, respect for dignity.

**Marketing and advertising:** gender stereotyping and negative portrayals.

**Gender sensitivity within workplaces:** gender balance in recruitment and selection policies, inclusive access to training and mentoring, sexual harassment policies, equal opportunities in allocation of news beats, career pathing and promotion.




Learning from the Tanzania good practice above discuss the aspects that should be covered in a gender sensitive code of ethics for the media.

CHAPTER 7

# Creating gender sensitive content in the media

## Objectives

To offer practical ways to strengthen gender sensitivity in news content.

## Learning outcomes

Media practitioners are able to create more gender sensitive content.

## Gender sensitivity in news content

By showing care and sensitivity in their writing, journalists limit the possibilities of their copy being re-angled in a manner they would not like or having a sensational headline assigned to their stories. These same principles apply equally to photographs.[28] To strengthen the way news is told in a more gender sensitive and responsive manner the media need to pay attention to a number of things. These include ensuring diversity voices and perspectives shown in the stories, including the voices of women, men, boys, girls gender non-conforming persons and relevant minorities; avoiding portraying any stereotypes, sensitivity to interviewees and audiences and sensitivity in language use; avoiding information which may create or recreate sexism in the media or which result in women being marginalised amongst other things.

There are various ways in which gender sensitivity and awareness can be measured in the media. The Gender Sensitive Indicators for the Media (GSIM) developed by UNESCO give guidance on practical ways to gauge levels of gender awareness in the editorial content of news media as it relates to a wide range of news and current affairs media forms and coverage.

Below is an extract from the GSIM on how the media can measure gender awareness in media representation and portrayal as well as how to verify that this has been done in the content.

This outline of indicators to measure levels of gender awareness in the editorial content of news media relates to a wider range of news and current affairs media forms and coverage than daily news reports.[28]

The media can use this to measure and reflect on their performance.

**Gender Sensitive Indicators**

**Strategic Objective 1:** Balanced presence of women and men -reflecting the composition of society, and human experiences, actions, views and concerns, in media coverage of news and current affairs.

**Critical area of concern:** Gender parity in editorial content of news media (written, broadcast and/or posted online by private, community and/or public media)

- Proportions of women and men seen, heard or read about in news & current affairs content.

[28] Sonke Gender Justice and Health-E News. (2017). Reporting on Gender-Based Violence: A Guide for Journalists and Editors. Sonke Gender Justice

[29] UNESCO. 2011. Gender Sensitive Indicators for the Media

- Proportions of women and men directly interviewed/quoted in news & current affairs content as sources of information and/or opinion.
- Proportions of women and men appearing as Spokespersons; Experts; 'Ordinary' citizens/vox pops in news & current affairs content.
- Proportion of external or societal orientation of women and men seen, heard or read about in news & current affairs content including images (e.g. work-related rather than home-related, relationship-related rather than family relationship-related).
- Proportions of women and men seen, heard or read about in news & current affairs content disaggregated according to social status (e.g. wealthy, working class, political elite, poor and rural).
- Proportions of women and men seen, heard or read about and/or interviewed/quoted as sources of information/opinion in news & current affairs content differentiated according to thematic areas such as 1) Politics & government; 2) Economics & business; 3) War & conflict; 3) Science & technology; 4) Sports; 5) Other.
- Percentage of stories focusing centrally/specifically on women and/or issues of special relevance/concern to women in news & current affairs content (e.g. gender-based violence, women's rights, women's achievements, etc.)
- Proportion of time/space and prominence (in respect to prime time or peak hours, front page or feature story) given to stories featuring women as sources of information/opinion and/or focusing centrally on women or issues of special relevance/concern to women in news & current affairs content.

**MEANS OF VERIFICATION**

- Sex-disaggregated analysis of news & current affairs content retrieved from media archives or independent studies carried out by other stakeholders including NGOs.
- Monitoring and sex-disaggregated analysis of news & current affairs content.
- Assessment reports on and/or evaluations/critiques of news & current affairs content by managers, editors and/or journalists and other media workers.

**Strategic objective 2:** Fair portrayal of women and men through elimination of stereotypes and promotion of multi-dimensional representation/portrayal

**Critical area of concern:** Gender portrayal in editorial content of news media (written, broadcast and/or posted online by private, community and/or public media)

**INDICATORS**

1. Proportion of stories with stereotypes (openly sexist interpretations of the characteristics and roles of women and men in society).
2. Proportions of stories with stereotypes (depiction of traditional "feminine"/"masculine" characteristics and male/female roles, thereby making them appear normal and inevitable while excluding other possible traits and functions for men and women in society).
3. Proportions of women to men portrayed as victims (e.g., of crime, violence/atrocity, conflict, disaster, poverty, etc.).
4. Proportions of women to men portrayed as survivors (i.e., with evidence of active agency despite adverse experiences/circumstances such as crime, violence/atrocity, conflict, disaster, poverty, etc.).
5. Percentage of stories that include multi-dimensional representation/portrayal of men and women (indicating journalistic effort to challenge/counter gender-based stereotypes).

6. Percentage of stories that contain sexist language used by reporters or broadcasters excluding in case of direct quote from a source (i.e., indicative of bias, discrimination or stereotyping based on sex or gender role).

**MEANS OF VERIFICATION**

Monitoring and sex-disaggregated analysis of news & current affairs content or independent studies carried out by other stakeholders including NGOs.
Sex-disaggregated analysis of news & current affairs content retrieved from media archives.
Application of the rule of inversion or role reversal (to help illustrate the meaning of stereotype).
Assessment reports on and/or evaluations/critiques of news & current affairs content by managers, editors and/or journalists and other

*Adapted from Gender-sensitive indicators for media: framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content.*

Inter-Press Service, advises that gender-aware reporting must be cognisant of the following:

- Gender-aware reporting requires journalists and editors to ensure that the coverage of an event or issue is told through the voices of both women and men. Journalism is about people (women and men), and their interactions in the environment they inhabit.
- Gender-aware reporting requires journalists and editors to use data, background information (context) and analysis through the perspectives of women and men to illustrate how the issue or policy reported on affects women and men in a society.
- A focus on the gender inequalities in a society.
- A focus on the political, economic and social rights violations of women.
- Stories that seek to challenge gender stereotypes through a specific focus on women and men in non-traditional gender roles.
- Stories that challenge power imbalances in both the public and private spheres (an example of power imbalances in the private sphere is the prevalence of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women).

Over the years, Gender Links has developed various checklists on media reporting and editing from a gender lens. These checklists are theme-based but also include an overview of gender sensitive reporting that can be applied to any thematic. Below is a checklist adapted from Gender Links on gender-aware reporting that journalists can use to achieve gender-sensitive reporting. This checklist in line with global GSIM. It suggests questions that the media must always ask to ensure media content is gender sensitive.



### Checklist for gender sensitive reporting

***Who speaks?***

- ✓ Are women's views and voices heard?
- ✓ Has an effort been made to reach them, instead of or along with men's views and voices?
- ✓ Are male and female subjects treated equally?
- ✓ Are a variety of sources consulted, representing a broad spectrum of views?
- ✓ If women are hard to reach to speak on this story, or they are not an equal or main part of the story, does the coverage raise critical questions as to why? There could be other women sources who can speak on behalf of women in hard-to-reach areas.
- ✓ If some women are difficult to reach, has sufficient effort and investigation taken place to ask why?

***How is the story told?***

- ✓ Does the coverage reflect a holistic and realistic view of women?

- ✓ Does the story challenge or reinforce stereotypes?
- ✓ Are these stereotypes blatant or subtle?
- ✓ Does the story apportion blame?
- ✓ Does the story exonerate the perpetrator?
- ✓ Are all subjects treated with dignity?
- ✓ Are the experiences and concerns of women belittled?
- ✓ Is your story fair, accurate and balanced? Is there adequate context and balance and analysis, which includes going beyond the event to explore the underlying issues?
- ✓ Is it a developing story that requires a follow-up, an analysis or an editorial comment?

### Language

- ✓ Does the article contain language that is inclusive of men and women? For instance, are gender-neutral terms used instead of gender-biased ones?
- ✓ Are the adjectives that are used objective and relevant, and do they convey any biases or stereotypes?
- ✓ Does the language avoid stigma and discrimination?
- ✓ Is relevant gender-disaggregated data provided? In other words, data on women and men that has been separated instead of an aggregate number for both women and men.
- ✓ Are women portrayed as survivors or victims? Are they portrayed as active or passive?
- ✓ Is physical description relevant to the story?
- ✓ Does the language used apply equally to men and women?

### *Visual representation of women in the media*

- ✓ Are women and men equally represented in images used?
- ✓ Over time, does the range of images portray women in all their diversity?
- ✓ Do images emphasize or exaggerate physical or sexual aspects?
- ✓ Would using a different image convey a better sense of the gender relations, roles and responsibilities of men and women?
- ✓ Does the image degrade the dignity of women?

### *Who tells the story?*

- ✓ Do only women report on gender and women's issues in your newsroom?
- ✓ Are gender awareness and gender sensitivity built into all reporting requirements?
- ✓ Is gender recognized as an important factor, and is it understood to include both women's and men's concerns?
- ✓ Are sub-editors sensitized to gender as regards the editorial issues?
- ✓ Are journalism schools providing training on gender-sensitive reporting and, if this is elective, who are the students opting to develop their capacity in gender reporting?

ANNEX A

# ANNEX A: SADC PROTOCOL ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

## ARTICLE 29: GENDER IN MEDIA, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Enact legislation, and develop national policies and strategies including professional guidelines and codes of conduct to prevent and address gender stereotypes and discrimination in the media.

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 and other regional and international commitments by Member States on issues relating to media, information and communication.

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 of men and women in the ownership of, and decision making structures of the media.

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 and 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.

## ARTICLE 30: UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Put in place information and communication technology policies and laws in the social, economic and political development arena for women's employment, regardless of race, age, religion, or class. These policies and laws shall include specific targets developed through an open and participatory process in order to ensure women's and girl's access to information and communication technology.

# Glossary of terms

**Gender:** Differences between males and females that are socially constructed, changeable over time and have wide variations within and between cultures. As opposed to biologically determined characteristics (sex), gender refers to learned behaviour and expectations to fulfil a specific image of masculinity and femininity. Gender is also a socio-economic and political variable with which to analyse people's roles, responsibilities, constraints and opportunities. The term gender is not synonymous with women; rather the term is used to refer to human or social attributes concerning both women and men collectively.

**Gender-based Violence (GBV):** GBV encompasses various forms of violence directed at women, because they are women, and men, because they are men, depending on the expectations of each in a given community. The violence is directed towards them because of their challenging notions of sexuality and gender identity and expression.

**Gender equality:** Women and men enjoy the same status and have equal opportunity to realize their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results. It is the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and the differences between women and men and the different roles they may choose to play. (CEDAW) sets the principles of gender equality through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life as well as education, health and employment.

**Gender sensitivity:** Commitment to recognising male-female social inequalities, in order to redress these through addressing women's needs and priorities, and to analyse programmes and projects for the differential impacts that they have on women and men. This awareness includes knowing that women, as well as men, should be involved in consultations about media practice.

**Gender Roles:** Socially-constructed or learned behaviours that condition activities, tasks, and responsibilities viewed within a given society as "masculine" or "feminine".

**Patriarchy:** A system of society or government in which the father or eldest male is head of the family and descent is traced through the male line. The wives/females are viewed as dependants. Roles assigned to men are considered superior and valued above females.

**Prejudice:** It is an irrational, preconceived opinion, not based on reality or actual experience. It often results in dislike, hostility and unjust behaviour.

**Rape Culture:** Rape culture is the social or cultural practices and beliefs that allow for rape and sexual violence to be normalised, accepted and expected.



STEP IT UP

FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA







GENDER LINKS

FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE