Glass Ceilings

Women and men in Southern Africa media

MALAWI



gender links

GEMSA
Gender and Media Southern Africa

Gender and Media Diversity Centre

OSISA
Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa

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Gender Links (GL) is a Southern African NGO committed to a region in which women and men are able to participate equally in all aspects of public and private life.

GLASS CEILINGS: WOMEN AND MEN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA MEDIA - MALAWI
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ISBN: 978-1-920550-09-7

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Printer: DS Print Media
Sponsors: OSISA and the MDG 3 FUND of the Netherlands Government

This report has been produced with the financial assistance of the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA) and the MDG 3 Fund of the Netherlands Government. The views expressed herein are those of Gender Links and can therefore in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of OSISA or the MDG 3 Fund.

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SUMMARY OF KEY QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS FOR MALAWI MEDIA HOUSES				
CATEGORY	% MALAWI		% REGION	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Percentage of employees by sex	23	77	41	59
OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS				
Non-permanent	17	83	36	64
Unskilled	23	77	29	71
Semi-skilled	41	59	55	45
Skilled technical	31	69	45	55
Professionally qualified	15	85	31	69
Senior management	26	74	28	72
Top management	19	81	23	77
Board of directors	27	73	28	72
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT				
Freelance	35	65	43	57
Part-time	31	69	37	63
Full-time, fixed term contract	23	77	42	58
Full-time open-ended contract	23	77	23	77
DEPARTMENTS				
Percentage of women and men in:				
Human resources	75	25	44	56
Advertising/Marketing	36	64	57	43
Editorial	28	72	42	58
Printing & distribution	25	75	24	76
Production	22	78	30	70
Design	22	78	31	69
Finance & administration	21	79	54	46
Technical/IT	6	94	16	84
BEATS				
Top three beats covered by women				
Lifestyle	80	20	55	45
Gender equality	67	33	71	29
Religion	67	33	52	48
Top three beats covered by men				
Crime	0	100	37	63
Disaster/War/Conflict	0	100	35	65
Science & technology	0	100	39	61
POLICIES	**Malawi**		**Region**	
Existence of a gender policy	40		16	
Existence of a sexual harassment policy	30		28	
Need for gender policy or improving one	70		68	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This audit of women and men in Malawi media houses is part of the *Glass Ceilings: Women and Men in Southern African Media* conducted by Gender Links (GL) in partnership with Gender and Media Southern African (GEMSA) Network in Malawi.

The findings will be used in a global study being carried out by the International Media Women's Federation (IMWF) through the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC).

The centre is a partnership between media development organisations and training and higher-learning institutions. It "collects and connects" knowledge, and collaborates to advance gender equality and diversity in the media across the globe.

The GMDC has also facilitated partnerships around the fourth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), and second Southern African Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) to be undertaken in 2009/2010.

The study took place in the context of the August 2008 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, that urges the media and all decision-making bodies in the region to achieve gender parity by 2015.

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

In Malawi the study is based on research carried out in 10 media houses, with a total of 1 132 employees. Researchers conducted in-depth case studies of two media houses and interviewed four journalists/senior managers/editors for their perspectives on the results. A further 39 senior staff responded to perception questionnaires.

In total 126 media houses (about half of them[1]) in 14[2] of the 15 countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), representing 23 684 employees, participated in the research. Some 463 respondents filled in the perception questionnaires. Regional comparisons are made throughout the report. This report should be read in tandem with the regional report: *"Glass Ceilings: Women and Men in the Southern African Media."*

Pushpa Jamieson, facilitator for the Media Action Plan on HIV/AIDS and Gender (MAP) in Malawi, undertook the research, and conducted profiles and case studies in Malawi. GL executive director Colleen Lowe Morna; deputy director Kubi Rama and assistant director (media research and policy) Dumisani Gandhi edited the final report.

Key findings of the study include:

- ***More than three-quarters of all media employees in media houses in Malawi are men:*** Women constitute only 23%, while there is 77% representation of men. The average proportion of women in Southern African media houses (41%) is almost twice that of Malawi, meaning the country lags far behind the region in offering women equal opportunities in the media.

[1] The Media Action Plan on HIV and AIDS and Gender, led by the Southern African Editor's Forum (SAEF) estimates that there are 255 media houses in the SADC region.
[2] The Angolan researcher failed to deliver results on time.

- ***But there are differences between media houses:*** The media houses with the smallest numbers of employees have the highest level of female representation at 36%, while the state broadcaster, with the largest number of employees, has female representation of only a quarter.

- ***Women constitute less than a third of the boards of directors:*** Women make up 27% of the boards in Malawi media houses, similar to the 28% of the regional study.

- ***There are few women in top management:*** Women occupy only 19% of top management posts in media houses in Malawi - lower than the regional average of 23%.

- ***They represent about a quarter in senior management:*** Women constitute 26% of those in senior management, similar to the regional average of 28%. The Malawi findings for women in senior management point to the "glass ceiling" that women come up against in the media, and the challenges they face in breaking into management.

- ***Men get better working deals:*** Men (77%) are more likely than women (23%) to be employed in open-ended, full-time contracts, compared to 42% in the rest of the region. In Malawi the employment category with the most female representation is freelance contracts (35%). While a lower proportion of women are on freelance than in the regional average of 43%, there is still a high level of job insecurity for women.

- ***Men dominate in most departments in media houses in Malawi:*** This is particularly the case in the technical/IT (94%); finance and administration (79%); production (78%) and design (78%) departments.



Business unusual: breaking the barriers by covering "hard" beats *Photo: Gender Links*

- ***There are more women in the support departments:*** Women in the Malawian media are under-represented in most areas of work, but they are in the overwhelming majority in human resources (75%), an area considered "women's work". In the region women predominate in finance and administration (54%) and in advertising and marketing (57%).

- ***Fewer women in editorial departments than in the region:*** In Malawi only 28% of those in the editorial departments are women. This is much lower than the regional average of 42%, and shows that the media lag behind in giving women the opportunity to work in the more skilled posts. This means the female view in editorial content, and also the mainstreaming of women's issues, are neglected.

- ***The gender division of labour in beats is still pronounced:*** Though in most media houses male journalists cover most of the beats, women predominate in beats considered "soft" or human interest beats, including lifestyle (80%), gender equality (67%), religion (67%) and education (57%). Interestingly, an equal number of female and male journalists covered gender violence and HIV/AIDS.

- ***There are no targets in place for achieving gender parity in media houses:*** None of the media houses in the study could point to specific targets for ensuring gender equality in line with the SADC 2015 parity target.

- ***Career pathing for women in Malawi media houses is not a priority:*** None of the media houses in Malawi have strategies in place to fast-track women within the organisation. But half of them said they had strategies for promoting women, against a regional average is 32% of media houses indicating such promotional strategies.

- ***Inconsistency in efforts to target good women candidates:*** Of the sample only 20% of the media stated they had a database of women, yet 70% claimed they targeted women specifically. In the regional sample a higher proportion of the media houses (36%) have a database of women candidates, but fewer (54%) seek to recruit women for jobs.

- ***Low levels of commitment to both maternity and paternity leave:*** In the Malawi sample only 40% of the media houses offer maternity leave - less than half of the 81% in the region. Only 10% of Malawian media houses have paternity leave, while a third of those in the region offer it. The low level of paternity leave across the region shows that child rearing is still believed to be a female responsibility.

- ***Child care is not a priority, but flexi-time is high on the agenda in Malawi media houses:*** None of the media houses in the Malawi sample offered child care facilities, compared to 15% in the regional sample. But 80% of media houses in Malawi (and 75% of media houses in the region) offer flexi-time. So although the companies are not prepared to give practical help with parental responsibilities, they do allow parents working-hours latitude to help them cope.

- ***Malawi media houses do better than the region on gender policies, but wish to improve:*** As 40% of the Malawi sample have gender policies, compared to only 16% for the region, the media are reasonably progressive on this front. And although less than a third have sexual harassment policies (about on a par with the region), 70% of the media houses expressed a whish to develop or improve on gender policies.



Pushpa Jamieson (left) at a gender policy workshop with the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

MALAWI MEDIA CONTEXT

The Republic of Malawi is a landlocked country, with a population of about 13.1 million people. The official languages are English and Chichewa.

Malawi gained its independence from Great Britain in 1964, and until 1993 the country remained under the authoritarian rule of Dr Kamuzu Banda. In May 1994 President Banda lost the presidential election to the United Democratic Front, led by Bakili Muluzi.

Muluzi was re-elected in 1999 to serve another five-year term as president in the new democracy. In the most recent election Bingu Wa Muthalika, of the Democratic People's Party, was elected President.

When Malawi became a multi-party democracy the government guaranteed freedom of the Press in the new constitution, but some restrictive laws have remained. The Malawi media thus still face a number of constraints.

The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) is a statutory body that regulates the airwaves; it was established pursuant to Section 3 of the country's Communications Act of 1998[3]. Under the Act, MACRA is responsible for protecting the interests of consumers, promoting open access to information, promoting competition, and providing training in communication services. It is also required to be independent and impartial.



Radio is the main source of news in Malawi *Photo: Gender Links*

Major media organisations and associations are the Malawi Media Women's Association (MAMWA), the Media Council of Malawi, and a chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa. MAMWA has played a leading role in attracting a female audience to radio. Radio listeners' clubs are set up by women media professionals, who organise rural women into groups that meet once a week, and debate a theme directly affecting their lives[4].

Gender and media in Malawi

Study (GMBS) of 2003 found that women constituted 12% of news sources in Malawi. In the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) conducted two years later, this had improved by 5% to reach 17%. Although not startling, this at least showed some progress, as in some countries in the region the figure receded.

Women's voices were virtually absent in certain beats, such as politics, crime and war and conflict. As in other countries in the region they predominate as sources of news reports and features on gender-based violence, as well as women being stereotyped as helpless victims of violence and as sex objects.

The GMBS also found that women constitute a mere 8% of print journalists in Malawi. While their research focused on the representation of women and portrayal of gender in editorial content, current research seeks to probe the gender dimensions and practices of the media houses, and how these affect media output.

The work on gender and institution transformation builds on continuing collaboration in developing HIV/AIDS policies in media houses. Since 2006 the rolling out of the Southern African Media Action Plan on HIV/AIDS and Gender (MAP), led by the Southern African Editors' Forum, has progressed steadily in Malawi. Most of the media houses

The Southern African Media Action Plan
MAP
on HIV and AIDS & Gender

[3] See http://www.macra.org.mw/index.php?link=about
[4] See http://www.pressreference.com/Ky-Ma/Malawi.html

adopted policies on World Aids Day, December 1, 2008. These included *Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, Joy Radio, Radio Islam, Zodiak Radio Station* and *FM 101 Radio Station*, among others.

The challenge in Malawi has been that all media houses opted for HIV/AIDS policies, which although gender-aware are not a substitute for stand-alone gender policies.

There is a need therefore to go back and roll out gender policies with these companies, and ensure the remaining few go through the full MAP process, as they have already bought in.

METHODOLOGY

With 20 media houses, Malawi ranks as a medium-density country. Table one shows that the sample of 10 media houses, with a total of 1 132 employees, included state/public media, broadcast and print media, private/commercial and community media.

Table one: Media houses that completed the questionnaires in Malawi

Media House	Type	Classification	Number of Employees		
			Women	Men	Total
Capital Radio Malawi Ltd	Radio	Private	13	23	36
Power 101 FM Radio Station	Radio	Private	11	57	68
Guardian Publications Ltd	Print	Private	10	20	30
Joy Radio	Radio	Private	14	25	39
Malawi Broadcasting Corporation	Radio, TV	Public	107	426	533
Nation Publications Ltd	Print	Private	46	207	253
Radio Alinafe	Radio	Community	15	27	42
Radio Islam	Radio	Community	5	19	24
Transworld Radio	Radio	Community	10	21	31
Zodiac Radio Station	Radio	Private	24	52	76
Total			**255**	**877**	**1132**

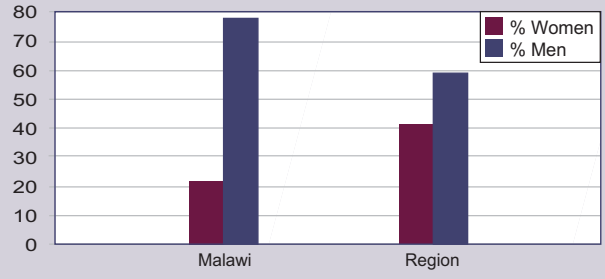
Human resources managers or payroll administrators provided most of the data while those who responded to perception questionnaires did so in interviews. The data for *Glass Ceilings: Women and men in Southern Africa media* was collected between July and August 2008. The research team gathered and compiled all of the questionnaire findings using Ms-Excel spreadsheets to generate graphs and tables.

FINDINGS

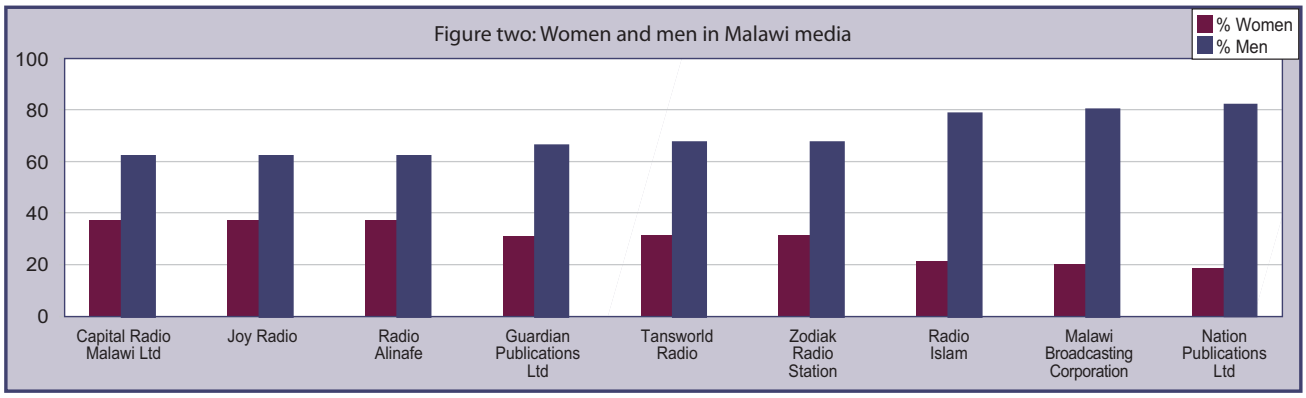
Women are under represented in the Malawi media

Figure one shows that women constitute only 23% and men 77% of those in Malawi media houses, compared to 41% and 59% respectively for the region. Most media houses still fall far short of the SADC target of gender parity by 2015. It is obvious that vigorous and comprehensive campaigns must be mounted to lift the representation of women in Malawi media, and mainstream women's issues.

Figure one: Total number of employees in Malawi vs the region

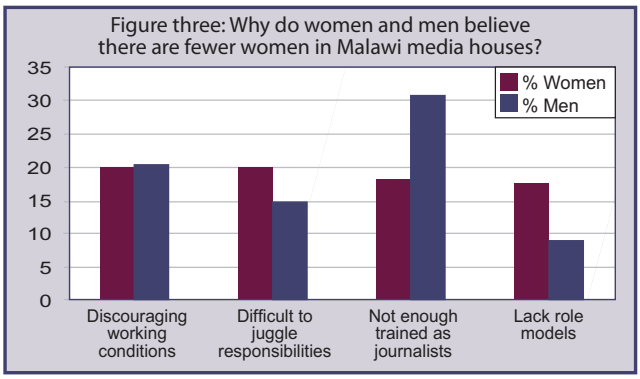


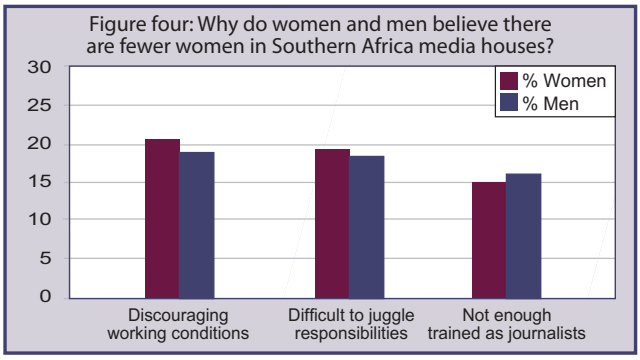
Variations by media house



As illustrated in Figure two, most media houses have at least twice as many men as women. The public broadcaster, *Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)*, has a male staff component of 80%. This is also the media house with the biggest staff, so it has the heaviest effect on overall figures. *The Nation Publications* does even worse, with only 18% female representation - the lowest proportion of all. *Radio Islam* is close behind these two with 79% male staff, but this imbalance is probably caused by religious and cultural preferences.

Why are there fewer women in Malawi media houses?





The main factors women and men believe hinder women from working in the media in Malawi are shown in Figure three. The same percentage of women (20%) cited discouraging working conditions and difficulty in juggling responsibilities as the main reasons for there being fewer women in media houses.

About one in three men (32%) believe the lack of training as journalists is the main reason for there being fewer women in media houses, and 17% of women agree with men on this. Another 17% of women believe the lack of role models and mentoring hinders women from entering and staying in the media industry.

Media a hostile home for women

In Malawi there are a number of reasons inhibiting women from joining media houses and moving up the ladder, such as family commitments; the "old boys' clubs", lack of role models and the unfriendly working hours. In addition to these hurdles there is also the worrying stereotyping of media women as being "loose", doing sexual favours to gain promotion or be assigned high-profile interviews. Working late hours is often seen to be culturally improper for women.

Female respondents tell how they were continually dissuaded from becoming a journalist: "More women do not train as journalists because of how women journalists are labelled. Even before I joined this field people discouraged me by saying women journalists are prostitutes." Another female respondent lamented: "The attitude of society deflects women away from media studies. Many people believe women journalists are prostitutes."

A male journalist noted: "Women in marriages have been barred by their husbands from joining the media industry, as they say it involves too much travelling, and the women would be meeting other men in the course of their duties."

Another added: "Many women find it difficult to balance family responsibilities with working as a journalist. This is made even more difficult when a woman is married to a man who has difficulty accepting that the job may require some time spent away from home. Often women in journalism are not respected by men, who think girls working in journalism is equal to prostitution."

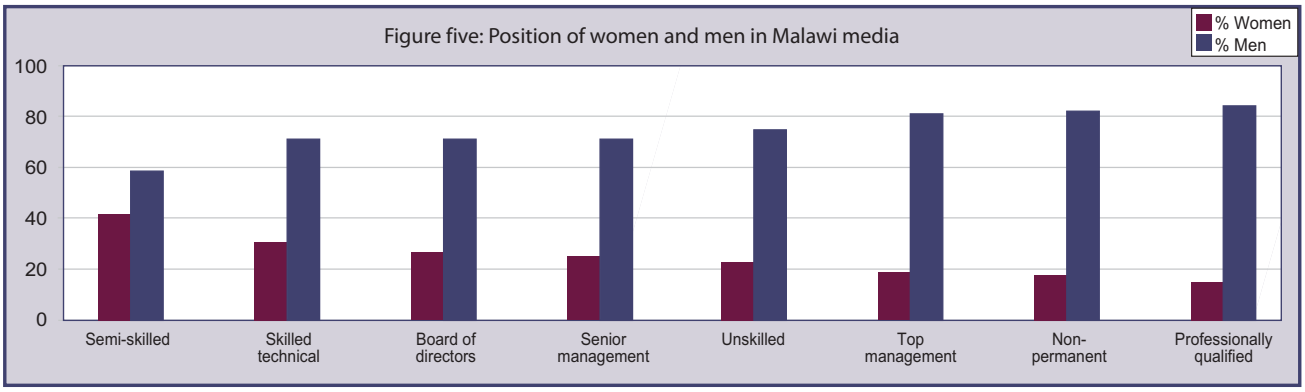
Women are under-represented in the top echelons

The study sought to determine the number of women and men at the different occupation levels in media houses. Table two describes which positions within the media houses fall within which categories.

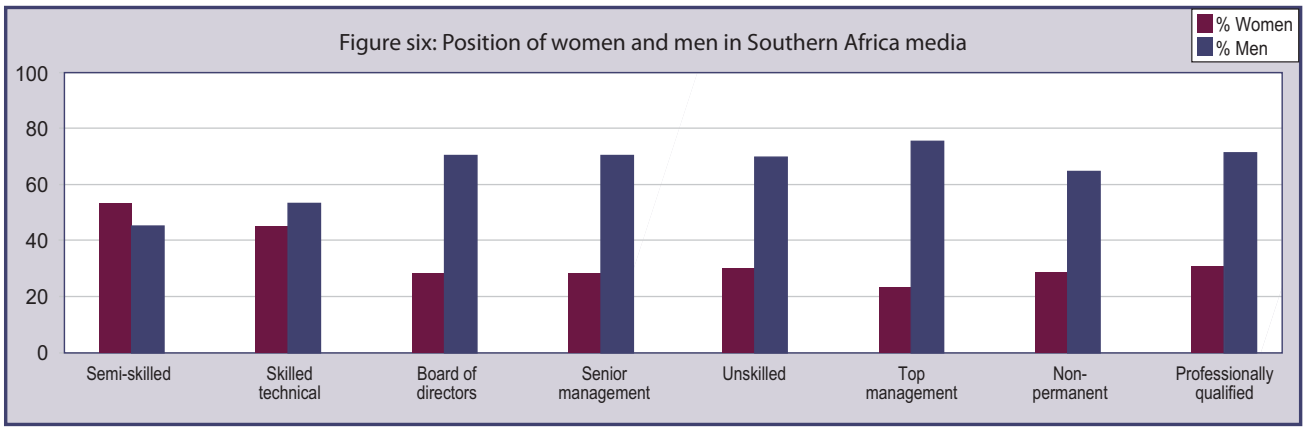
Table two: Occupational levels and examples of positions

Occupational levels[5]	Examples of positions
Board of directors	Chief Executive Officer, Managing Director
Top management	Editor-in-chief, managing editors (often with financial responsibilities)
Senior management	Editors of editorial sections such as sport, entertainment or motoring
Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and middle management	Assistant editors, chief sub-editors, pictures editors, producers, news presenters or anchors, designers
Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors	Reporters, sub-editors, feature writers
Semi-skilled and discretionary decision-making	Personal assistants, executive assistants
Unskilled and defined decision-making	Secretaries, clerks, drivers, receptionists
Non-permanent	Freelance writers

Figure five: Position of women and men in Malawi media



[5] The categories are based on the Employment Equity Act of South Africa and the Patterson scales.



Figures five and six illustrate where women are within the media hierarchy. The two graphs show that Malawi has lower representation of women at all occupational levels than those of the region. Women constitute less than a third of the boards of directors in Malawi, and this is close to the regional average of 28%.

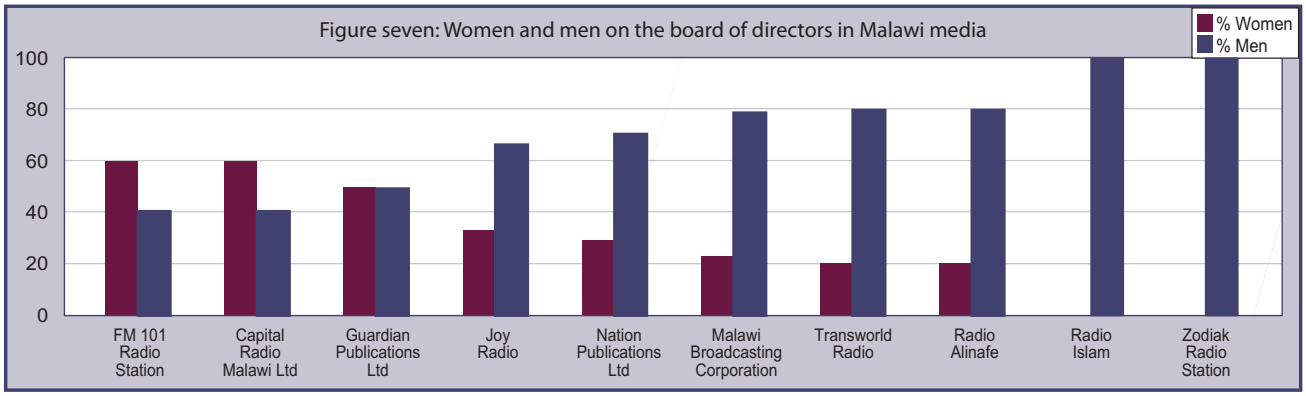
There are similar proportions in both the region and Malawi for women in senior management (28%, 26% respectively). In Malawian media houses top management has the lowest representation of women in managerial levels, with only 19%, while the region has slightly more at 23%.

Men predominate by far in the professionally qualified category (85%), and the regional average is more than twice the female representation in this level in Malawian media houses (15%). This is a significant finding in that journalists are included in this category. This suggests that women struggle to gain managerial positions because not that many of them have made it into the newsrooms as journalists.

Men also dominate the skilled technical field (69%), although women fare better in this category in the region (45% against 31%). Men make up 83% of the non-permanent staff, and 77% of the unskilled, mainly because many of them work in production and printing and distribution, which offer a number of lower-paid or menial jobs.

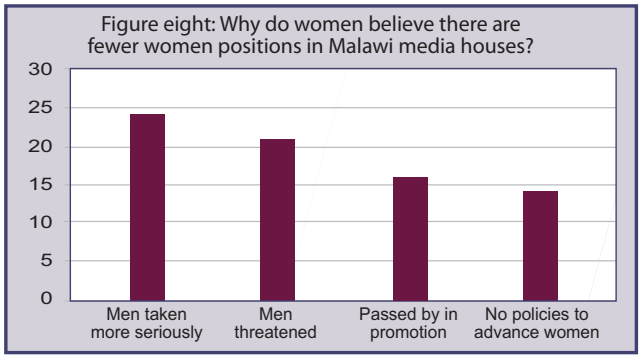
The Malawi media houses occupational level with the highest proportion of women is that of the semi-skilled (41%).

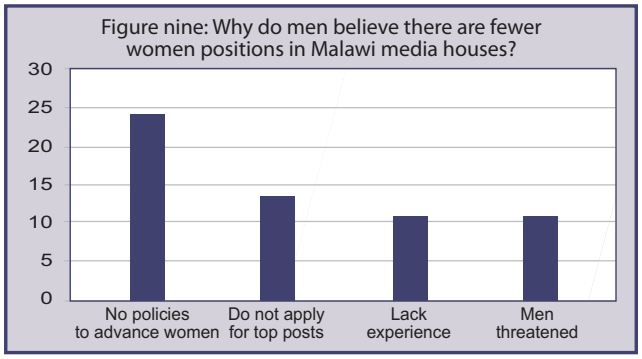
Variations by media house



Media houses vary considerably in size, and in the smaller ones there may be only two or three directors. But the findings generally indicate that women are poorly represented at board level in Malawian media. Figure 7 shows that two media houses, *Radio Islam* and *Zodiak Radio Station*, had zero representation of women on their board, compared to 60% at both *FM101 Radio Station* and *Capital Radio Malawi Ltd*. The *Guardian Publications Ltd* achieved gender parity on their board. The cultural considerations of Islam would appear to obviate women as directors.

Why are there fewer women than men in senior positions?





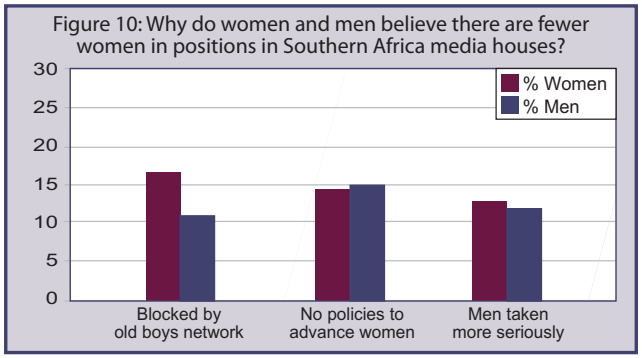


Figure eight shows that in Malawi, the highest proportion of women (a little more than one in five) cited "men are taken more seriously" and "men feeling threatened" as the main reasons for the glass ceiling in media houses, while higher proportions of men (Figure 9) believed the main reason for women being scarce in decision-making was lack of policies to advance them. Conversely, the highest proportion of male and female respondents in the rest of the region (Figure 10) cited the "old boys' network" as the main reason for women not advancing. As the second most telling reason men cited "no policies to advance women", and women said "men are taken more seriously".

Loss to the profession

Zainah Liwanda, a journalist turned researcher, is an example of the many women who leave the media profession. Many regret the loss of Liwanda to the media, as she was a reporter known for impeccable sources and meticulously investigated stories.

Liwanda worked for seven years in the newsroom in various positions. Her first job was in 2000 when she joined Blantyre Newspapers Limited, publishers of *The Daily Times, Malawi News* and *Sunday Times* as a sub-editor. She was designated to the *Malawi News*. In 2003 she joined Nation Publications Limited (NPL) as a senior reporter. After about two years, Liwanda was promoted to news analyst. NPL publish *The Nation, Weekend Nation* and *Nation on Sunday*.



Zainah Liwanda at her desk in Lilongwe, Malawi
Photo: Pushpa Jamieson

Asked if she had tried for promotion, and what the results and reasons for the decisions were, Liwanda says "Yes, as a result I was promoted from senior reporter to news analyst while with *NPL*. I remember the reason for my promotion given in the letter was that I was a hard worker. Management said in recognition of my hard work they had decided to promote me."

She said was not actually approached by her superiors to discuss her promotion, and was never part of the decision-making team. Usually it is the editors or bureau chiefs who made decisions, she said. Liwanda is confident that if she had remained longer with NPL she would have been promoted again, but she did not want to miss the opportunity of a better position and greater financial benefits when she was offered a job with the University of North Carolina research centre in Lilongwe.

Asked about the main obstacles women face in advancing in editorial departments, she said there were many, among them being that men who dominated decision-making positions in media houses generally did not give women a chance to progress or be promoted. This was evident because in most media houses women were in middle positions, not top positions. "Even when a female journalist works extra hard she could not be given that top position, as it was already filled by a man," Liwanda said.

Liwanda cited accusations by male counterparts of female journalists being favoured if, say, their stories made the front page, or if they were promoted or advanced in any way. Some male sources were also an obstacle, she said, as they wanted to exchange sex for stories, and some female journalists quit for fear of these advances.

Liwanda said it was important to note that some female journalists did not advance because they did not apply themselves, and expected to be favoured just because they were female. She encourages women to apply themselves aggressively and professionally in order to make sure that their stories translate into front-page stories.

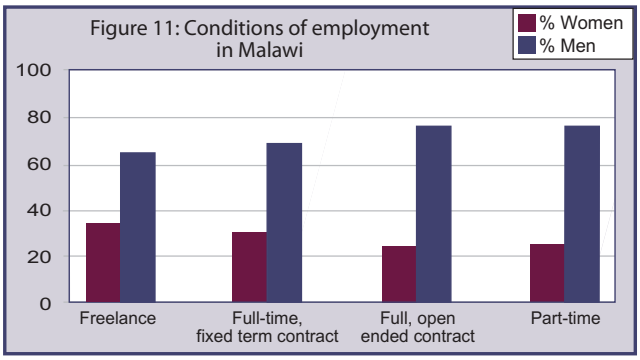
She also encourages female journalists to work hard and compete with their male counterparts through active media women's associations. She suggests there needs to be a lobbying of media owners to recognise female journalists' contributions by promoting them to decision-making positions. Liwanda says there are resources available, and female journalists could start their own media houses and take up decision-making positions such as editors-in-chief, editors and chief sub-editors, to prove they can do it. These are some of the strategies she suggests should be followed to enable women to advance in media houses.

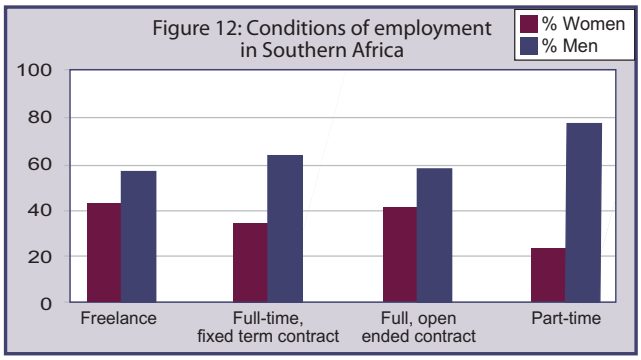
Although Liwanda is no longer with the media she firmly believes reporting is her calling, and it is her passion. This is clear when she says: "I miss the newsroom! But one thing I know is that one day I will go back. That's my destiny. I was trained as a journalist and I will die as one."

Conditions of employment

The study found that men had more favourable working conditions than their female counterparts. The position occupied by women and men as well as the terms and conditions of their service have implications for what they earn. These factors could be a significant structural barrier to achieving gender parity.

Women likely to have less favourable conditions of employment than men



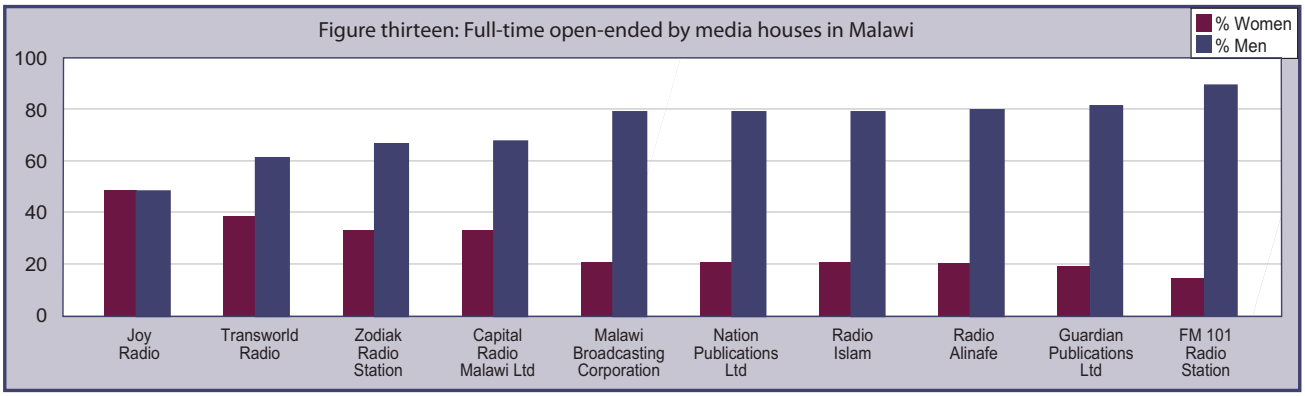


Figures 11 and 12 illustrate the conditions of service for media practitioners in Malawi and the Southern African region. The most secure form of employment is full-time, open-ended contracts. Whereas in the region 42% of women media workers are on such contracts, in Malawi the figure is only 23%, and women there have very little job security.

The next most secure form of employment is the full-time, fixed-term contract, and more than twice as many men as women in Malawi, 69% against 31%, are on such contracts. The percentages are similar to those of the region.

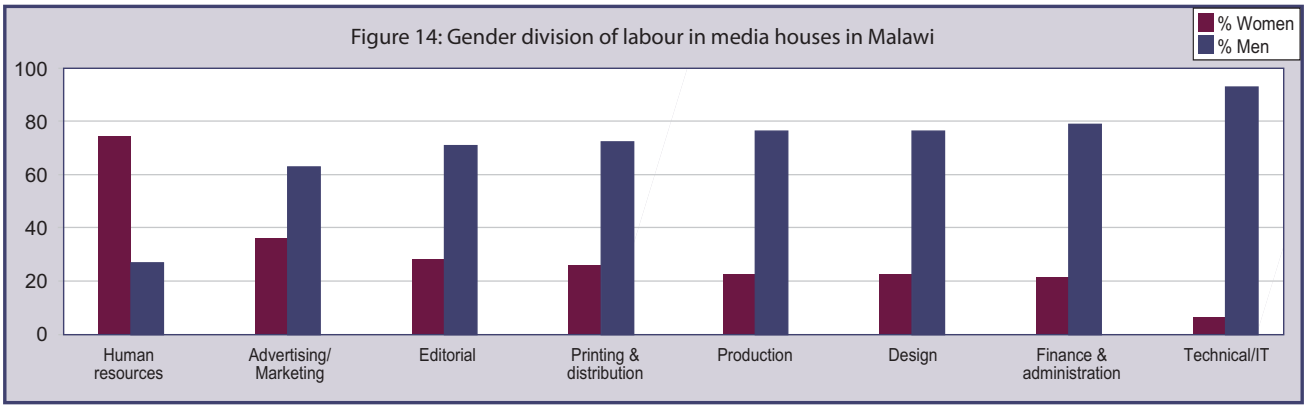
Though the freelance category has the highest representation of women out of all the conditions of employment, it is still low with only 35%. Interestingly, both in the region and in Malawi (77% for both) men constitute the majority of part-time employees, largely due to their predominance in production and printing and distribution. Due to the dual roles they play in running a home and working, this category should suit women better.

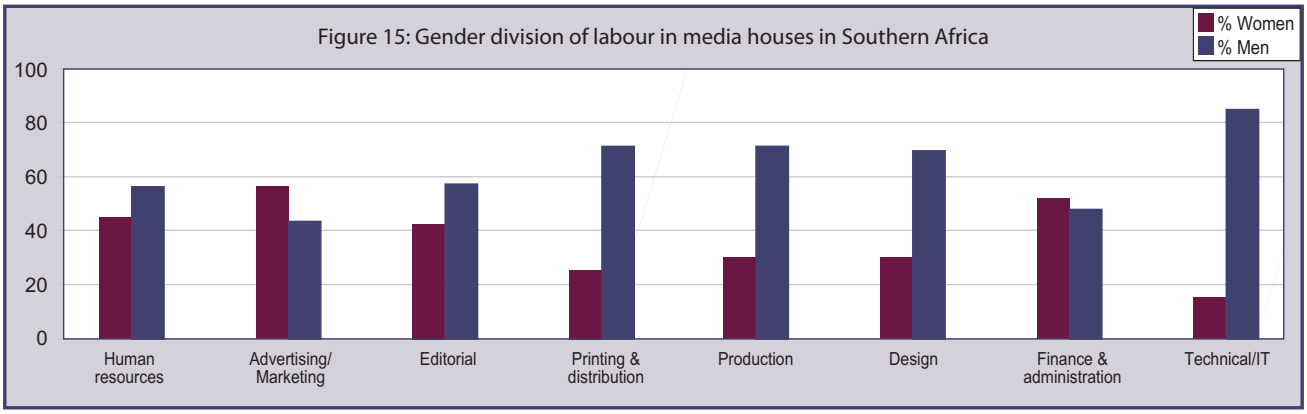
Conditions of employment by media house



Despite the fact that only a third of their employees are female, Joy Radio, is the only media house that gives out equal numbers of full-time, open-ended contracts to men and women. Women in all the other Malawian media houses in the study benefit by between 13% and 38% of such contracts.

Gender division of labour in the media

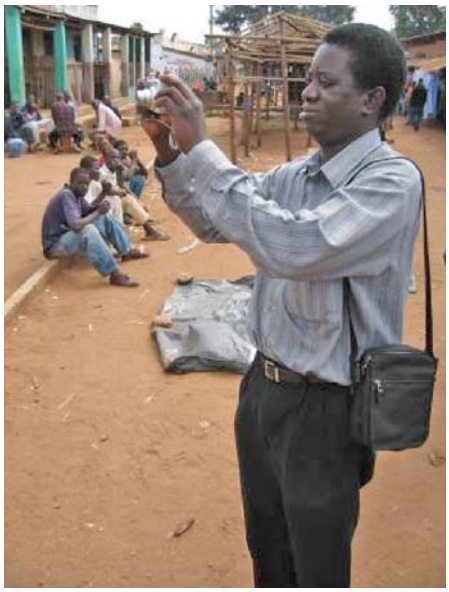




Figures 14 and 15 discuss where men and women are employed within the media house. Men dominate in all of the departments except for human resources, where women make up 75% of the employees. In the region women constitute about 44% of the human resources department, and a little over half the employees in the finance and administration departments.

There is an increasing proportion of women in the editorial department, the domain of editors, sub-editors, journalists and photographers (42% in the region compared to only 28% in Malawi), and this augurs well for parity in the not-to-distant future.

In Malawi and the region women are least represented in technical and IT (a meagre 6% in Malawi and 16% in the region); printing and distribution (25% and 24% respectively) and production (22% and 30% respectively). Advertising and marketing has the second-highest level of representation of women for both Malawi (36%) and the region (57%). As women are well suited to this work, concerted efforts should be made to rectify the imbalance in Malawi.



Men still dominate in the visual media

Photo: Gender Links

Differences in earnings

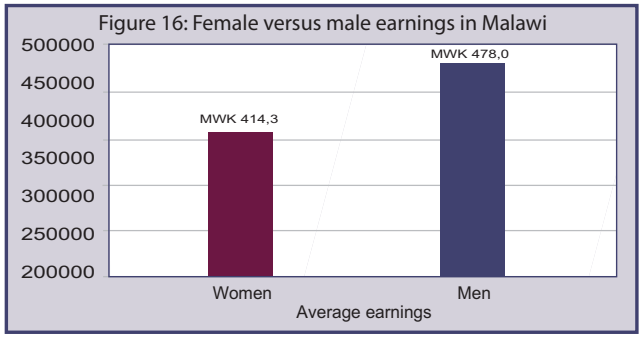
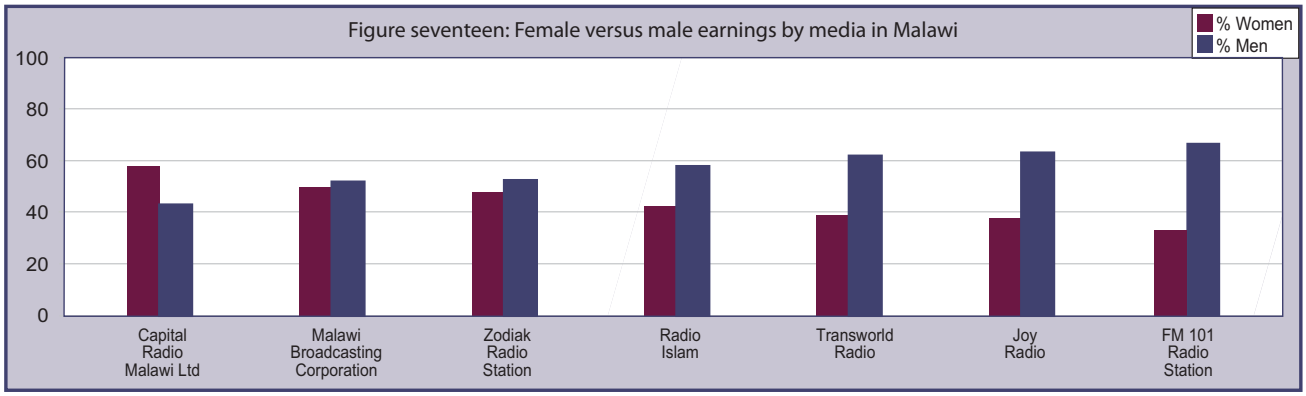


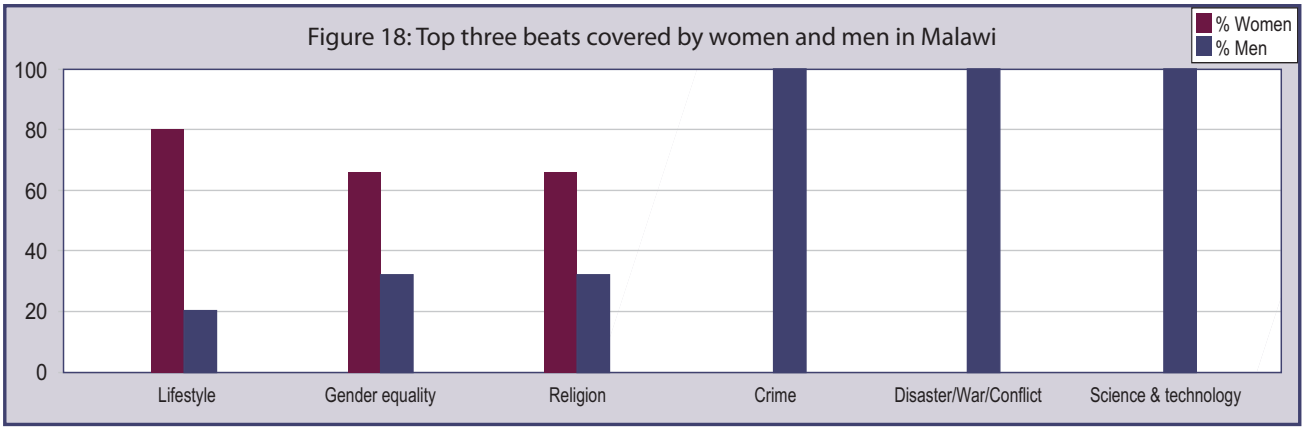
Figure 16 displays the average earnings of female and male employees in Malawi media houses. This shows that women on average earn MWK 414 333 ($2 960) a year, compared to MWK 478 013 ($3 414) in the case of men. Based on data provided for this study, women in media houses in Malawi on average earn 8 to 9% less than men.

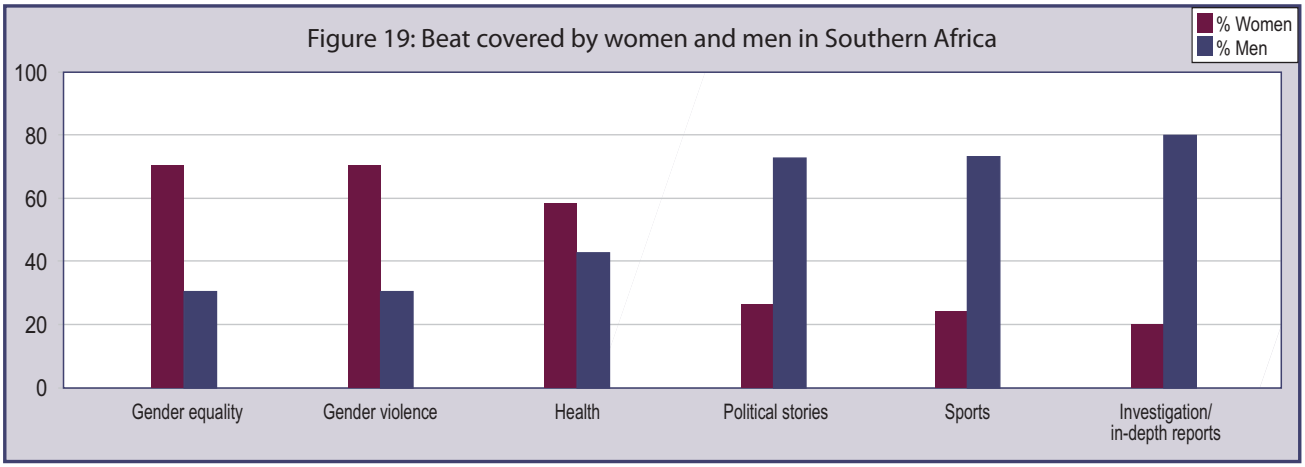


Seven out of the 10 media houses in Malawi gave data for earnings. Based on Figure 17, the media house where women earn more than men on average is *Capital Radio Malawi Ltd*. This is also the media house with the highest percentage of women on their board of directors (60%). The public broadcaster is very close to reaching gender parity in earnings, with 49% female and 51% male.

It should be noted that these figures *do not* reflect differences in earnings of women and men at the *same level*, but are arrived at by dividing total annual earnings of women by number of women, and total annual earnings of men by the number of men.

The gender gap in average earnings encapsulates differences in conditions of employment, types of occupation and the respective levels of women and men. Indeed, the gender gap in other institutions tends to be higher than 10%. The reason why this is lower in the media is that while men dominate in the highest-paid management positions, they also predominate in lowest-paid posts. For instance, production and distribution (intrinsic to the media industry) are male-dominated in Malawian media houses.





The nature of beats assigned to male and female journalists is an indicator of how editorial departments view the roles of women and men in society. Beats are also significant because they have a bearing on promotion prospects, with "hard" beats generally a more likely ticket to the top than "soft" beats.

Figure 18 illustrates the top three beats for women in the Malawi media (lifestyle, gender equality, and religion), and the top three for men (science and technology, disaster/war/conflict, and crime). The men dominate these three totally (100%), and this is an anomaly as many women journalists in South Africa, for instance, have become good crime reporters. Cultural and security concerns appear to be hindering women from covering crime and conflict. In the region (Figure 19) gender equality, gender violence and health topped the list for women, while politics, sport and investigative/in-depth reporting topped the list for men.



Women journalists are more concerned with social issues *Photo: Fletcher Gon'ga*

Table three: Women and men in different beats in Malawi and the region				
Beats	Malawi		Region	
	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men
Lifestyle	80	20	55	45
Gender equality	67	33	71	29
Religion	67	33	52	48
Education	57	43	54	46
Entertainment/arts/culture	50	50	42	58
Gender violence	50	50	71	29
HIV/AIDS	45	55	53	47
Agriculture	44	56	41	59
Courts	43	57	37	63
Health	43	57	59	41
Youth	40	60	52	48
Economic/Business/Finance	37	63	39	61
Human Rights	36	64	42	58
Labour	33	67	36	64
Media	33	67	42	58
General	28	72	37	63
Sports	25	75	24	76
Political stories	21	79	25	75
Investigative/in-depth reports	17	83	20	80
Sustainable development and environment	17	83	33	67
Crime	0	100	37	63
Disaster/War/Conflict	0	100	35	65
Science & technology	0	100	39	61

Table three, which reflects the findings for all beats, shows that there are some interesting gender benders in the Malawi media. For example, an equal proportion of women and men cover gender violence and entertainment/arts/culture. And the courts, traditionally a male preserve, have more than 40% coverage by women.

Female sourcing depends on female journalists

Despite the persisting gender gaps on news beats, there appears to be no concerted strategy to challenge the stereotypes of women covering "soft" beats in Malawi media.

As one female respondent put it: "When editors assign reporters to stories, they prefer male reporters to cover most of the political breaking stories and conflicts/investigative pieces, while female reporters are assigned to health and social stories. The perception is that female reporters cannot do good hard-news stories."

Another female respondent says female journalists have to constantly prove themselves before they can cover non-stereotypical beats. "On the issue of assignments, I have always been regarded as not fit to tackle investigative and hard-news pieces, just because I am female, but I constantly remind my seniors that I am capable of doing whatever a male can do. There's a need for female members to be aggressive, and prove they can do any stories well."

Nevertheless, many female respondents agree that it is acceptable for women to cover beats strong on women's issues, because female journalists understand these better: "Women address matters in a sensitive manner. Men approach issues in a "head-on" way. Female journalists have a deeper understanding of women's matters, just as men journalists understand those of the men better."



More women journalists, more women sources? *Photo: Gender Links*

One mentioned cultural norms: "The culture of Malawian society tends to dictate that some issues are best dealt with by women, and others best by men."

Male respondents believe that having more women will lead to more gender-aware content. "Some sources are more comfortable speaking to fellow women. Women's voices will be heard if sources are able to talk more openly with female journalists. This helps to bring an equal voice, balancing opinions and objectivity in the information the media house gives to the public," said one male respondent.

Making a difference?

The study sought out opinions on whether having more women in media houses makes a difference. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2005 showed that women journalists are more likely than men to consult female opinion, but this does not mean that 50% of their sources are women.

In the Southern African analysis of the global study, female sources constituted 28% of the total consulted by women journalists, compared to 19% of the sources used by male journalists. In the global findings this was 25% for women and 20% for men.

With the exception of Angola, women consulted female sources more than men did in every country of the region, and they in some instances consulted female sources 40% of the time.[6]

[6] Lowe-Morna, Colleen, *Mirror on the Media, Who makes the news?* Mirror on the Southern African findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2005, Gender Links 2006.

Table four: Women and men's perceptions - does gender make a difference in media houses in the region and in Malawi?				
	Malawi		Region	
	% Women who agreed	% Men who agreed	% Women who agreed	% Men who agreed
a) There is no relationship between having women in the media and achieving gender balance and sensitivity in media coverage	26	42	31	39
b) Female journalists are more likely to seek out female opinion than male journalists	53	53	46	45
c) Female journalists are more likely to cover gender related topics more than male journalists	79	61	69	62
d) When there are women in senior management positions gender is more likely to be taken seriously in the work of the media house	79	44	70	49
e) Where there is a "critical mass" of women in the media house this affects the way that men think and behave	50	47	53	50
f) Men can be as gender aware and sensitive as women	83	89	78	87
g) Women are their own worst enemies	56	58	45	45

Table four shows that women and men differ substantially on whether having women in the media helps bring about gender balance and sensitivity in coverage. Close to half the men believed it made no difference, while only 26% of women agreed with them. The same proportion of men and women (53%) believe female journalists are more likely to seek female opinion.

A vast majority of men (79%) and to a lesser extent women (61%) believe female journalists are more likely to cover gender-related topics, and that where women are in senior management, gender is likely to be taken seriously. More than half of women perceive women to be their own worst enemies. The majority of women and men believed "men can be as gender-aware as women". Half of women and less than half of male respondents felt it was crucial to have a "critical mass" of women in the media if they were to make a difference in the behaviour and attitudes of male colleagues.

Pulling each other down ?

Only half of the women in Malawian media houses in the sample said a "critical mass of women" could make a difference in the way women were viewed in the media. Many respondents believed other women were their worst enemies, and tended to pull each other down.

As one respondent passionately maintains: "Women have always been known to have the "pull them down syndrome". We have the tendency of not wanting fellow women to succeed; how are men meant to take us seriously if we can't support one another? This behaviour needs to be checked in most of us." A male respondent agrees: "Most women still do not believe they amount to anything, and do not stand up for themselves. Generally women tend to pull each other down."

Nonetheless, many other respondents strongly believe in a critical consciousness from managerial levels – it's not necessarily about the "mass" of numbers but the attitude of decision-makers:

Esther Misheck, senior reporter at *Joy Radio*, says "As a woman who has on many occasions headed the newsroom I can say that the attitude of management and their policies have been responsible for achieving gender parity in the newsroom.

"Women have encouraged other female journalists to take on the same kinds of assignments as male journalists. This has been the motivation to work as hard as or harder than their male counterparts."

Misheck's junior colleague, Yvonnie Akonda Sundu, says the high representation of women at *Joy Radio* has helped her and her work. "When a group of women speak with one voice it carries more weight than an individual, whose voice is not heard. Not because what is being said is not important, but due to a lack of backing from others who understand what is being said about an issue."

Enoch Balakasi supports high representation of women in media houses. "Having a large percentage of women who work in a professional manner in the newsroom has changed the attitudes of male journalists in many ways. It has changed the way they view what is newsworthy. The gender dimension to the article is often well considered."

The managing director of *The Guardian* newspaper, Duwa Mutharika, says it has taken a long time for her to be accepted by the media fraternity, not just because she is a woman, but because of her connection to the President of Malawi. "My solution was to just keep working hard, because I knew that eventually I would be vindicated."

As MD of *The Guardian* Mutharika makes a special effort to empower women in her media house. To increase the number of women working in the newsroom she seeks out those who have had the best training by recruiting women out of MIJ and the Polytechnic. A male respondent working at *The Guardian* affirms Mutharika's efforts: "A good example is *The Guardian*, where because of the woman in a senior position, it takes gender issues seriously."

Workplace policies and practices

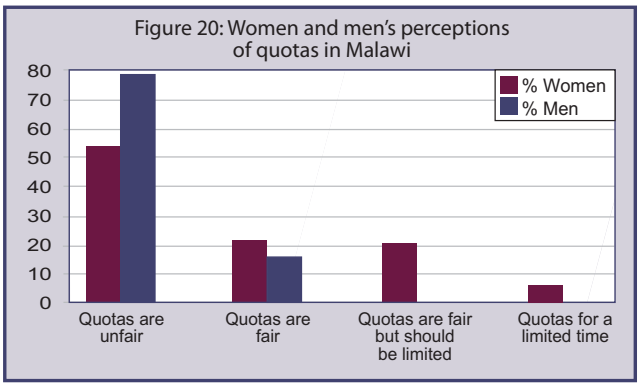
The workplace environment has a substantial bearing on achieving gender parity in media houses. Respondents indicated what kinds of practices or policies their companies had put in place to increase women's participation and representation. Among others, these included whether they had gender policies (or would wish to have one); affirmative action (fast-tracking), career planning and promotion. Table 5 summarises what proportion of the media houses checked "yes" to having the following policies or practices in place:

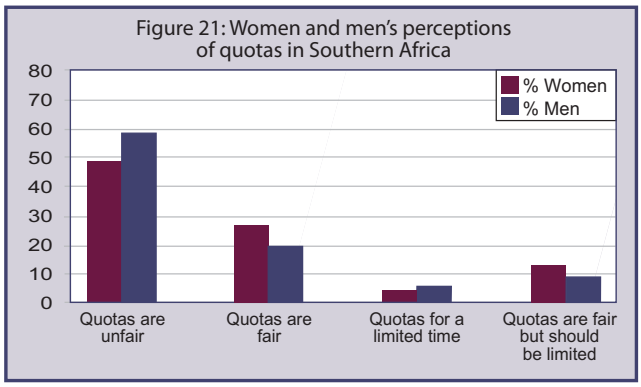
Table five: Workplace indicators in Malawi and the region

	% Malawi	% Region
Targeting women	70	54
Data banks for women	20	36
Gender-balanced panels	40	54
Fast tracking	0	10
Promotion	50	32
Succession	50	35
Flexi-time	80	75
Maternity leave	40	81
Paternity leave	10	33
Child-care facilities	0	15
Women's participation	60	63
Sexual harassment policy	30	28
Gender policy	40	16
Need or improve a gender policy	70	68

Affirmative action

70% of media houses indicated they have specific targets for improving women's representation, but the findings on quotas raise questions as to whether Malawian media can hope to achieve the target of gender parity set by the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development by 2015.

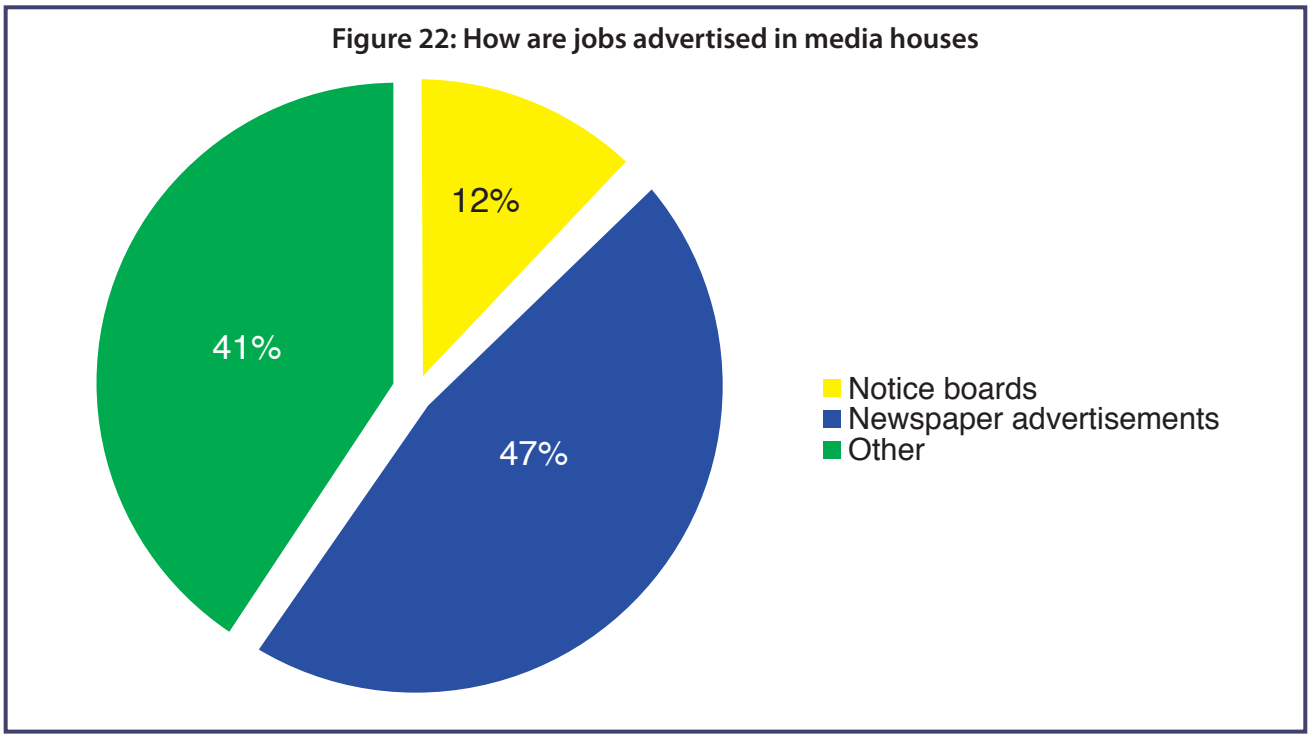




Far more Malawian men than women (79% to 53%) feel quotas for achieving gender equality are unfair. Only 16% of the men and 20% of women thought quotas fair, while the concurring percentages for Southern Africa were men, 20% and women, 27%. It is clear that men in Malawi are overwhelmingly against quotas, and the strong opposition to special measures for increasing the level of women's representation is a concern, because with few exceptions, nowhere in the world has gender parity in decision-making been achieved without special measures.

Recruitment

Only 20% of the media houses in Malawi stated they have databanks for women, and 40% claim they use gender-balanced panels. The low levels of strategies are reflected in the overall figures for representation of women in Malawian media houses. It is crucial to assess whether or not women are selected for positions when they have been specifically targeted.



According to the responses, 47% of job opportunities are advertised in newspapers, and 12% on notice boards. The category "other" accounts for 41% of the advertisements, and this includes a range of means - including the "old boys' network". The information does not show what kinds of jobs are advertised where; a key factor would be whether these adverts are being sent to any specific women's forums and organisations.

Career pathing, fast tracking and promotion

There was no indication of media houses using strategies to fast-track women within the organisation. The regional average is also negligible, with only about 10% of media houses fast-tracking women. Half the media houses in Malawi, however, do consider women for a promotion or in succession planning (compared to 32% and 35% respectively in the region).

Work environment

At 80%, more media houses in Malawi than in the region (75%) offer flexitime. This supports the perceptions of women (65%) and men (67%) that media companies in Malawi are sensitive to, and try to accommodate, family life and responsibilities.

Although a legislative requirement, a very low 40% of the sample stated that they offer maternity leave, and 10% offered paternity leave. This perpetuates the stereotype that the mother is responsible for the primary parenting role. None of media houses had child care facilities.

Gender and sexual-harassment policies

Similar to the region, a third of Malawian media houses said that they have sexual-harassment policies. Sexual harassment is a concern in Malawi as 30% of women felt the level of sexual harrassment was high, whereas in the region only 20% see the level as high. Less than half (40%) of media houses sampled said they had a gender policy, though this was much higher than the regional average of 16%. Some 70% of the media houses in Malawi (compared to 68% in the region) want a gender policy or an improved gender policy.

Table six: Workplace indicators by media house

Work place indicators that exist within media houses in Malawi	FM 101 Radio Station	Radio Islam	Zodiak Radio Station	Trans-world Radio	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation	Capital Radio Malawi Ltd	Joy Radio	Nation Publications Ltd	Radio Alinafe	Guardian Publications Ltd
Targeting women	✔		✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔
Data banks for women									✔	✔
Gender-balanced panels	✔		✔						✔	✔
Fast tracking										
Promotion	✔		✔	✔		✔		✔		
Succession	✔		✔			✔		✔	✔	
Flexi-hours	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	
Maternity leave			✔	✔			✔	✔		
Paternity leave								✔		
Child-care facilities										
Women's participation			✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔
Sexual harassment policy				✔				✔		
Gender policy					✔	✔	✔		✔	
Need a gender policy		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔		✔

Table seven shows the responses of media houses to progressive gender provisions in the work place. It is interesting that Nation Publications has the highest number of ticks, yet has the lowest representation of women in managerial positions. Transworld, a media house with a high representation of women in management, also has a high number of workplace indicators to ensure gender equality.

Conversely, MBC, the public broadcaster, has among the fewest ticks, despite claiming to have a gender policy. An indicator of the fact that this policy is not being implemented is the fact that the MBC also said that it needs a gender policy. Although companies may claim indicators, it is apparent that policies on paper are not necessarily being implemented in reality.



Gender workshop at the MBC *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Sexual harassment in media houses: a major work-environment challenge for female journalists

Throughout the perception responses, both female and male media practitioners highlighted either sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual behaviour, and advances from senior male colleagues to women in lower positions. This exacerbates the stereotyping of female journalists and perception of female media practitioners as prostitutes.

A female respondent stated: "High levels of sexual harassment dominate in most media houses. For instance, editors would like sexual favours from female journalists if they are to be assigned more frequently to cover or attend seminars and workshops, otherwise you are bound to be in the office full-time, and not be given special assignments. Promotion is another critical area where female journalists fall prey to male managers who make it conditional on sleeping with them."

Male respondents concurred. "Most women in media houses are harassed sexually by male counterparts, either by the language they use towards women or by touching them unnecessarily. There have been cases where people have been suspended from work because they were found having sex with a colleague in the studio. This results in most women not being respected in most media houses," said one male respondent.

CASE STUDY:

Daily Times[7], Blantyre Newspaper Limited (BNL)

The Daily Times is the largest national daily newspaper in Malawi, with a circulation of 14 000[8]. It is a part of Blantyre Newspapers Limited (BNL), established in 1895. Still BNL has less than 30% representation of women in their media house. *The Times*, despite its widespread coverage, is therefore a newspaper with inadequate voices from women.

Low representation of women has significant impact on content

Brian Ligomeka, senior editor at *The Daily Times*, states the case: "The low representation of women in the newsroom has an impact on editorial content, in the sense that most male reporters, except for a few trained in gender reporting, do not include substantial amounts of news and issues about women in their coverage. The stereotyped and negative coverage about women and issues that affect them is a reflection of the low representation of women."



Suzgo Khunga, reporter at *The Daily Times*
Photo: Pushpa Jamieson

Suzgo Khunga is a female reporter at *The Daily Times* who struggles in a male-dominated environment. Asked whether having fewer women in the newsroom inhibits women from participating fully in decision-making, she says the editorial team for three papers consists of 8 women out of 35, including the managing editor. Of the 8 only 2 are sub-editors, and they have no say on decisions at higher level.

She asserts: "The low proportion of women also affects content, because the editors and a large number of sub-editors are male, so what they say goes, no matter what your opinion is. Being at a bureau headed by males, stories at the head office are selected without consideration for gender or impact, but for the sales they will generate."

Khunga's male colleague Mike Chipalasa agrees: "Fewer women in the newsroom inhibits women from participating more fully in decision-making, because most decision-making positions are held by men." Chipalasa, a journalist for a little more than two years, says he feels dishonest when he talks about women empowerment in his articles, because this is not practised in the newsroom. "I am a hypocrite when I talk about women empowerment, when my own office has low representation."



Mike Chipalasa, *Daily Times* reporter
Photo: Pushpa Jamieson

Nevertheless BNL, and more specifically *The Daily Times*, is not a unique case study among Malawian media houses. Many managers and decision-makers use the politically correct rhetoric of 50/50, but few are willing to implement the strategies to get there.

[7] The logo was taken from website, www.dailytimesbppmw.com . *The Daily Times* and BNL was not included in the quantitative aspect of this study. Consequently we do not have comparative figures of how many female employees or how many women are in managerial positions at this media house. Rather all of the figures included are gathered from the interviews done for this case study with a senior manager, a female reporter and a male reporter.

[8] 2007. *So this is democracy: State of media freedom in Southern Africa 2007*, Windhoek: MISA

Leading from the front?

Brian Ligomeka says so far BNL has achieved 25% female representation in the editorial department. Even though they are still far from achieving gender parity, he claims strategies have been put in place to increase the number by retaining those working for the newsgroup, and luring others to join.

He agrees it is important to achieve gender parity in for a number of reasons, the first of which is that such an achievement enables the media house to be a role model on practices they advocate.

The media in Malawi advocate 50-50 gender representation in parliament and in other decision-making positions. Ligomeka believes that instead of being hypocrites by advocating 50-50 when they are not living up to that ideal, media houses should play a pro-active role and set standards themselves, before expecting others in society to achieve such targets. It is encouraging that while the media are not yet there, most media houses are striving hard to achieve gender parity.

Ligomeka says there are strategies in place to increase the representation of women in editorial departments.

- The first one ensures that among trainee journalists, BNL accommodates 50% females. Once the interns graduate they are considered for permanent placement. Four females working for the group were once interns, and are now employed full-time.
- The second strategy is that female journalists' promotions are fast-tracked to ensure retention. A number of the female journalists are now senior reporters, while those who were senior reporters are being trained in-house as sub-editors.
- The third strategy is that female journalists who would like to follow their spouses to other cities or towns be allowed to do so. This strategy should help to retain female staff.
- The final strategy to encourage female journalists to upgrade their qualifications, as in the case with their male counterparts. One female journalist has just completed post-graduate studies in media management at Rhodes University in South Africa, and another is upgrading from a diploma to a degree course at Shareworld Open University. These are future female editors of Blantyre Newspapers Limited publications.

Ligomeka says the inclusion of more women in the newsroom will increase positive coverage on women and their issues. One of the publications, the *Malawi News*, has a supplement called *FeMail* headed by a female editor.

"It is encouraging to see that the whole supplement of more than eight pages celebrates the achievements of women in society. The positive portrayal of women in the FeMail supplement is a clear demonstration that, if we have more female journalists in the newsroom, we will have positive news about women - unlike the current situation where women are portrayed as victims and villains, and not as celebrities and achievers."

Ligomeka is chairperson of the National Media Institute of Malawi, and continues to push for the advancement and participation of women in the media.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that there are significantly fewer women in media houses in Malawi than in the region, but that the representation of women in management is similar to the figures for the Southern African region.

The "glass ceiling" is created by the attitude that men are more fitted to the media, and an inability to take women seriously - even stereotyping them as prostitutes. Gender-insensitive work environments and the fact that many men appear to feel threatened by a critical mass of women exacerbate the problem.

Men are usually encouraged to take up senior positions in a way that women are not. As a female respondent said: "There is still the belief that men are better managers than women, so when there is a need to fill top positions men are the first to be considered."

Women face glass ceilings in all the departments and the gender division of labour is still alive amongst covering particular beats for news in Malawian media houses.

One of the key findings of this study is that there are not many indications of a high level of commitment to gender equality in media houses. There are no comprehensive and systematic policies and practices to narrow the gender gap, and quotas are frowned upon male and female media practitioners alike.

Nevertheless, a third of media houses said they had gender policies; the majority either wanted a gender policy or to better a gender policy.

Respondents were asked what should be done to promote gender balance in media houses. These were their responses:

Figure 23: Women's top three policies and practices to promote gender balance in Malawi media houses

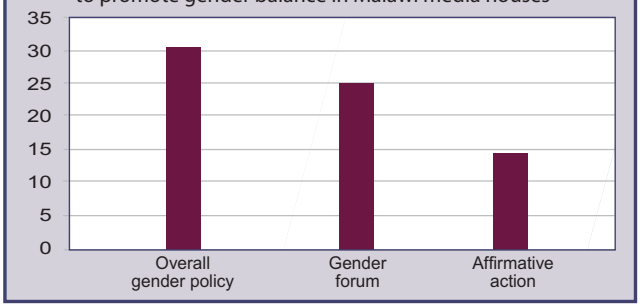
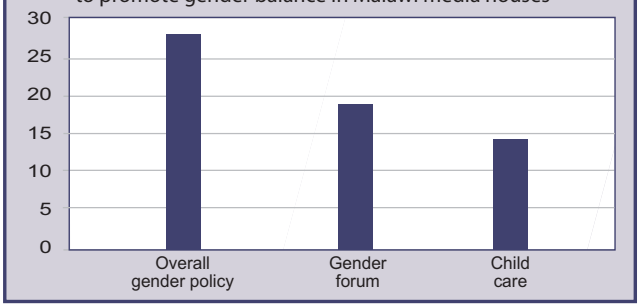


Figure 24: Men's top three policies and practices to promote gender balance in Malawi media houses



Both women and men gave as their top response that media houses should have overall gender policies followed by the creation of gender forums. While women gave affirmative action as their third response, men cited child care as the next most enabling factor for women's participation.

Key strategies following this study include:

- Awareness-raising and publicity through disseminating the findings of this research, and workshops to discuss the findings and forge strategies at regional and national level.
- Follow up by supporting the 75% of media houses in Malawi that wish to improve existing gender policies as a way of lessening gender inequalities. This will be done in tandem with advocacy work arising from the global Glass Ceiling Study, as well as the 2009/2010 GMMP/GMBS on media content. The studies will enable advocacy groups to share with media houses data on gender in their institutional make-up and media content.
- Ensure that there are functioning sexual-harassment policies in all media houses.
- To develop strategies ensuring that policies are implemented, and advocate tools for facilitating effective implementation (monitoring and evaluation, self-monitoring, career pathing etc) to achieve the goal of gender parity and sensitivity in media houses.
- Networking with editors' forums, media unions and media development NGOs for advocacy and lobbying around the SADC Gender Protocol target.
- Training and development programmes to build the capacity for mainstreaming gender at the workplace and in editorial content.
- Facilitating leadership training for women in media houses.
- The bi-annual Gender and Media Summit where awards will be made and best practices shared.
- Carrying out another region-wide survey of the position of women and men in Southern Africa media houses in five years, including Malawi, as a way of gauging progress in achieving gender parity in media houses in Southern Africa.



Emma Kaliya who co-ordinates the gender NGO network champions the 50/50 campaign in Malawi *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Media provisions in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

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

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

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

Take measures to discourage the media from:

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

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

"We cannot hope to reduce or eliminate poverty, or promote human rights without women's equality. Media play a crucial role in this. But in order for media to effectively promote this role, key media players and managers like me need to be aware of gender equality in order to advance equal rights and opportunities for both men and women"

- Al Osman, managing director of Capital Radio, receiver of the 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award from National Media Institute of Southern Africa (NAMISA) in Malawi and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) 2007 Award for the Promotion of Media Independence in the SADC region.

