Glass Ceilings

Women and men in Southern Africa media

MAURITIUS



gender links

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Gender and Media Southern Africa

Gender and Media Diversity Centre

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Gender Links (GL) is a Southern African NGO that is 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 - MAURITIUS
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SUMMARY OF KEY QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS FOR MAURITIAN MEDIA HOUSES				
CATEGORY	% MAURITIUS		% REGION	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Percentage of employees by sex	33	67	41	59
OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS				
Non-permanent	52	48	36	64
Unskilled	30	70	29	71
Semi-skilled	35	65	55	45
Skilled technical	22	78	45	55
Professionally qualified	40	60	31	69
Senior management	22	78	28	72
Top management	25	75	23	77
Board of directors	36	64	28	72
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT				
Freelance	53	47	43	57
Part-time	40	60	35	65
Full-time, fixed term contract	31	69	37	63
Full-time open-ended contract	26	74	42	58
DEPARTMENTS				
Percentage of women and men in:				
Finance & administration	46	54	54	46
Editorial	39	61	42	58
Advertising/Marketing	38	62	57	43
Human resources	32	68	44	56
Production	23	77	30	70
Technical/IT	16	84	16	84
Design	13	87	31	69
Printing & distribution	6	94	24	76
BEATS				
Top three beats covered by women				
Religion	62	38	52	48
Human Rights	58	42	42	58
Media	58	42	42	58
Top three beats covered by men				
Political reporting	20	80	25	75
Labour	21	79	36	64
Courts	27	73	37	63
POLICIES	**Mauritius**		**Region**	
Existence of a gender policy	33		16	
Existence of a sexual harassment policy	56		28	
Need for or improving existing gender policies	78		68	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

The findings will in turn 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), a partnership between media development organisations, training and higher learning institutions for the "collection and connection" of knowledge and "collaboration" 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) that will take place 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 Mauritius, the study is based on research carried out in nine media houses, with a total of 1190 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 31 senior staff responded to perception questionnaires.



La Vie Catholique has achieved gender parity *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

In total, 126 media houses (approximately half of all media houses[1]) in 14[2] of the 15 countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) representing 23 678 employees participated in the research. Some 463 respondents filled in the perception questionnaires. Relevant 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."*

Saskia Naidoo of MWO/GEMSA undertook the research in Mauritius. Loga Virahsawmy, GL Director for Mauritius and Francophone countries, and President of MWO/GEMSA, conducted further research, profiles and case studies. 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:

- ***There are over twice as many men as there are women in media houses in Mauritius:*** Men constitute 67% of employees in media houses; more

[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.

than double the 33% women employees. The proportion of women in media houses in Mauritius is considerably lower than the 41% women in Southern African media houses overall.



Opening up: Jean Claude L'estrac of L'Express meets member of Media Watch Organisation *Photo: Loga Virahsawmy*

- ***But there are differences between media houses:*** Most of the large media houses have twice as many men as women. However, small media houses *La Vie Catholique* and *Impact News*, are the only media house with more women (58% and 71% respectively) than men.

- ***Women constitute a little over one third of the boards of directors:*** Women constitute 36% of those on boards of directors in media houses in Mauritius, compared to 28% in the regional study.

- ***But they barely feature in top management:*** Women occupy a quarter of top management posts in media houses in Mauritius; slightly more than the regional average of 23% women in top management.

- ***There are low levels of women in senior management positions:*** Women constitute 22% of those in senior management in media houses in Mauritius; lower than the regional average of 28%. The Mauritius and regional findings for women in senior management point to the "glass ceiling" that women experience in the media and the challenges they face in breaking into management.

- ***Men get better working deals:*** Men (74%) are more likely than women (26%) to be employed in open-ended full-time contracts, compared to 42% women in the rest of the region. In Mauritius, 53% of those on freelance contracts are women, compared to 43% in the regional study. This reflects a much higher level of job insecurity for women than for men in the Mauritian media.

- ***Men dominate in all departments in media houses in Mauritius:*** This is particularly the case in the printing (94%); design (87%) and technical/IT (84%) departments.

- ***There are more women in the support departments:*** While women in the Mauritian media are under represented in all areas of work, they are more numerous in areas considered to be "women's work" including finance and administration (46%) and advertising/marketing (38%). In the region women dominate in finance and administration (54%) and in advertising and marketing (57%).

- ***Fewer women in editorial departments than in the region:*** In Mauritius 39% of those in the editorial departments in media houses are women; this is lower than the regional average of 42%.

- ***The gender division of labour in beats is still pronounced:*** Male journalists dominate in all of the hard beats such as politics (80%); labour (79%) and courts (73%). Women journalists predominate in religion (62%); human rights (58%) and media (58%).

- ***There are no specific 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 Mauritian media houses is not a priority:*** As in the regional finding only 13% of media houses in Mauritius have strategies in place to fast track women within the organisation. Even fewer media houses (11%) in Mauritius have strategies for promoting women within media houses. This is substantially lower than the regional average of 34%.

- ***There is not enough effort to target good women candidates:*** Of the sample 43% of the media houses stated that they have a database of women candidates and 33% target women specifically. In the regional sample 40% of media houses have a database of women candidates and a much higher proportion (57%) of media houses in the region target women specifically for jobs.

- ***Commitment to maternity but not paternity leave:*** In the Mauritius sample 89% of the media houses offer maternity leave; this is higher than the regional average of 81%. Only 22% of Mauritian media houses have paternity leave, lower than the regional average of 33%. The low commitment to paternity leave across the region perpetuates the belief that child rearing is a female responsibility.

- ***Child care is not a priority but flexi time is high on the agenda in Mauritian media houses:*** None of the media houses in the Mauritian sample offered child care facilities, compared to 17% in the regional sample. But 89% of media houses in Mauritius (and 75% of media houses in the region) said they offered flexi time.

- ***Mauritian media houses doing better than region on gender policies but want to improve:*** A third (33%) of the media houses in Mauritius stated that they have gender policies; over half (56%) have sexual harassment policies and 78% of media houses showed interest in developing or improving an existing gender policy. Only 16% of media houses in the region said they had gender policies while 28% said they had sexual harassment policies.



Glass Ceiling researcher Saskia Naidoo *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

MAURITIUS MEDIA CONTEXT

The Republic of Mauritius is a group of islands in the south west of the Indian Ocean, consisting of the main Island of Mauritius, Rodrigues and other several islands located at distances greater than 350 km from the main island. The population is estimated at 1.2 million.

The history of the Mauritian press dates as far back as 1773. During the period of censorship, after the British took over in 1810, the Franco-Mauritian elite fought for, and won, the right to a free press from the British rulers in 1832. During the nineteenth century, the press became an instrument in the fight for political and social emancipation of different groups. In post-colonial Mauritius, the media has consolidated its position as a key player in the island's democracy. Broadcasting was started by private interests but around 1944-45 colonial authorities took this over and it became the Mauritius Broadcasting Services (MBS). The MBS became the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) in 1954. Liberalisation of the airwaves began in 2002. The MBC operates under the MBC Act. The Act stipulates that the broadcaster should balance between ethnic and religious interest but gender does not feature in the Act.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is a statutory body that regulates the airwaves while the Association of Advertising Authorities (AAA) is an advertising self regulatory body. MWO-GEMSA is the first civil society organisation established to "watch the watch dogs." One of its key objectives is to promote diversity in the media.



Sexist stereotypes in the Mauritian Media

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Gender and media in Mauritius

The Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) of 2003 found that women constituted 17% of news sources in Mauritius.

In the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) conducted two years later, this had risen slightly to 21%.

Women's voices were virtually absent in certain occupational categories including politics, religion, police, military, science and technology. They predominate as victims of violence and sex objects. The GMBS also found that women constitute 24% of print journalists. While the GMBS research focused on the representation and portrayal of gender in the editorial content in the media, the current research seeks to probe the gendered dimensions of the institutional composition and practices of the media and how this impacts on media output.

The work on gender and institutional transformation builds on ongoing collaboration to develop HIV and AIDS newsroom policies. Since March 2005, GL has worked with 11 media houses in Mauritius in developing gender aware HIV and AIDS policies as part of the Media Action Plan on HIV and AIDS and Gender led by the Southern African Editor's Forum (SAEF). Of the 11 media houses nine (MBC; La Sentinelle ; Samedi Plus; Le Dimanche ; La Vie Catholique; Impact News; Le Defi; Star and La Voix Kreol) have adopted and launched their HIV and AIDS policies.



METHODOLOGY

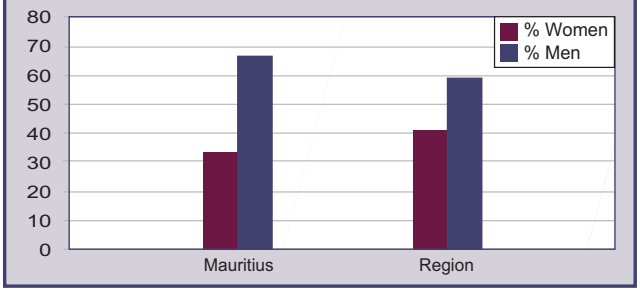
With 22 media houses, Mauritius ranked as "medium density" country. Table one shows that the sample of nine media houses with a total of 1196 employees included state/public media; broadcast and print media, private/commercial and community media.

Table one: Media houses that completed the questionnaires in Mauritius					
Media House	Type	Classification	Number of Employees		
			Women	Men	Total
La Voix Kreol	Print	Community	4	6	10
La Vie Catholique	TV, Radio	Community	7	5	12
Le Dimanche	Print	Community	3	9	12
Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation	TV, Radio	Public	224	445	669
Samedi Plus	Print	Private	7	14	22
Le Defi Media Group	Print	Private	33	55	88
La Sentinelle Ltd	Print	Private	116	253	369
Le Militant	Print	Private	1	7	8
Impact News	Print	Private	5	2	7
Total			**395**	**795**	**1196**

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 - August 2008. Several media houses declined to answer questions relating to remuneration. The research team gathered and compiled all of the questionnaire findings using Ms-Excel spreadsheets to generate graphs and tables.

FINDINGS

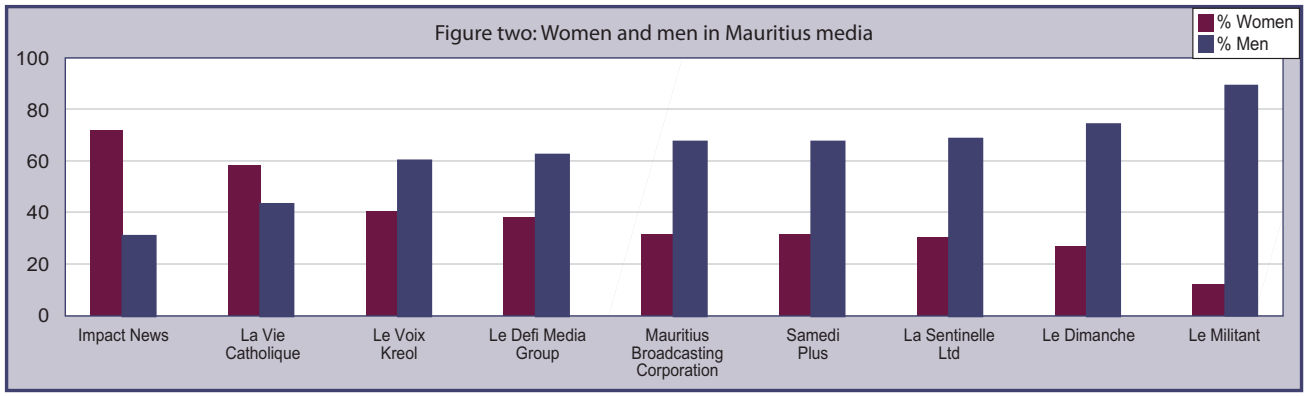
Figure one: Total number of employees in Mauritius vs the region



Women are under represented in the Mauritius media

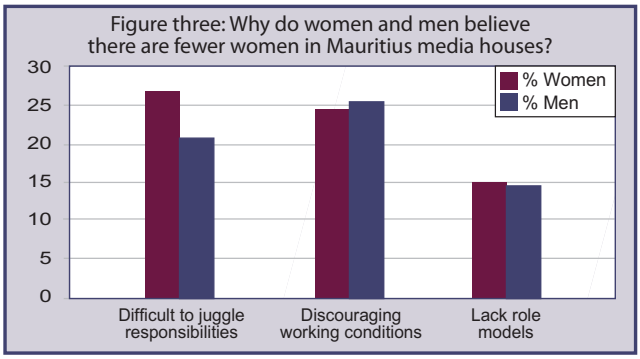
Figure one shows that overall women constitute 33% and men 67% of those in Mauritian media houses compared to 41% and 59% respectively in the region. In most cases, media houses still fall far short of the SADC target of gender parity by 2015 in Mauritius.

Variations by media house

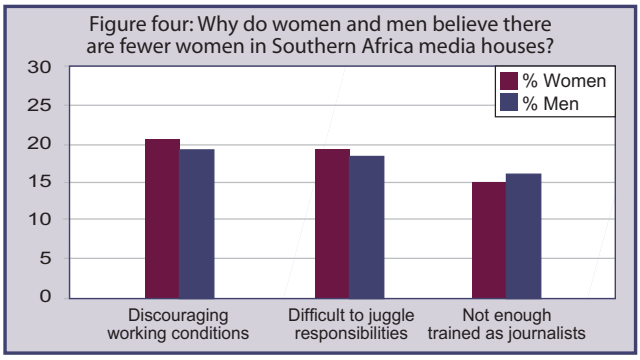


As illustrated in Figure two, most newsrooms have more men than women. However, two of the smaller media houses, *Impact News and La Vie Catholique* have more women than men. The Mauritian Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), the public broadcaster, the media house in this study with the most employees, has 67% men and 33% women. *Le Dimanche* with 75% men and *Le Militant* with 88% men had the most glaring gender gaps.

Why are there fewer women in Mauritian media houses?



The top three reasons why women and men believe there are fewer women in media houses in Mauritius are shown in figure three. Most women (27%) cited the difficulty in juggling responsibilities as the main reason for fewer women in media houses while most men (26%) said discouraging environments resulted in fewer women being present in media houses. Both women (15%) and men (14%) believed that women do not have sufficient role models to encourage them to join media houses.



Across the Southern African region, most women and men cited discouraging work environments and difficulties in juggling responsibilities as the key reasons for fewer women in media houses. The regional finding differed from the Mauritian findings in that 15% women and 17% men suggested that insufficient training might also account for the low representation of women in media houses. This is not seen as an issue in Mauritius, where there is gender parity at most institutions of learning.

Missing from action!

Many women felt that juggling domestic and professional responsibilities hindered women's ability to work more effectively within the media sector. The family unfriendly media environment and the high level of domestic expectations within the home results in women seeking alternative employment in order balance home and work.



Debating gender at Impact News *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Annick Daniella Rivet, a reporter Le Defi Media Group said that the main obstacles are "personal. It is difficult when my children are not well. Fortunately I have a gender sensitive husband who looks and cares for them but when they are sick I like to stay with them. I feel it is my responsibility as a mother to cuddle them and give them the love they need especially when they need me most. Very often when my children are ill it is my husband who has to take leave to stay with them. I also believe this is one of the main reasons why so many female journalists are not married.

"The worse is when my children are on holiday. Very often they do not see me for over three days which I think is not normal. When they are on holidays they wake up late and by then I have left home and when I come back they are already in bed. All I can do is kiss them goodnight in their sleep."

Male respondents on the other hand believed women left the industry quickly because they "cannot relate to the people in media houses."

Raymond R. Nauvel, Editor in Chief of *Le Dimanche*, said that the "ideal situation would have been to have gender parity in the newsroom but in reality this is very difficult. In *Le Dimanche*, we do not have any full-time female staff and the only female journalist we have is on a freelance basis. Journalism is not suited for women. Late working hours are not conducive for women to apply for the post… Journalism is not a 9.00 am to 4.00 p.m job. In March 2009 we are going to have a bi-election, girls cannot go and cover elections due to late hours…"

This comment reflects the patriarchal attitudes in the Mauritian media; the most powerful sub-conscious barrier to women's advancement. When asked what they thought gender means, women (75%) and men (65%) thought it meant "male and female". Only a minority of the Mauritian sample chose "gender means socially constructed roles". This shows that there are the low levels of gender awareness in Mauritian media houses.

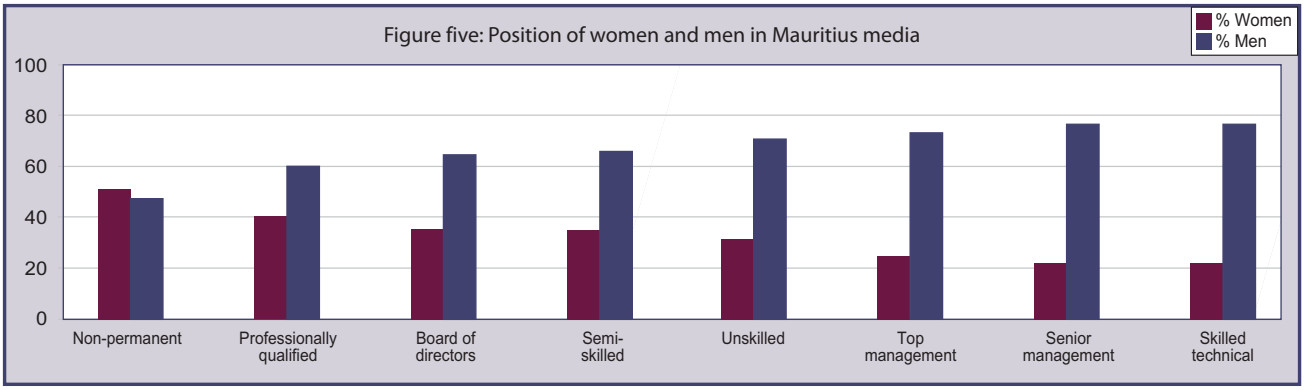
Women are under-represented in the top echelons

The study sought to find out the number of women and men at the different occupational levels in media houses. Table two provides a description of which positions within the media houses falls within which categories.

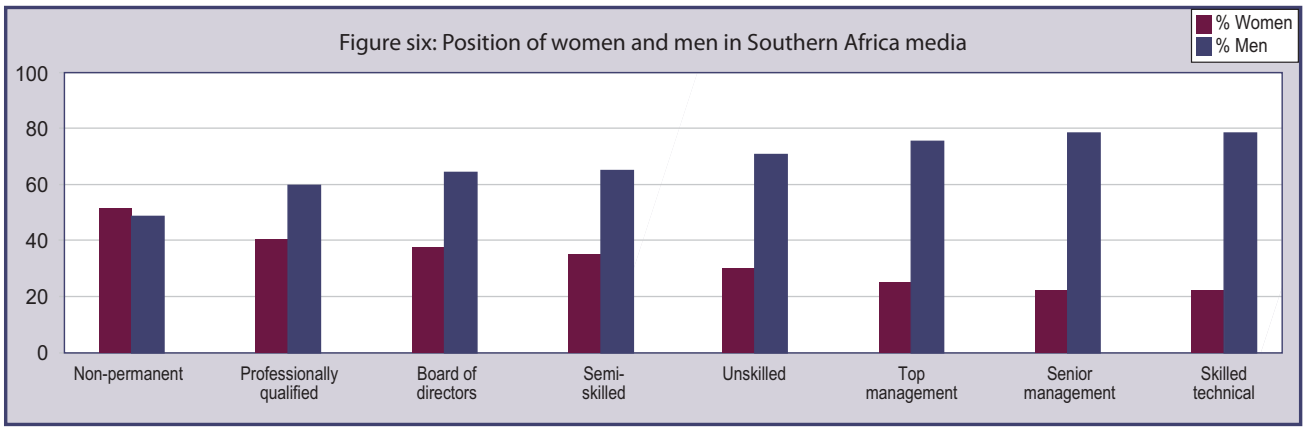
Table two: Occupational levels and examples of positions

Occupational levels[3]	Examples of positions
Board of directors	CEO, Editor in Chief
Top management	Managing editors of various newsrooms within media houses
Senior management	Editors of different sections
Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management	Assistant editors, news presenters/anchors, correspondents, designers, producers
Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors	Reporters, sub-editors
Semi-skilled and discretionary decision-making	PA's, executive assistants
Unskilled and defined decision-making	Secretaries, clerks, drivers, receptionists
Non-permanent	Freelance writers

Figure five: Position of women and men in Mauritius media



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



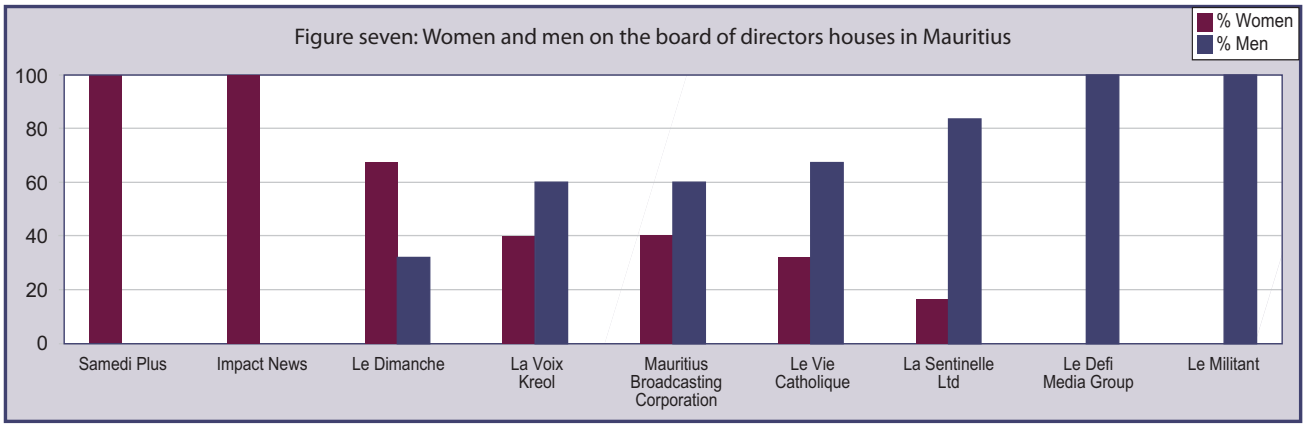
Figures five and six illustrate where women are within the media hierarchy. The two graphs show that in general, women are poorly represented at the top echelons but have higher representation in the lower positions. Women constitute a quarter of the top management in Mauritius; slightly higher than the regional average of 23%. In Mauritius women constitute 36% of the Boards of Directors which is higher than the regional average of 28%. But there are only 22% women in senior management in Mauritius. This is lower than the regional average of 28% for women.

Mauritius media has a high proportion of women in non- permanent employment (52% as compared to 36% in the region). However, Mauritius is like the rest of the region in that women comprise 30% of unskilled staff, compared to 29% in the region.

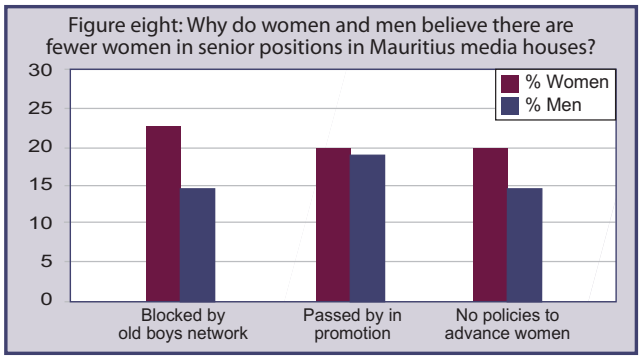
The skilled technical category is generally a male preserve: in Mauritius women comprise 22% of this category; much lower than the regional average of 45%.

However, at 40%, Mauritius has more women in the professionally qualified category than the regional figure of 31%. This is an interesting finding in that journalists are included in this number. This suggests that women are making it into journalism but not into management positions.

Variations by media house



Media houses vary considerably in size and in smaller media houses there may be only one or two directors. However, the findings generally indicate that women are poorly represented at board level in Mauritian media. Figure seven shows that two media houses, *Le Defi Media Group* and *La Militant* had zero representation of women on their Board of Directors compared to 67% at *La Dimanche*; 40% at La Voix Kreol; 40% at the MBC; 33% at *La Vie Catholique* and 17% at *La Sentinelle Ltd*.



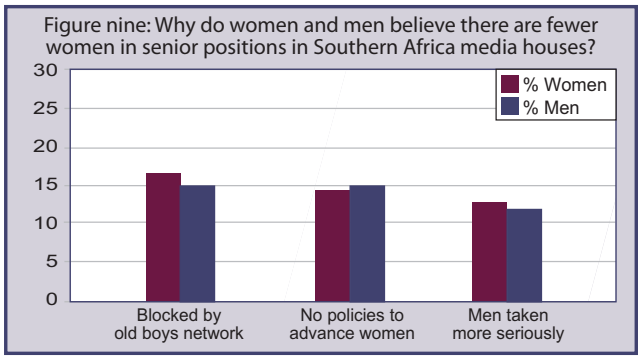


Figure eight shows that in Mauritius, the highest proportion of women cited the "old boys network" as the main reason for the glass ceiling in media houses while higher proportions of men cited the fact that women are by-passed in promotions and that there are no policies to advance women in media houses as the main reasons for women being scarce in decision-making. Respondents in the rest of the region also cited the "old boys network" as the main reason for women not advancing, with men citing "no policies to advance women" and women saying that "men are taken more seriously" as their second reasons.

How one woman broke the glass ceiling



Daniele Babooram *Photo: Loga Virahsawmy*

When Daniele Babooram sensed someone following her late at night, she rushed to hide in a corner and when the man came close, she gave him a good thump. Six years later Babooram learned that it had been her best friend trying to protect her on a dark night! The Manager and Editor in Chief of *La Vie Catholique* laughs as she tells the story which reminds her both of the hazards of being a woman in the media and the dangers of stereotyping.

Born of well respected parents in a region where drugs and prostitution are rife, she started her career as a nurse. In 1989 she saw the advertisement for the post of journalist at "La Vie Catholique". She tried her luck and applied. Starting from the bottom, she has risen to the top post through learning-on- the-job and with the help of certificate courses in Mass Communication at the University of Mauritius and an Editorial Management Course at Rhodes University in South Africa.

The top job came unexpectedly, when the former Editor-in-Chief resigned. Called back from holiday, Babooram assumed the post of Acting Editor-in-Chief. Soon after, her predecessor committed suicide. She had to manage her own inner emotions as well as the feelings of her colleagues. Restructuring the newsroom to ensure a clear demarcation between the administration and the newsroom also proved a challenge.

The third big challenge is that although the media is a faith-based newspaper she has to find ways and means of making it a profit-making. She has worked to do so with her team of five male and seven female journalists. Sexist language is not tolerated. The working environment is healthy and friendly. Babooram's staff are regular participants at workshops run by Gender Links and Media Watch Organisation. The mission of *La Vie Catholique* is to give voices to all and especially the voiceless. Journalists are taught how to engage with people; how to make them talk.

Babooram finds it odd when she receives invitations that says Ms Babooram and Mr Babooram, as her husband's name is Rannoojee. She chose to keep her maiden name because "gender equality in work also means gender equality in the home."

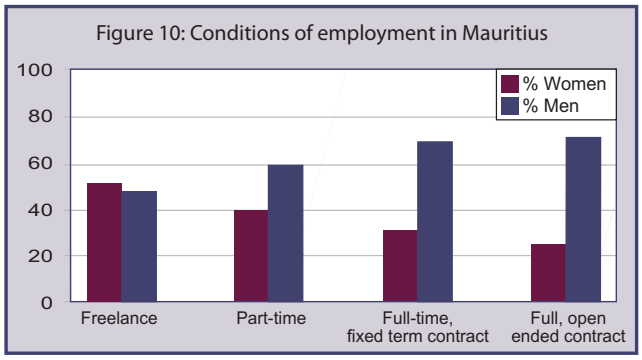
At the time of writing, her husband was home maker since he had just lost his job. He takes the children to tuitions, helps with the cleaning of the house, the washing and the cooking. "He has even organised himself with other mothers to take the children to tuition in turns. He seems very happy as now he is giving his two girls quality life."

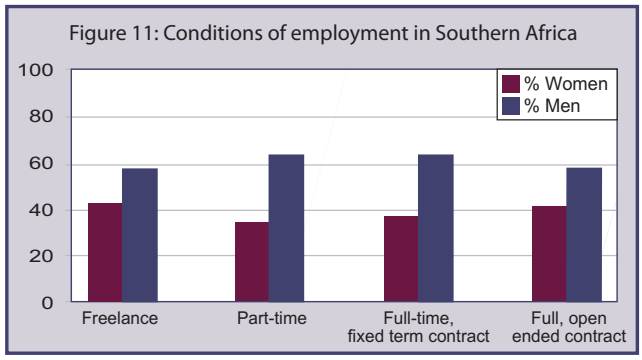
Babooram is an example of the fact that although journalism can be tough it is not an impossible job for a woman: if the right environment is created.

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 and can be a significant structural barrier to achieving gender parity.

Women likely to have less favourable conditions of employment than men

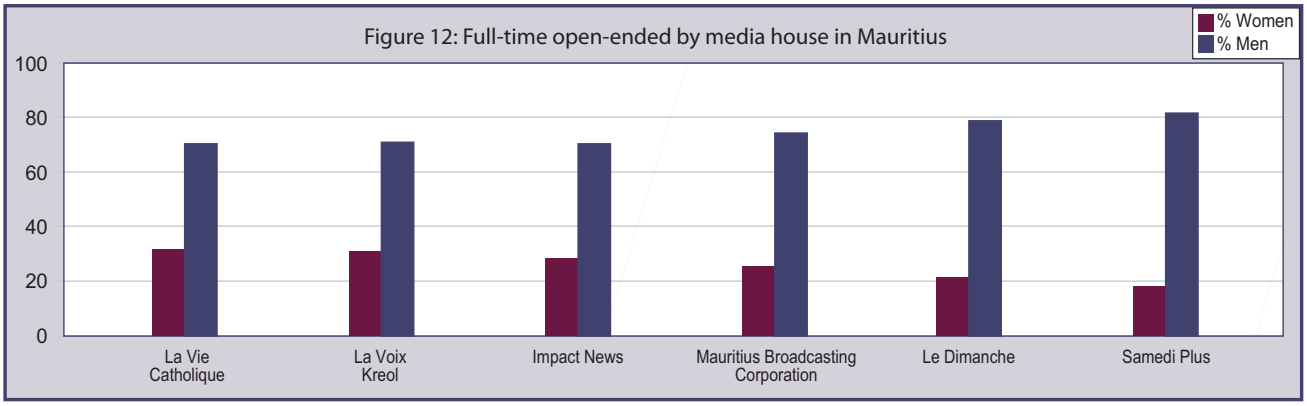




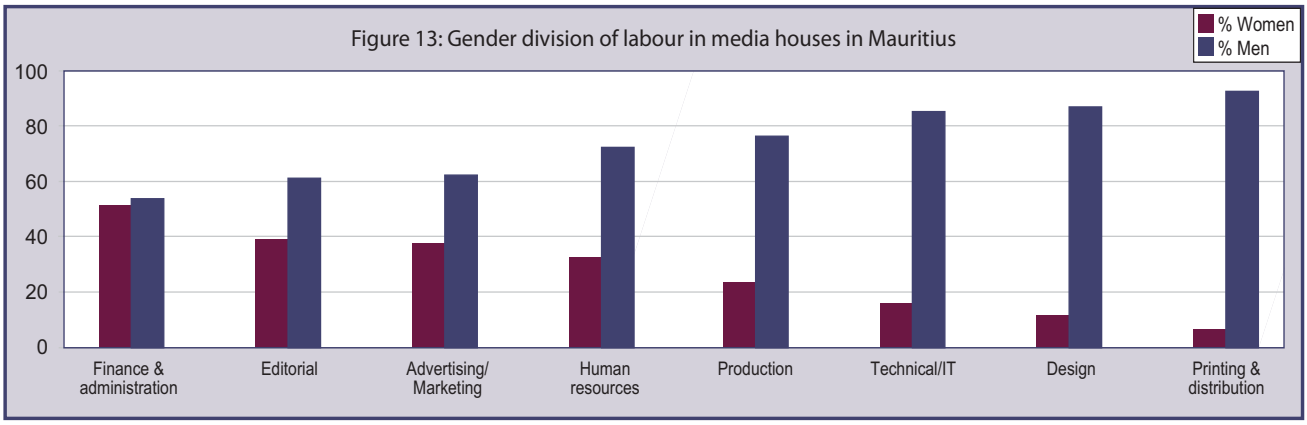
Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the conditions of service for media practitioners in Mauritius and the Southern African region. The most secure form of employment is full-time, open-ended contracts. Whereas in the region, 42% of women media workers are on such contracts, in Mauritius the figure is only 26%.

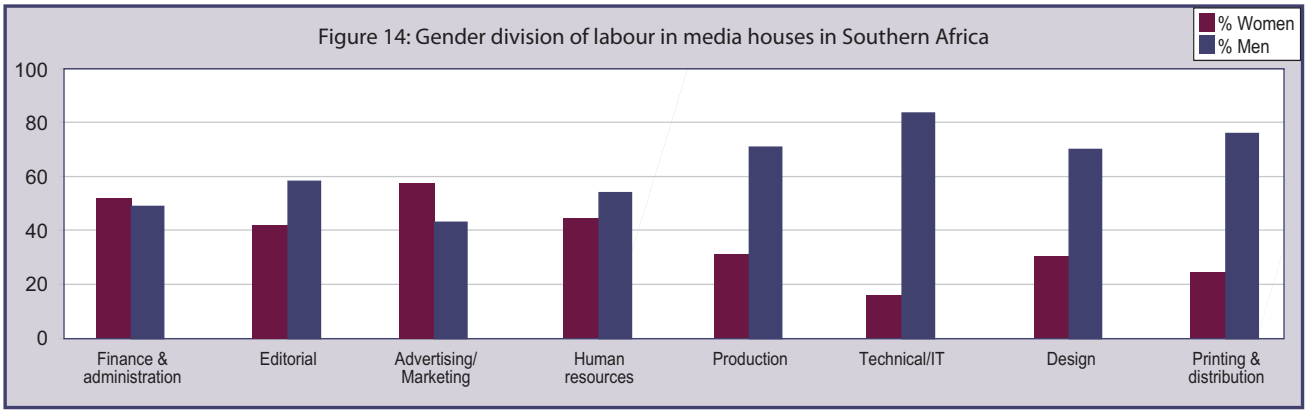
The next most secure form of employment consists of full-time, fixed term contracts. Again, men constitute 69% of those with such contracts compared to 31% women (figures similar to the region). Women in Mauritius do, however, constitute 53% of all freelance journalists (in the region this is 43%). Interestingly, both in the region and in Mauritius (77% and 60% respectively) men constitute the majority of part-time employees. This is usually a category in which women predominate due to the dual roles that they plan in the home, and has implications for their earnings.

Conditions of employment per media house



Gender division of labour in the media

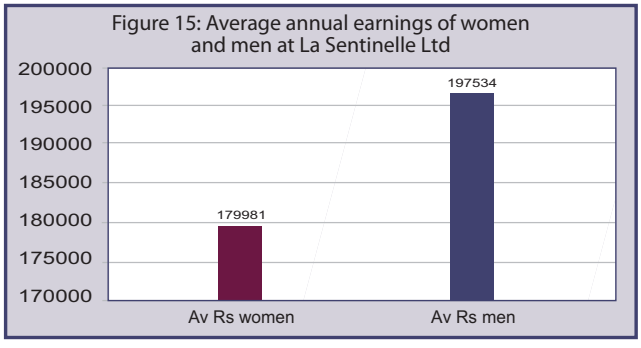




Women and men in media houses in Mauritius and the region come closest to gender parity in the finance and administration occupational category with women (54%) predominating in this area in the region, compared to 46% women in this category in Mauritius. There is an increasing proportion of women in the editorial department where editors and journalists are found (39% women in editorial in Mauritius compared to 42% in the region). Women constitute about one-third of the advertising/marketing and human resource departments.

In Mauritius and the region women are least well represented in printing and distribution (6% and 24% respectively); technical and IT (16% in both Mauritius and the region) and production (23% and 30% respectively). While women comprise 31% of media designers in the region, in Mauritius this figure is 13%.

Differences in earnings

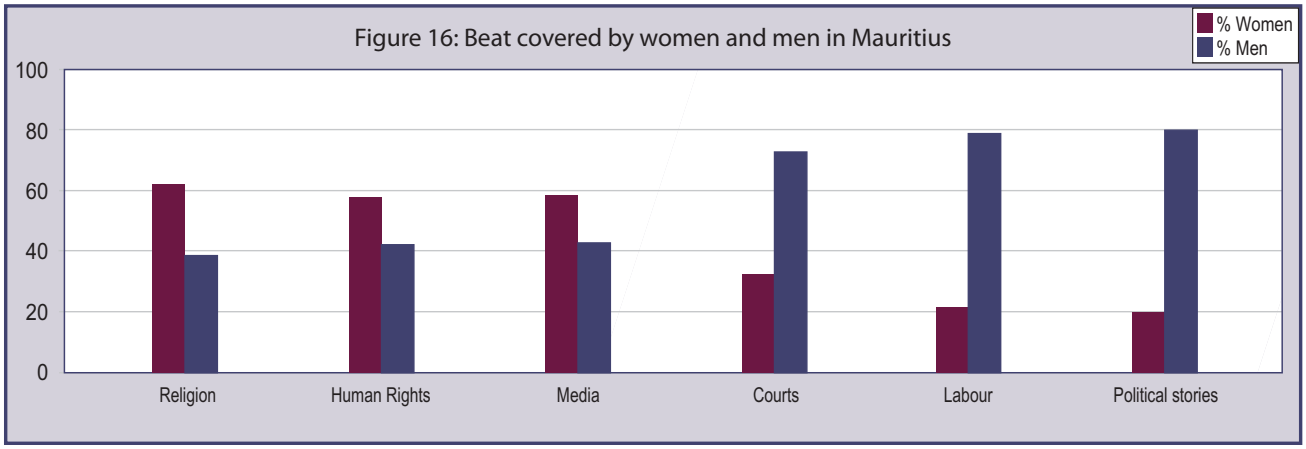


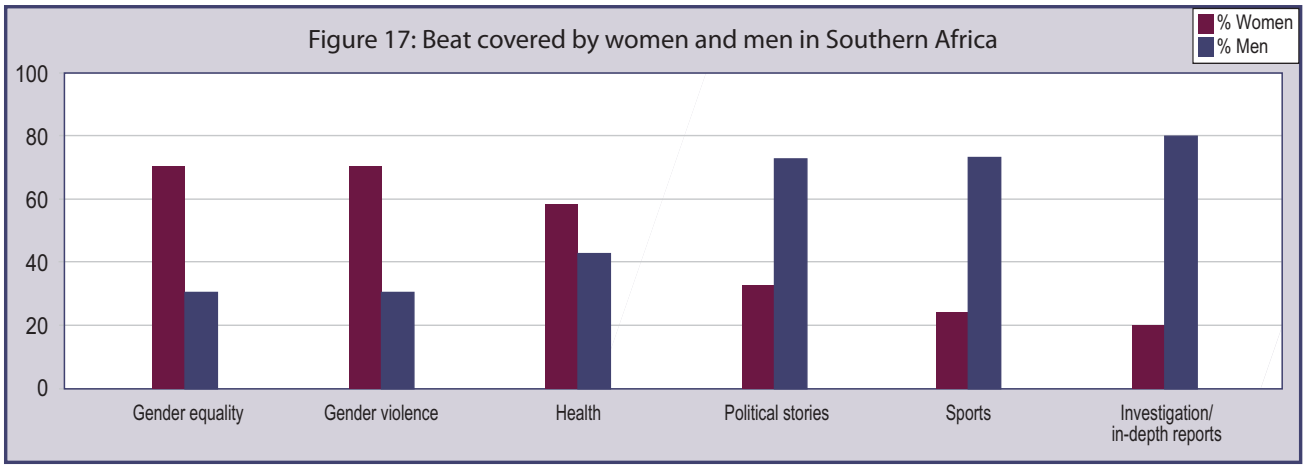
Only one Mauritian media house, La Sentinelle, gave reliable data on earnings. This showed that women on average earn Rs 179 981 ($5624) per annum compared to Rs 197 534 ($6173) in the case of men. While the MBC, the public broadcaster, declined to provide earning figures, data gathered by GL in 2003 from this media house similarly suggested that women in media houses in Mauritius on average earn 10 to 11% less than men.[4]

[4] Data provided by the human resources department of the MBC in 2003 for a discussion paper in preparation for a gender policy workshop put average earnings of men at the MBC at Rs150 372 per annum compared to Rs135 688 in the case of women.

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; occupational types and 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 the lowest paid posts, because production and distribution (which are intrinsic to the media industry) are male dominated.

Gender division of labour across beats





Which beats are assigned to male and female journalists is an indicator of how newsrooms view the roles of women and men in society. Beats are also significant because they have a bearing on promotion prospects, with the hard beats generally a more likely ticket to the top than the soft beats. Figure 16 illustrates the top three beats for women (religion; human rights; and media) and the top three beats for men (the courts, labour and political stories). In the region gender equality, gender violence and health topped the list for women while political stories, sports and investigative/in depth reports topped the list for men.

Table three: Women and men in different beats in Mauritius and the region				
Beats	Mauritius		Region	
	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men
Religion	62	38	52	48
Human Rights	58	42	42	58
Media	58	42	42	58
Education	57	43	54	46
General	56	44	37	63
Gender violence	54	46	71	29
Gender equality	53	47	71	29
Agriculture	50	50	41	59
Investigative/in-depth reports	50	50	20	80
Science & technology	50	50	39	61
Lifestyle	45	55	55	45
Disaster/War/Conflict	43	57	35	65
Sustainable development & environment	43	57	33	67
Youth	42	58	52	48
Entertainment/arts/culture	41	59	42	58
Crime	38	62	37	63
Economics/Business/Finance	38	62	39	61
HIV & AIDS	38	62	53	47
Sports	38	63	24	76
Health	33	67	59	41
Courts	27	73	37	63
Labour	21	79	36	64
Political stories	20	80	25	75



Male journalists in Mauritius also cover gender issues *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Table three, which reflects the findings for all beats, shows that there are some interesting gender benders in the Mauritian media. For example, a roughly equal proportion of women and men cover gender violence and gender equality; agriculture; investigative and in-depth reporting; science and technology and lifestyle. At 38%, there is also an increasing number of women covering economics, business and finance, traditionally a male preserve.

Gender blind beats?

Despite the persisting gender gaps on news beats, there appears to be no concerted strategy to challenge the stereotypes of women covering soft beats. Raymond R. Nauvel of *Le Dimanche* believes that women are better suited to soft beats and vice versa: "More women could have an impact on the work in the sense that they bring a feminine touch to the environment but not necessarily in the news. They might be good to write on social issues or corporate social responsibilities. This could bring some diversity in articles but men are best suited to write on politics and sports."



Rudy Veeramundar
Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

On the other hand, Rudy Veeramundar, Editor in Chief of *Samedi Plus* notes: "My best journalists are female. At the last press conference of the Prime Minister our female journalist was congratulated by the Prime Minister for the pertinent questions she asked. Over and above female journalists are committed and assume their responsibilities…"

Veeramundar does not force female journalists to go into "hot areas" but supports those who are interested in doing so. He believes that very often female journalists are less afraid than male journalists to work in difficult areas or under difficult circumstances. "

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, women sources constituted 28% of the total sources consulted by women journalists compared to 19% of the sources referred to by male journalists (compared to 25% for women and 20% for men in the global findings). With the exception of Angola, women consulted women sources more so than men in every country of the region, with women journalists in some instances consulting up to 40% women sources[5]

Table four: Women and men's perceptions - does gender make a difference in media houses in the region and in Mauritius?

	Mauritius		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	23	50	31	39
b) Female journalists are more likely to seek out female opinion than male journalists	62	39	46	45
c) Female journalists are more likely to cover gender related topics more than male journalists	77	28	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	85	33	70	49
e) Where there is a "critical mass" of women in the media house this affects the way that men think and behave	77	28	53	50
f) Men can be as gender aware and sensitive as women	85	100	78	87
g) Women are their own worst enemies	38	33	45	45

[5] 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 shows that only a few women, and only half of men, believe that there is no relationship between having women in the media and achieving gender balance and sensitivity in media coverage. Women (62%) believe that women are more likely to seek out female opinion, although men (39%) are not as convinced. Women (77% and 85% respectively) also believe strongly that female journalists are more likely to cover gender-related topics, and that where women are in senior management positions, gender is likely to be taken seriously. Only a minority of women and men believe that "women are their worst enemies." Both women and all men believed that "men can be as gender aware as women." Women (77%) felt it is crucial to have a "critical mass" of women in the media if they are to make a difference.

Critical mass?

Mauritian women interviewed said that a "critical mass of women" will make a difference even though men might feel threatened. They argued that having many women in media houses promotes gender balance in all spheres. As one respondent commented: "The more the number of women, the more the work about gender balance could move on." Most men felt that gender equality depends on the "attitude of women". As one male responded put it: a "fair mix is important … but moderation and equilibrium … are very important for media houses. Men did not see gender equality as priority for men but as women's issue."



More women journalists, more women sources? *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

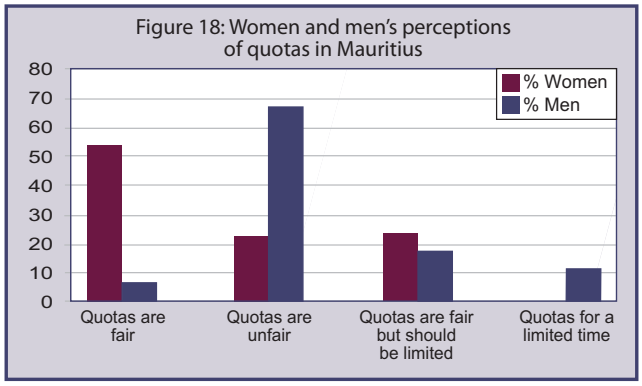
Workplace policies and practices

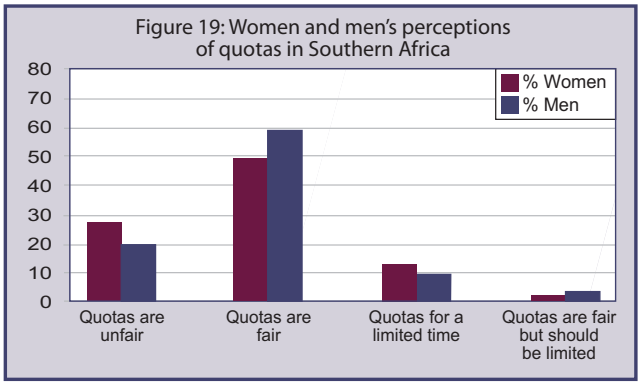
The workplace environment has a substantial bearing on achieving gender parity in media houses. Respondents indicated what kinds of practices or policies their companies had put in place to increase women's participation and representation in media houses. Among others, these included whether they had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

Table five: Workplace indicators in Mauritius and the region		
	% Mauritius	% Region
Targeting women	33	54
Data banks for women	33	36
Gender-balanced panels	56	54
Fast tracking	11	10
Promotion	11	32
Succession	22	35
Flexi-hours	89	75
Maternity leave	89	81
Paternity leave	22	33
child care facilities	0	15
Women's participation	56	63
Sexual harassment policy	56	28
Gender policy	33	16
Need or improve a gender policy	78	68

Affirmative action

Despite the SADC target of achieving gender parity in media houses by 2015, only 33% of media houses indicated that they have specific targets for achieving gender equality, compared to the regional average of 54%.



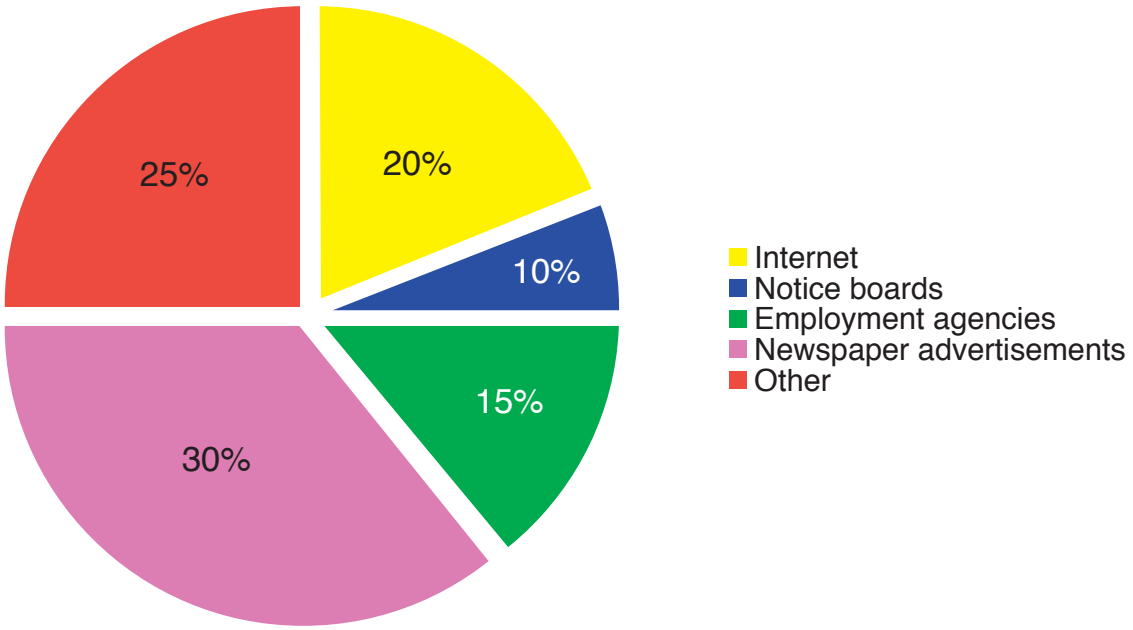


While 59% men and 49% women in the region supported quotas for achieving gender equality in the media in the region, in Mauritius only 6% of the men, compared to 54% of women in the country sample supported such measures. Mauritius has a strong constitutional stance against affirmative action. The strong negative reaction 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 being taken.

Recruitment

Some 33% of media houses in Mauritius stated that they have databanks for women and 56% that they use gender balanced panels. These strategies are not reflected in the overall figures for the representation of women in Mauritian media houses. It is crucial to assess whether women are selected for positions when they have been specifically targeted.

Figure 20: How are jobs advertised in media houses



According to the responses, a third of job opportunities are advertised in newspapers; 20% via the Internet, 10% on notice boards and 15% via an employment agency. A quarter of the advertisements are under the category of "other" - this could include a range of other means -including the "old boys' network." The information does not show what kinds of jobs are advertised where. Also, a key factor is if these adverts are being sent to any specific women's forums and organisations.

Career pathing, fast tracking and promotion

In a finding very similar to the rest of the region, only 11% of media houses had strategies to fast track women within the organisation. A very low proportion of media houses (11% in Mauritius as compared to 32% in the region) actively considered women for promotion. Succession planning for women in Mauritius and the region is on the agenda but not in enough media houses: 22% in Mauritius compared to 35% in the region.

Work environment

A large proportion of media houses in Mauritius (89%) offer flexi time; this is higher than the regional average of 75%. This is supported by the perceptions of women (91%) and men (82%) that the media houses in Mauritius are sensitive to, and try to accommodate family life and responsibilities.



Annick Danielle Rivet *Photo: Loga Virahsawmy*

Annick Daniella Rivet, a reporter at Le Defi Media Group for 17 years, cited her main challenges as child care and needing to be able to "work from home" more frequently.

"I still have small children I am not sure if I will be able to take more responsibilities as I am afraid that my children will suffer… We should be allowed to go home and write our articles once we have collected all our materials and done our interviews. I must admit that my Director very often gives me permission to go home and write my article after I have done the news coverage. Internet connection at home is very important and journalists should also be given laptops so that they can work at home. If women are allowed to work from home, the quality of the work will be better as they will not have to worry about children. They can care for their children and work at the same time."

Although a legislative requirement, only 89% of the sample stated that they offer maternity leave and 22% offered paternity leave. This perpetuates the stereotype that the mother is responsible for the primary parenting role. Only 17% of media houses said that they had child care facilities.

Gender and sexual harassment policies

Compared to the region Mauritian media houses (56%) have a much higher proportion of sexual harassment policies than the region (28%). Sexual harassment is of concern in Mauritius as 23% of women felt that there were high levels of sexual harassment. This is much higher than the regional average of 11%.

One third of the media houses sampled said they had a gender policy; higher than the regional average of 16%. Some 78% of the media houses in Mauritius and 68% 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 Mauritius	La Voix Kreol	Le Dimanche	MBC	Samedi Plus	Le Defi Media Group	Le Sentinelle Ltd	Le Militant	Impact News	La Vie Catholique
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 six shows that *La Sentinelle*, a media house with the lowest percentage of women managers has the most number of ticks against its policies or policy intentions, while *La Vie Catholique* (which has achieved gender parity)and *Le Defi Media Group* have the least number of ticks. This is to some extent explained by the fact the latter media houses have already implemented progressive practices. But the ticks also raise the suspicion that policies on paper are not necessarily being implemented in practise.

CASE STUDY:

MAURITIUS BROADCASTING CORPORATION

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) is an example of a media house that has adopted a gender policy and worked systematically to over the last six years to try to promote gender equality in its ranks and in its editorial content.

Although women are still under-represented in all areas of the MBC, the broadcaster received the award for best practice on gender at the inaugural Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership-Media Action Plan (SPI-MAP) Institutional Excellence Media Awards in September 2007. The award recognised the progress that had been made in certain areas of the MBC such as its radio section that is headed by a woman as well as the considerable progress that has been made in diversifying editorial content.

As the judges put it: "Sensitive to public opinion and seeking transparency and accountability, the MBC has a unique and cordial working relationship with civil society organisations such as Media Watch Organisation. MBC programmes also offer visible access to female voices with respect to their human rights. Theirs is indeed a true example of excellent institutional leadership. This outstanding devotion and accomplishments reflect the highest credit upon the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation and sets an excellent example in Southern Africa for other media houses and indeed other sectors to emulate."

In 2003, the Corporation began the process of drafting a gender policy and a gender aware HIV and AIDS policy with the assistance of Gender Links (GL). The policy focused on gender at the work place and in editorial content. On 1 December 2006, World AIDS Day, the MBC adopted and launched the Gender Policy and gender aware HIV and AIDS Policy.

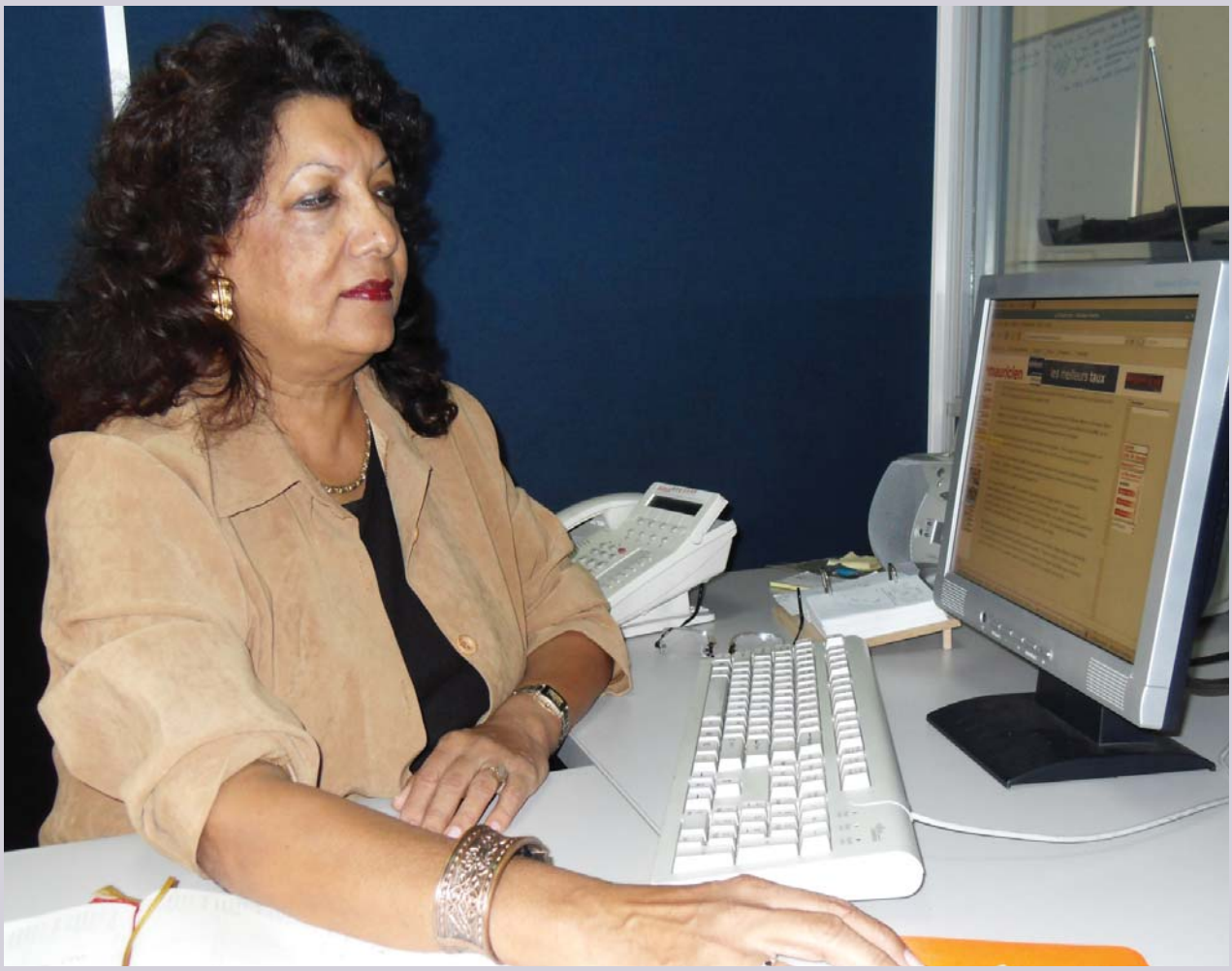


Official launch of HIV and AIDS Policy and Gender Policy at the MBC by the Deputy Director General Ravin Bacchoo
Photo: Palmesh Cuttaree

Women rising in the ranks

On the face of it, progress has been slow. In 2003, women constituted 30% of the overall staff at the MBC. The Glass Ceiling study showed that this has since only increased by 3%. However, the proportion of women in top and senior management has increased from 4% to 20%. Luximbye Samboo Principal Officer in Charge, Human Resources Division noted that "the corporation is doing its level best to ensure that there is gender equality in its endeavours."

MBC Radio showing the way



Pamela Patten

Photo: MBC

Pamela Patten is the Director of Radio at the MBC. She has been working as a journalist for over thirty years. In her division of the MBC, women comprise 54% of the total, compared to the overall average of 33%.

Patten bemoans the fact that of the 30 technical staff, only two are women, but cites this as progress, since in the past there were no women at all in this side of the house.

She herself has received the "Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques" (Knight in the Order of Academic Palms) from the French government for her contribution in the media field.

According to Patten: "We are amongst the first media houses in Mauritius to have developed a gender policy. Staff have participated in training by Gender Links and MWO-GEMSA to put in place a gender policy and a gender aware policy on HIV and AIDS. I was part of the delegation of MWO-GEMSA at the Gender and Media Summit in 2006.

"Having worked for the MBC radio station for over 30 years, I have acquired wide experience on gender issues nationally, regionally and internationally. I am a member of the Southern African Broadcasting Authority (SABA). I also sit on the Steering committee of the African Media Partnership. We must walk the talk. We cannot say we are members of all these Committees and do not put into practice what we learn. After all we have a Gender Policy. Having more women in MBC Radio shows that our Gender Policy is put into practice."

Asked why gender balance is important, Patten maintained that "gender equality means good governance, gender justice and inclusive democracy. It is of utmost importance for such a big enterprise as ours to give women their due. Women are well educated and have earned their place in society. Women bring a different angle and different perspective to news and programmes. As a public broadcaster we must be a role model."

Lorna Valery Kallee, a woman journalist at MBC radio added: "The high representation of women impacts on the treatment of certain subjects. Although it is understood that both women and men give the same treatment to all beats, women are more sensitive on certain issues. Our approach on subjects like the society, examinations results, and a child who is sick are different as we bring this caring touch. This brings a different approach to news coverage."

Kavish Pultoo, a male counterpart reflected: "I am new at the MBC, but from the onset there has been a good understanding and the feel good factor. The friendship, support, collaboration and co-operation between men and women make the environment very healthy and good to work in."

Patten exudes a motherly air. "The MBC radio was like our house. The staff were part of our family. We did not have any sophisticated equipment, IT was unknown to us and yet we did a professional job," she said. "During cyclones we slept at the MBC and gave fresh news and fresh views to the population at large. As women we could feel the miseries of families and wanted to make sure that they knew where to go for shelter and for food. If we heard that there was a family in danger we would immediate inform the police and the authorities concerned so that this family could be saved. Women are sensitive to social problems."

The radio head says that "people are not afraid to voice their opinion and women know how to encourage women to talk. Women are confident in the presence of another woman. You will be surprised to know that when there are talk shows with a female journalist, lots of women telephone to give their opinion. Women give different perspectives to news and programmes and our male colleagues appreciate that."

Asked if male attitudes have changed as a result of having a woman leader and majority women staff, Patten noted that, "our male colleagues have lots of respect for us. Young male journalists are prepared to learn from their female colleagues. There has always been a good and friendly atmosphere at MBC Radio.

"We learn a lot from each other. Working at the MBC radio is a continuous process of learning. For live programmes, for example, when we go to villages or to big events, we very often have one male and one female journalist. We support each other and pick up what one of us may have missed. Personally I think it is very important that positive attitudes are from both sides."

Pultoo added: "Women bring new and very appropriate aspects to the content of news. They give us the basis of how to work on societal issues. They bring new ways of reporting with innovative ideas. My female colleagues have taught me how to do a caption that attracts listeners; how to introduce subjects and how to work on details. What must be said and what must not be said. I really enjoyed it when they taught me how to turn a press release into a news piece. They have pointed me to where and how to look for sources to create a good story and to ensure that story is balanced."

So how will this be sustained? "I believe it will be sustained by itself," says Patten. "In our oriental section, for example, there are 47 females compared to 31 males and they are doing a great job. Their listeners like them. They are doing what any media house should do, i.e. informing, educating and entertaining in the language of the people. We broadcast in 13 languages. The listeners feel close to them."

If any proof of sustainability is needed, go no further than Marguerite Labat, who at 97 is still presenting programmes three times a week after a life-long career at the MBC. "We have recommended her to the *Guiness Book of Records* as the radio presenter who has the longest years of service and who is still on air," Patten laughs. "You see these women are so good that we cannot do without them!"



Shirley Chamroo, Presenter of the SADC Gender Protocol Programme at the MBC
Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

Gender in editorial content

In the 2003 Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) conducted by GL and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) women constituted 17% of sources in MBC Radio and Television. In a one day monitoring exercise for the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) in 2005 the proportion of women sources in Mauritius had increased to 24%.

Civil society gender and media watchdog, Mauritius Media Watch Organisation - GEMSA has noted that the MBC has consistently included women as experts and from the grassroots to comment on the budget; HIV and AIDS; security and other key issues. The MBC has regular programmes to empower women and gender specific programmes.

The MBC is the only institution in the region that is running a series of 12 call-in radio programmes on the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. This is a best practice that media houses in region should replicate.

Way forward

Work still needs to be done to transform the MBC's work environment and bring parity between women and men. The MBC gender policy needs to be operationalised and monitored. A gender policy action plan needs to be put in place and should have high level commitment. The action plan must identify clear indicators, responsibilities, set timeframes to implement the action plan and have a dedicated budget. Indicators identified must be integrated into the performance agreements of key staff and evaluated.

The MBC should develop self-monitoring tools for evaluating progress in the implementation of the policy and action plan within set time frames. There needs to be a general increase in gender sensitisation programmes/workshops for all staff, women and men, to ensure buy in at all levels to the gender policy and gender mainstreaming at the corporation.

MBC Radio has made great strides in achieving gender equality. This should be documented and used as a case study for other departments within the MBC. As the MBC itself put it in the award entry for the 2007 MAP awards: "As a public media house it is our mandate to assist government bodies, community groups and NGOs to promote gender equality."[6] Charity must begin at home!

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

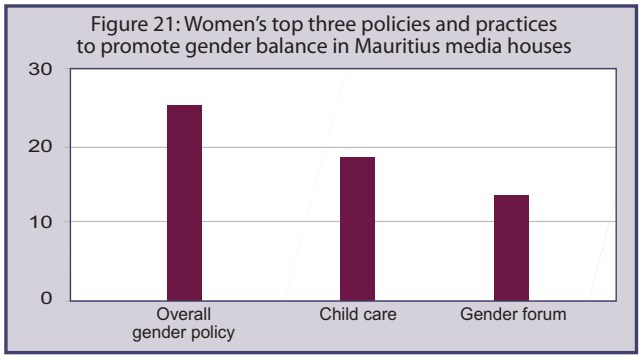
The study shows that there a fewer women in media houses in Mauritius and particularly in boards of directors, top management and senior management level. The "glass ceiling" is created by the "old boys networks"; gender insensitive work environments and the fact that "men are threatened by a critical mass of women". Men are usually encouraged to take up senior positions in a way that women are not.

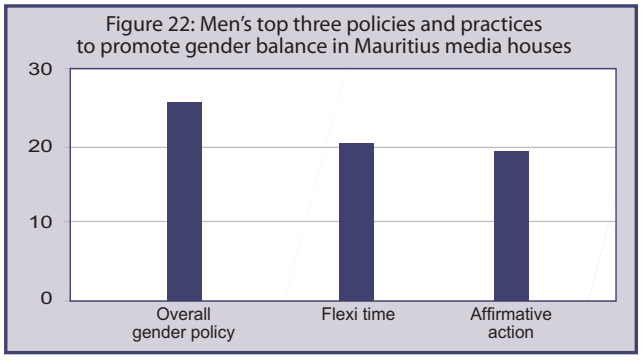
Women face glass ceilings in all the departments and although they are splintering some cracks in news beats the gender division of labour is still alive here as well.

[6] MBC entry for SPI-MAP Institutional Excellence Media Awards

One of the key findings of this study is that there is high level of commitment to gender equality in media houses. However, there are no comprehensive and systematic policies and practices to address the gender gap. A third of media houses said they had policies; the majority either wanted a gender policy or a better gender policy.

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





Key strategies for follow up will include:



In-house training at *Le Mauricien* by Gender Links and Media Watch Organisation
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

- Awareness raising and publicity through the launch of the findings of this research and workshops to discuss the findings and forge strategies at regional and national level.
- Follow up and supporting the 78% (both Mauritius and region) of media houses that expressed interest in developing or improving existing gender policies as a way of addressing gender inequalities in their media houses. This will be done in tandem with the advocacy work around 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 functioning sexual harassment policies in all media houses.
- Developing strategies that will ensure that the policies are implemented including the development of monitoring tools for ensuring effective implementation (monitoring and evaluation; self monitoring; career pathing etc) to ensure the goal of gender parity and sensitivity in newsrooms is achieved.
- 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 to manage mainstreaming gender at the work place and in editorial content.
- Facilitating leadership training for women in media houses.
- The biannual 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 Mauritius, as a way of gauging progress in achieving gender parity in media houses in Southern Africa.

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.

"Gender equality means good governance, gender justice and inclusive democracy. It is of utmost importance for such a big enterprise as ours to give women their due. Women are well educated and have earned their place in society. Women bring a different angle and different perspective to news and programmes. As a public broadcaster we must be a role model."

- Pamela Patten, Director of Radio, Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation.

