

## #balanceournews

International Women's Day Campaign  
8 March, 2019

Press pack



women in news

---

## CONTENTS

1. Campaign purpose
2. Campaign message
3. What can you do?
4. About gender balance
5. Campaign visual
6. Social media campaign
7. Sample stories
8. Facts and statistics
9. Glossary & definitions
10. Strategies to increase gender balance
11. About WAN-IFRA & Women in News



women in news

---

## CAMPAIGN PURPOSE

The ratio of women to men in the news is 1:3. It's time to change this. In recognition of International Women's Day 2019, let's come together to raise awareness about the lack of women's voices in news content, and demonstrate our community's collective influence to find solutions to change this.

---

## CAMPAIGN MESSAGE: #balanceournews

We want equal voices for women and men and gender balance in our news. We want to move the ratio of women to men is from 1:3 to 1:1. We want to #balanceournews.

*Our campaign aligns with the official International Women's Day 2019 campaign theme of #balanceforbetter calling for gender balance across the world. You can find details on <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>*

---



women in news

---

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. **Join the campaign:** That's step one. We'd love to know what you are planning to do (you'll find contact details at the bottom of this pack).
  2. **Promote on social media:** Help create a stir via your social media channels. You'll find all the information about hashtags and handles below.
  3. **Share the campaign visual:** #balanceournews has a powerful visual for you to share, downloadable in multiple formats from the WIN website ([www.womeninnews.org](http://www.womeninnews.org)). Publish in your paper or on your news site, or share on social media.
  4. **Publish stories:** Publish stories and features to raise awareness about gender balance in the news and gender equality more generally: the problem, the challenges, great success stories, tech solutions. We've created two sample stories below for you to republish or repurpose.
  5. **Track your content:** Here's a challenge. Why don't you track gender balance in your own content for a week to see how you're doing? Start with counting sources and main characters in your front or home page stories. Contact us if you need some advice on the best approach.
  6. **Spread the word – ask others to join:** Amplify the campaign by getting other media and organisations involved. You could even create a national campaign.
-



## ABOUT GENDER BALANCE

### Why is gender balance in the news important?

The media is a prism through which society sees itself. It influences the basis of our thoughts, beliefs and actions. Women represent half of the world, but only one-quarter of the news, whether as subjects, sources or writers. The media have an amplifying effect on society: when women are not portrayed as equal in the media, this risks perpetuating and reinforcing gender inequalities and stereotypes at the societal level. If that happens, it's not just bad for women – it's bad for society as a whole.

### What does (a lack of) gender balance in the news mean?

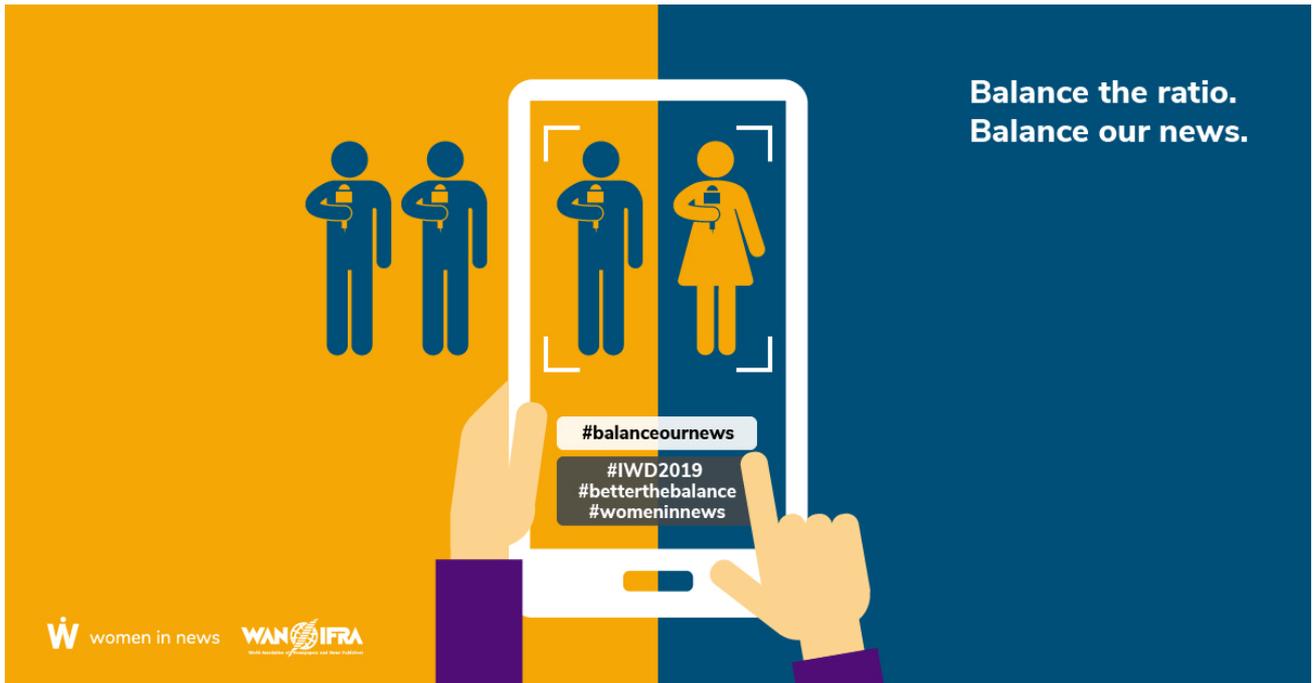
When we talk about gender balance in the news or in content we mean that:

- **More men than women are being written about** as the subjects of the news (especially in politics and other 'hard' topics)
  - **More men than women are being used as sources** (particularly expert sources)
  - **More men than women are newsmakers**, are writing or presenting the news or shaping the news (reporters/presenters/editors etc.)
  - **Women are being portrayed in ways that stereotype them and reinforce traditional roles.** (E.g. women are still being portrayed in ways that are sexist and demeaning)
-



women in news

## CAMPAIGN VISUAL



The campaign visual is available to download in various formats and sizes:

- JPG Facebook image: 1200x630 (colour)
- JPG Facebook cover image: 820x310 (colour)
- JPG Twitter image: 440 x 220 (colour)
- JPG Twitter cover image: 1500 x 500 (colour)
- JPG/PDF for print: square (colour+greyscale)
- JPG/PDF for print: rectangle (colour+greyscale)

Link to download: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1S9PQP-dMCuX-17vaNjR8lpWbgGOheDyh>



women in news

---

## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

### Steps

1. Follow WIN and WAN-IFRA on the handles below before 8 March 2019 for campaign updates and insights.
2. Retweet and repost WIN and WAN-IFRA's tweets/posts.
3. Download and share the #balanceournews campaign visual (details above).
4. Create your own posts via your social media channels. You can use the samples below.

### Hashtags

**#balanceournews #womeninnews**

Associated IWD hashtags: #IWD19 #IWD2019 #betterthebalance

### Handles

Twitter handles: @womeninnews @newspaperworld

Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/WINatWAN](http://www.facebook.com/WINatWAN)

### Campaign contact info

Contact email: [communications@womeninnews.org](mailto:communications@womeninnews.org)

### Sample posts for Twitter/Facebook

Women represent half of the world, but only one-quarter of the news, whether as subjects, sources or writers. This year, let's #balanceournews! #IWD19 #betterthebalance

The ratio of women to men in the news is 1:3. Let's make it 1:1. Balance the ratio. Balance our news. #balanceournews #betterthebalance #IWD19



women in news

The ratio of women to men in the news is 1:3, let's work together to #balanceournews and change it to 1:1

Only 1 in 4 people in the news are women. For every time a story is written by or about a man, there should be a story written by or about a woman. For every time a man is used as an expert source, a woman should be used for her expertise. Let's #balanceournews. #betterthebalance #IWD19

Only 1 in 4 people in the news are women. The gender gap is the widest in news about politics and government, where women are the subjects of stories just 16% of the time. Let's #balanceournews. #IWD19 #betterthebalance

The media has a special responsibility to portray women as equal to men and when it doesn't it risks perpetuating and reinforcing gender inequalities and stereotypes. #balanceournews #betterthebalance #IWD19

Knowledge is power, so we ask you to track gender balance in your organisations and strive to #balanceournews. Know it to change it!

Let's put the balance back in gender balance! #betterthebalance #balanceournews #IWD19

---



## STORY #1

### Barriers to gender equality in the news

The media is a prism through which society sees itself. It shapes what we think about, what we believe and what we do. So when gender imbalance exists in the news media, these same imbalances often play out in society, leaving room for gender stereotypes, pay gaps and sexual harassment. As we mark International Women's Day on 8 March, we the media need to reflect on how women are portrayed in the news, the barriers women journalists face on the job and solutions to improving gender balance in our news.

Women make up half of the world. And yet when it comes to certain industries, like the media, women hardly represent half of the workforce or the content that we consume. Despite gains, thanks to social awareness campaigns like the #MeToo Movement or Brazil's #DeixaElaTrabalhar (#LetHerWork), only one in four people we hear, read about or see in newspapers, on the television and radio news are women, according to the most recent global figures from the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP). These figures haven't budged since the last GMMP report in 2010.

Much of the reason behind such dismal figures stems from how women are seen in society itself. Deeply ingrained stereotypes about women, which vary by region, contribute to how women participate in the news, whether as journalists and editors or sources. And if media companies aren't careful, they can easily reinforce existing stereotypes or create new ones, perpetuating gender imbalances in their news content or within their workforce.

"Patriarchy has been the biggest challenge to ensuring that gender balance is achieved," says Jane Godia, East and Central Africa Project Manager and key gender trainer for WAN-IFRA's Women in News project. "Through socialisation, it's been determined that men must be leaders and final decision-makers. In this, women have ended up being discriminated against when there are opportunities that could be shared equally."

An important indicator of how women are portrayed in the media is how they are used as sources. Sometimes external forces are to blame. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women must ask permission of fathers or husbands before responding to the press. This leads to a lack of self-confidence, especially when it comes to commenting on political or economic issues, which can cause women sources to back away from publicly commenting. Thus in the interest of time and ease, a journalist may bypass using a woman source in place of a man.



women in news

“Some women, for example in vox-pops, are afraid of being interviewed,” says Helen Kadirire, a journalist at the *Daily News* in Zimbabwe. “They are afraid of what their husbands, family and society will think of them if they are seen in a newspaper article.”

When it comes to expert sources, the GMMP 2015 shows that, globally, women are used just 19% of the time and as spokespeople 23% of the time. These figures vary slightly by region, with the highest rates in North American and Latin American news, which use women as expert sources 32% and 27% of the time, respectively. But overall, great gains must be made in using more women for their expertise in the news, whether in print, digital, radio or television.

In the MENA region, women’s voices are most lacking in male-dominated fields, like politics or economics, where women have not been given the space to be sources and lack the confidence to voice their opinions. It’s a phenomenon that affects the media around the world.

“My challenge with women sources is that they are scarce across all fields,” says Gosego Motsumi, a senior journalist at *The Botswana Gazette* in Botswana. “When you make appointments for interviews, they give you the runaround because they have ‘a lot’ on their plate. The interviews never really materialise.”

And like in many parts of the world, the problem often starts with the journalist herself. “Women journalists may face safety issues while reporting from conflict zones, or the threat of visibility and harassment when working in highly conservative societies”, says Fatemah Farag, the MENA Director of Women in News. This can affect how they report on a story and the type of source or content they use.

In Nigeria, for example, many are against women in leadership positions, a commonly held belief in other parts of Africa. This under-representation of women journalists on the continent contributes to scepticism around a woman’s role in the media profession, which inevitably affects content.

When women are finally represented in the media, articles and broadcasts often use outdated gender tropes, portraying women in traditional roles such as wives, mothers or homemakers as opposed to CEOs or politicians.

Or women may be described as ‘emotional’ or ‘hysterical’, typecasting them as less successful, educated or authoritative than men, and putting them at an immediate disadvantage. This leads to an overall lack of trust in the press by women. In Zimbabwe, for example, the large amount of negative coverage of women leads them to shy away from speaking to the media.

“Many women are uncomfortable with facing the press and feel they would not get a fair report. This fear is well-founded,” says Tikhala Chibwana, the Director for Women In News Africa. “Most of the time when women are covered in the media, it is either because they are victims or they have done something wrong. For that reason, many women want to stay clear of the press.”



women in news

For all the challenges, however, there are solutions. Bloomberg, for example, has a dynamic database of women experts to ensure that its journalists have access to a woman expert on any topic. They are also training senior or expert women within various industries on media and communication skills so that these women have the confidence to be high quality expert sources.

Knowing how to be gender balanced is also crucial. The media industry can train journalists to be gender balanced in their reporting – through their use of language and subject, to ensure that women’s voices carry as much weight as those of men.

These solutions work best when we as an industry are committed to change. And this commitment has to be across the board – from senior management to junior reporters. Organisational culture is just as important as putting clear gender policies and strategies in place.

“It will take time for media managers and the public to have confidence in women's voices as sources and subjects of news, and also women being appreciated as leaders and managers in the newsroom,” says Jane Godia. “But if the media as an industry and individual media houses take it upon themselves to address gender discrimination and gender stereotypes, then the barriers will [one day] be removed.”

---



## STORY #2

### High tech tools join the race for gender balance in the news

Gender balance in the media – or rather the lack of it – is a global problem. Regardless of country or region, figures show that women have less of a voice in the news, whether they are subjects, sources or journalists. But to solve the problem, we need to know the true scale of it. That's why a host of resources – from digital solutions and lo-fi tools to awareness-raising initiatives – are being created to track gender parity in the news as a first step to reversing the imbalance.

Gender balance has come to the forefront in numerous industries around the globe, thanks in part to social awareness campaigns like the #MeToo movement. But when it comes to the news media, women are still under-represented by 3 to 1. In the five years between 2010 and 2015, women only showed up 24% of the time as content or sources in print, radio, television or online news, according to the Global Media Monitoring Project.

With the issue of gender equality trending the world over, media organisations and partners are joining forces to create solutions that monitor how often women appear in articles, as sources, content or as the journalists themselves. These resources come in the form of digital trackers and high tech tools as well as the implementation of policies or awareness-raising campaigns. It's all in an effort to change the news culture around the globe.

#### Tech tools are breaking into the market

North America and Europe have been pioneers in gender tracking, with several digital tools available. In Canada, Informed Opinions' Gender Gap Tracker looks at the ratio of female to male sources quoted in online news across the country. Users can select a date range and adjust a slider to track the progress of their favourite news sources over a given span of time.

In Sweden, developer Max Berggren has created a similar tool at Prognosis, to monitor Swedish, US and UK news sites. The results of the tracker are posted every 24 hours on Prognosis' Twitter account.

In the United States, Bloomberg has taken the initiative to correct gender imbalance in its coverage. Starting in 2018, the organisation enhanced its news publishing software so that it could track the diversity of its stories. The tool allows editors to put a tag every time an article features a woman source.



women in news

And the *Financial Times*, headquartered in London, created a tool last November that warns journalists when their articles quote too many men. The bot was created after the news organisation found that just 21% of the people quoted in the publication were women. Now, section editors are alerted if they're not doing enough to use women sources.

Non-profits are getting on board to create gender-tracking resources as well. United for News, a global coalition of media, private industry and NGOs, is using awareness-raising, advocacy and support to improve the numbers on gender. They recently announced pilot programs in Canada, Iraq and Ukraine to address the lack of gender diversity in the news.

UNESCO, with the support of Cambridge University Press, has developed a sports media-focused gender equality Chrome extension called 'Her Headline', which does a quick scan of sports articles and highlights gender-biased words and phrases.

And WAN-IFRA's Women in News programme (WIN) is preparing to launch a free online app by mid-2019 – the WIN Gender Tracker. It's being developed as two versions: one for journalists and one for media organisations. While journalists will be able to run their articles through the app to understand how gender balanced their content is and where to make improvements, media organisations will be able to regularly analyse larger datasets from their digital content and track progress over time.

"This isn't a public media monitoring exercise," says WIN's Director Melanie Walker. "It is a tool specifically for journalists and media organisations to use internally, to allow them to monitor gender balance in their content so that they understand how to improve it."

## Lo-fi solutions work just as well

Tools and bots are well and good, but what if media organisations don't have the means or know-how to create digital solutions? At VK Media in Sweden, journalists and editors have been doing things the old-fashioned way to keep track of gender balance. Since 2002, the media organisation has been measuring the gender of main characters in the print edition of its stories by simple counting methods, after a study showed that women were only the primary character in news stories 23% of the time while women represented 51% of readers.

"The first three months we counted main characters every day in every story in every section on every page," says Marie-Louise Jarlenfors, COO of Digital at VK Media. "That was the winning formula for us." In the first six months, women as main characters in articles at VK Media jumped to 38% and now, that number is up to 49%.

And in the UK, the BBC has run its 50:50 Challenge since January 2017 as a way to ensure gender balance in the expert voices used across its channels. The challenge looks at bylines, references and photographs when calculating how many women and men are represented in a news piece.



women in news

What started with their Outside Source programme has now expanded to programmes such as BBC News at Six and Ten and The One Show, and the BBC's director-general has announced a target of an equal amount of men and women expert voices across all of its programmes and websites by April 2019. The 50:50 challenge is now being piloted by news organisations in Europe and the US.

## Strong gender balance strategies are essential

Other news organisations are sticking to more traditional methods of ensuring gender balance in their newsrooms – proving that you don't need tools and trackers to shift the gender balance. At India's Mint, a strong ethics policy has ensured that 50% of the publication's journalists are women, including the 16-member leadership team. The editorial team also works to ensure that gender makes its way into content on a regular basis.

To encourage media organisations to make gender balance in the news a common practice, non-profits are working to offer resources and tools for journalists and editors. Awareness-raising is often a first step for those who don't know where to start. Who Makes the News, an information and resource portal, hosts the Global Media Monitoring Project, the world's longest running research and advocacy initiative that works to promote gender equality in the media. Free Press Unlimited has created a Gender Equality Policy of tools and operational plans for organisations to use to ensure gender balance. And Chicas Poderosas, an NGO that works across Latin America, the US and Europe, provides women with new media skills.

## Hope for the future

The race to gender equality has begun, and with so many resources available – from tools and trackers to editorial policy – we as an industry look set to see major changes. With the efforts of all – from managers and CEOs to journalists and editors – great things can happen in the name of gender balance in the media.

Looking for more information on the resources mentioned in this article, plus many more? Keep reading below.

## Tools

### Informed Opinions' Gender Gap Tracker

<https://gendergaptracker.informedopinions.org/>

### Prognosis Gender Equality Tracker

[www.prognosis.se/GE/UK/](http://www.prognosis.se/GE/UK/)

[www.prognosis.se/GE/USA/](http://www.prognosis.se/GE/USA/)

[www.prognosis.se/GE/Sweden/](http://www.prognosis.se/GE/Sweden/)



women in news

**Unesco 'Her Headline'**

<http://herheadline.com/>

**WIN Gender Tracker (coming soon)**

[info@womeninnews.org](mailto:info@womeninnews.org)

## Resources

**BBC Media Action's Gender Equality Toolkit/BBC 50:50 Challenge:** A website offering practical advice for achieving gender equality.

<http://genderandmedia.bbcmmediaaction.org/>

**Global Media Monitoring Project 2015**

[http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports\\_2015/highlights/highlights\\_en.pdf](http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2015/highlights/highlights_en.pdf)

**Financial Times gender equality bot**

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/nov/14/financial-times-tool-warns-if-articles-quote-too-many-men>

**Unesco Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM):** A global framework for the media to analyse content and operations, with the aim to achieve full gender equality in the media by 2030.

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-diversity-and-gender-equality>

**WAN-IFRA, WINning Strategies 2018**

[https://www.wan-ifra.org/sites/default/files/field\\_media\\_image\\_file\\_attach/WAN-IFRA\\_WINning\\_Strategies\\_2018.pdf](https://www.wan-ifra.org/sites/default/files/field_media_image_file_attach/WAN-IFRA_WINning_Strategies_2018.pdf)

## Initiatives/organisations

**Chicas Poderosas**

<https://chicaspoderosas.org>

**Council of Europe: Action plan 2016 – 2019**

<https://rm.coe.int/internet-governance-strategy-2016-2019-updated-version-06-mar-2018/1680790ebe>

**Free Press Unlimited**

[https://www.freepressunlimited.org/sites/freepressunlimited.org/files/gender\\_equality\\_policy\\_building\\_inclusive\\_societies\\_in\\_and\\_through\\_the\\_media.pdf](https://www.freepressunlimited.org/sites/freepressunlimited.org/files/gender_equality_policy_building_inclusive_societies_in_and_through_the_media.pdf)

**International Federation of Journalists**

<https://www.ifj.org/what/gender-equality.html>



women in news

**United for News**

<https://www.unitedfornews.org/>

**VK Media**

<http://vkmedia.se/>

**Women in News**

<http://womeninnews.org/>

**WAN-IFRA**

<http://wan-ifra.org/>

---



---

## FACTS & STATISTICS

There remain persistent gaps in the portrayal and representation of women in not only traditional media, but also in digital media forms. Women only represent 1 in 4 people we hear, read about or see in the news, and that number hasn't budged in nearly 2 decades.<sup>1</sup> That's a ratio of 1:3 women to men.

Here's a rundown of the leaders and laggards when it comes to how women are portrayed in the news as well as some regional figures on women in the news.

### The good news

In **Latin America**, 43% of reporters and presenters are women, up from just 28% in 2000.<sup>2</sup> Over the past two decades, the gender gap of people in the news has narrowed most dramatically in Latin America, by 13 percentage points, from 16% in 1995 to 29% in 2015.<sup>3</sup>

**North America's** media has the highest percentage of experts in the news who are women (32%). North America and **the Middle East** also get points for raising awareness. Stories by female reporters there are between almost 2 to 2.5 times more likely to raise gender (in)equality issues than those by their male counterparts.<sup>4</sup>

Female news presenters outnumber men at the highest rate globally in **Asia**, at 58%, with the **Middle East** close behind at a rate of 57%.<sup>5</sup>

**Asia** and **Latin America** boast more women reporting on political and crime news than any other region.<sup>6</sup>

Between 2000 and 2015, the gap has narrowed in the number of stories in newspapers, television and radio newscasts reported by women in **Africa** by +11%.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Global Media Monitoring Project 2015, WACC

[http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports\\_2015/highlights/highlights\\_en.pdf](http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2015/highlights/highlights_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>3</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>4</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>5</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>6</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>7</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC



women in news

## The bad news

Women are used as sources in **Sub-Saharan Africa** by a ratio of between 1:4 and 1:5 across the region. None of the countries surveyed in a 2015 report have reached a level of one-third women sources.<sup>8</sup>

Women report just 30% of political news in **Africa**.<sup>9</sup>

A study of the major national news organisations in the **United States** found that men report three times as much of the news as women do at ABC, CBS and NBC combined.<sup>10</sup> At 20 of the nation's top news outlets, men produced 62.3% of news reports versus 37.7% by women during a studied period of time.<sup>11</sup>

## Women as subjects

**Globally**, women make up only 24% of people heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television, radio and online news.<sup>12</sup>

On a **global scale**, the gender gap is the widest in news about politics and government, where women are the subjects of stories just 16% of the time.<sup>13</sup>

In news coverage in Europe, women appear as subjects in one in four news items (23.37%).<sup>14</sup>

## Women as sources

**Globally**, Just 19% of expert sources and 23% of spokespeople are women in news articles.<sup>15</sup>

Women were eye witnesses on a **global scale** just 28% of the time and gave personal experiences 38% of the time in newspapers, radio and television stories.<sup>16</sup>

In **Canada**, male sources accounted for almost three-quarters of all persons quoted (71%), while women were quoted at a rate of 29%.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Gender in Media Content, Gender Links  
<http://genderlinks.org.za/shop/gender-in-media-content-gmps/>

<sup>9</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>10</sup> The Status of women in US media, Women's Media Center  
<https://www.womensmediacenter.com/reports/the-status-of-women-in-u.s.-media-2017>

<sup>11</sup> Status of women in US media, WMC

<sup>12</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>13</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>14</sup> Gender equality in the EU's digital and media sectors, EU parliament  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)614695](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2018)614695)

<sup>15</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>16</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>17</sup> Gender of Sources in Canada, Informed Opinions  
<https://informedopinions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Gender-of-sources-in-Canadian-media-Informed-Opinions-FINAL.pdf>



women in news

In terms of expert sources in **Canadian** news, 66% of academics, 76% of politicians, 70% of unelected government officials, 78% of those associated with private business and 73% of those quoted from the legal profession were all men.<sup>18</sup>

Four out of every five people quoted as experts in online news articles by the main **UK** news outlets are male.<sup>19</sup>

## Women as news makers

Women represent only one-third of full-time journalists **globally**, in a survey of 522 companies (2011 data).<sup>20</sup>

**Globally**, 41% of radio and 57% of television newscasts are presented by women.<sup>21</sup>

Women represent a minority (40%) of news reporters across the **EU**, and are less likely to be assigned to more “hard” news stories in areas such as economics (39%) and politics (38%).<sup>22</sup>

Women are under-represented in the workforce across media sectors in **Europe**, primarily at decision-making levels and in the governing bodies that influence media policy. Women account for only 35% of CEOs and board members in public broadcasting companies across the EU-28.<sup>23</sup>

Work by women anchors, field reporters, and correspondents has declined in the **United States**, plummeting to 25.2% of reports in 2016 from 32% in 2015.<sup>24</sup>

In **Southeast Asia**, nearly half all respondents (48.6%) said they had women represented at executive levels in their media organizations, as opposed to 37.2% of respondents in **South Asia**.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Gender of Sources in Canada, Informed Opinions

<sup>19</sup> The gender balance of expert sources quoted by UK news outlets online, King's College, 2018  
<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/giwl/assets/gender-balance-of-expert-sources.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Global Report of the Status of Women in the Media, IWMF, 2011  
<https://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IWMF-Global-Report.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>22</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017  
<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>

<sup>23</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality

<sup>24</sup> Status of women in US media, WMC

<sup>25</sup> Inside the news: challenges and aspirations of women journalists in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO, 2015  
<http://www2.unwomen.org/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2015/06/inside-the-news-final-040615.pdf?la=en&vs=3403>



women in news

## Portrayals of women

The most common sexist tropes across all types of media, according to those surveyed in an **EU**-wide poll, portrayed women as less authoritative than men, and portrayed them in stereotypical (home- and family-focused), sexualized or auxiliary roles.<sup>26</sup>

A study in 2009 found that 79% of images of Arab women in **Arab media** were negative.<sup>27</sup>

18% of respondents to a study in **Asia** felt that women were frequently depicted as 'victims', 16% said they were depicted as 'family figures' and 14% felt that women were depicted as 'sexual objects'.<sup>28</sup>

## Coverage of women's issues

Three out of 10 stories in the news in **North America** focus on gender equality concerns.<sup>29</sup>

More men in the **United States** produce stories on sports, weather, and crime and justice, while women wrote more often on lifestyle, health, and education news.<sup>30</sup>

---

---

<sup>26</sup> Gender Equality in the Media Sector, European Parliament  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)614695](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2018)614695)

<sup>27</sup> Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Al-Ariqi, 2009  
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/Middle%20Eastern%20Women%20in%20the%20Media%20A%20Battle%20Against%20Stereotypes.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> UNESCO, Inside the news

<sup>29</sup> GMMP 2015, WACC

<sup>30</sup> Status of women in US media, WMC



## STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE GENDER BALANCE

Here are some tips to help you increase gender balance in your content. **Find the woman in every story!**

**Include women as sources:** Use women sources to ensure that their perspectives are being included, and avoid only quoting women in stereotypical roles like teachers or homemakers.

**Make women the experts:** Make sure that you have a balance of women and men acting as experts in your reporting to bring a diversity of voices and opinions.

**Increase your women bylines:** Maintain a balance of reporting by both women and men. Make sure that you have women writing and creating your content.

**Don't use language that excludes women:** Make sure that your language includes all genders, sexualities and identities.

**Avoid job titles that perpetuate stereotypes:** Make job titles neutral. For example, use 'police officer' rather than 'policeman', 'chairperson' rather than 'chairman' etc.

**Never use overtly sexist language or images:** Refrain from jokes, language or images that degrade women, are offensive or reduce women to sexual objects or extreme stereotypes.

**Provide newsroom staff with gender balance training:** Provide training so that journalists and editors understand the importance of gender balance in the news.

**Create a gender balance style guide:** Create a style guide for all staff in order to streamline content for gender balance.

**Set targets and timeframes:** Either setting a target of 50:50 across the board or differentiating targets depending on departments.

**Measure your progress:** Create a system to measure how your media company is doing in terms of gender balance. Having this data ensures that people and departments are held accountable for their performance.



## GLOSSARY & DEFINITIONS

*Taken from the Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus, European Institute for Gender Equality (<https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus>)*

**Gender:** The attributes and opportunities that society says you must have because you are men or women. Society also defines relationships and relations between women and men, women and women, girls and boys.

**Gender aware:** The ability to view how society assigns gender roles and relationships and the ability to understand the effects that this has. *Related terms: gender sensitive*

**Gender balanced (language):** Language that is not gender specific and which considers people in general, with no reference to women and men or at least equitable representation of women and men. *Related terms: gender fair language, gender neutral language*

**Gender bias:** Actions or thoughts that are prejudiced (consciously or unconsciously, because of preconceived ideas of what women and men's attributes, characteristics and roles should be based on their gender.

**Gender stereotype:** Preconceived ideas of what women and men's attributes, characteristics and roles should be based on their gender.

**Sexism:** Attitudes and actions that discriminate against people based solely on their gender.

---



women in news

---

## ABOUT WAN-IFRA & WOMEN IN NEWS

### Women in News

[www.womeninnews.org](http://www.womeninnews.org)

Women in News (WIN), WAN-IFRA's Gender and Media Freedom Strategy, aims to increase women's leadership and voices in the news. It does so by equipping women journalists and editors with the skills, strategies and support networks to take on greater leadership positions within their media. In parallel, WIN partners with media organisations to identify industry-led solutions to close the gender gap in their newsrooms, boardrooms and in the content they produce. WIN is currently working with more than 90 media organisations from 16 countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa, MENA and South East Asia including:

- WIN AFRICA: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- WIN MENA: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine
- WIN SEA: Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam

WIN is made possible through support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### WAN-IFRA

[www.wan-ifra.org](http://www.wan-ifra.org)

WAN-IFRA is the global organisation of the world's newspapers and news publishers, representing more than 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites and over 3,000 companies in more than 120 countries. WAN-IFRA is unique in its position as a global industry association with a human rights mandate to defend and promote media freedom, and the economic independence of news media as an essential condition of that freedom. WAN-IFRA applies a dual approach to supporting media freedom. It addresses political and structural constraints to media freedom through advocacy, and applies development to strengthen the capacity and networks of the media and their representative institutions. This dual approach of applying advocacy and development allows WAN-IFRA to address challenges to media freedom from multiple perspectives, leveraging experiences and synergies between advocacy and development projects, partnerships and the wider expertise of WAN-IFRA's international community to encourage meaningful change within societies.