



WOMEN IN NEWS HANDBOOK

MANAGING DIVERSITY

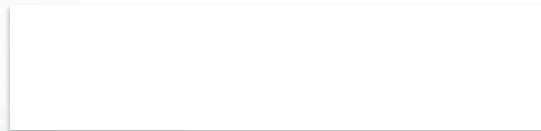
A GUIDE FOR MEDIA MANAGERS





women in news

The World Association of
Newspapers and News Publishers'
editorial leadership programme



Practical handbooks
such as the business
case for gender
diversity, increasing
gender balance in the
news and addressing
sexual harassment in
the industry



Manuals and action plans
such as a step-by-step
guide to creating a
mentoring programme,
or best practice sexual
harassment policies



Reference
tools such as
database of senior
women media
practitioners
in intervention
countries or
gender equality
benchmarking
tools

PREFACE

This handbook has been produced by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) to help media managers successfully manage diverse teams, with a focus on gender diversity. It is hoped that it will assist managers to be more gender 'aware' in their day to day management decisions.

There can be an assumption that media managers already know how to deal with gender issues but as experience has shown, this is not always the case. Media managers are expected to make decisions that are gender aware and yet they themselves may not have been exposed to any meaningful information or training on how to successfully manage diversity.

This obviously is a Catch 22 situation where on one hand we have media managers that are not well equipped with gender information, while on the other hand the same media managers are expected to lead and champion the gender diversity programmes in their organizations and hopefully create a working environment of gender equality, balance and equity.

There are many organizations that are doing great work on gender equality in the media such as Gender Links, UNESCO, UNDP and others. This handbook relies on some of these excellent resources. This handbook is intended to provide a short-hand to media managers on practical approaches to managing diversity.

It has been compiled by a former media manager who has first-hand knowledge and therefore can relate to the dilemma facing other media managers today on gender matters. It is a peer education tool; information from one media manager to another.

WAN-IFRA has over the years trained media women through the Women in News (WIN) programme and equipped them with new skillsets to enable them take full advantage of any opportunities for career advancement in their media institutions. This programme has been successful judging by the number of women whose careers have progressed forward after attending the programme.

Following this leadership development training, the WIN participants have complained that they have returned to newsroom environments that have remained hostile and unsupportive of their new skills and aspirations.

WAN-IFRA believes that the WIN programme could become an even greater success if media managers are brought into the fold and they play their part. This handbook is therefore an attempt to bridge the information gap by sensitizing the media managers so that they can help create a more gender sensitive working environment.

It is the author's belief and hope that given the right information on gender matters, media managers can easily transform their workplaces into a gender aware environment where both male and female employees can contribute to their highest potential to the betterment and success of their organizations.

DEFINITIONS

Below are some definitions of commonly used gender terms adapted from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gender training manual.

GENDER

Gender identifies the social relations between men and women. It refers to the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, and how this is socially constructed. Gender roles are dynamic and change over time.

GENDER AWARENESS

Gender awareness is an understanding that there are socially determined differences between women and men based on learned behavior, which affects access to and control of resources. This awareness needs to be applied through gender analysis into projects, programmes and policies.

GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender Analysis is the process of analyzing information in order to ensure development benefits and resources are effectively and equitably targeted to both women and men, and to successfully anticipate and avoid any negative impacts development interventions may have on women or on gender relations. Gender analysis refers to the methodology for collecting and processing information about gender. It provides disaggregated data by sex, and an understanding of the social construction of gender roles, how labour is divided and valued.

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality is a result of the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities and the equal allocation of resources or benefits or in access to services.

GENDER EQUITY

Gender equity entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalances between the sexes.

GENDER ROLES

Gender roles mean learned behaviours in a given society/community, or other special group, that condition which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as male and female. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and by the geographical, economic and political environment. Changes in gender roles often occur in response to changing economic, natural or political circumstances, including development efforts. Both men and women play multiple roles in society.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that women and men have equal access to and control over resources, development benefits and decision-making, at all stages of development process, projects, programmes or policy.

GENDER SENSITIVITY

Gender sensitivity encompasses the ability to acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities and incorporate these into strategies and actions.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Below are some suggestions on how this handbook could be used.

1	It could be shared with media managers for them to go through in their own time. However, a more interactive approach would be recommended as it provides an opportunity to answer questions and deepen understanding.
2	The handbook can also be summarized into a power point presentation and presented to media managers as an introduction to gender in the media. This could then be followed by a question and answer session.
3	Where media managers are gathered together, some-sub topics of the handbook can be used for discussion and are sure to generate lively debate. This approach would provide an opportunity to participating managers to apply their experiences to the discussion and test their own knowledge and understanding of gender matters. You can find on the next page some suggested actions and topics that could be used as part of moderated discussions.

SUBTOPICS

a	Executive management has appointed a woman as Editor of a publication. She has declined to take up the position, citing lack of managerial skills and family commitments. What do you do?
b	A recently promoted female Managing Editor is experiencing a lot of resistance from male subordinates. Some of them do not even turn up for her meetings and do not submit their reports on time. The Managing Editor has asked for help. How do you help her?
c	<p>A randomly picked newspaper from one of the participating media houses can be reviewed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of stories featuring women• Number of stories with women sources• Number of stories with women experts <p>These could be compared with the number of stories featuring men newsmakers, male sources or male experts in the same publication.</p>
d	Some women shy away from being interviewed by the press, while others are afraid of getting it wrong. The Board of your media house would like to see an urgent increase in the number of women featured as news sources and experts. What would you do?
e	How might the poor representation of women in senior management positions in media houses impact on content, treatment of stories and interest by young women to join and stay in the journalism profession.

INTRODUCTION

A number of studies have shown that while there are as many women as men joining the journalism profession, when it comes to representation in senior management positions, there are very few women.

An analysis of the content of the media also reveals that there are few stories about women and even fewer women news sources. The portrayal of women when they are covered in the media often tends to be negative. The media therefore tends to perpetuate certain gender stereotypes by the way it covers issues involving women.

Some of these practices may not be deliberate as some media managers are often surprised when such issues are brought to their attention. There are certain gender practices that have existed in the media for many years without conscious decisions or indeed policies to offer guidance on how to deal with them.

This calls for a re-examination of how media houses handle gender issues and whether the media which claims to give a voice to the voiceless is in fact living up to its promise when it comes to gender matters.

WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN THE MEDIA

Generally speaking, it is a rare occurrence to find a woman heading a media house. Other than those that lead media houses by virtue of owning the media houses or being part of the family which owns the media houses, women that lead media houses as professional hired hands are few and far between.

Senior management teams of media houses are dominated by men, with women making a guest appearance on the list from time to time.

By implication, it means that the many editorial decisions that media houses have to make on a daily basis, about what to publish and how to treat various stories may not have an input from any woman at all.

Women bring diversity to the team and limited participation of women in the media at senior levels means that the opportunity to harness and promote diversity is lost and the perspective of media coverage is limited to the male view on matters.

WOMEN MISSING OUT ON MEDIA CONTENT

A look at the content of the media will also reveal that coverage of men tends to dominate the press. One would be excused for thinking that women are in a minority or that they are not active in some of the fields.

When women are covered in the media, they will often be referred to as someone's wife, someone's daughter or someone's aunt as if they do not have an identity of their own. And yet some of them have accomplished so much in their individual capacities but they are treated like they do not exist until they have a man standing beside them.

Much of the coverage of women in the media is relegated to fashion, entertainment, leisure and as sex objects in advertisements and yet there are many women who continue to excel in every endeavour of life such as politics, commerce, sciences or sports.

The news content is heavily skewed in favour of men as both the news makers and the experts quoted for comments are predominantly male. Considering that the population of women hovers around 52 per cent in many of the societies, the content of news materials does not represent women interests well.

Gender analysis and a better understanding of the gender dynamics would no doubt enable the media managers to make better and informed decisions and begin to address some of the gender imbalances in the media.

MEN'S PERSPECTIVES DOMINATE NEWS

A look at news sources that are quoted in the media, it is clear that they are mostly men and naturally the perspectives given in those stories are those from a male point of view.

And yet they are just as many authoritative women professionals as they are men. There are women economists, lawyers, doctors, engineers, politicians and social experts able to comment on media stories.

It is always good when the media makes an effort to include the voice of a woman in authority. However, the actual choice of a quote is sometimes limited to less important issues or it is wrapped up in some gender stereotypes. Often, the line of questioning does not do justice to the views of the woman expert who is expected to always wave the gender flag.

"As a woman lawyer, what is your take on this legislation..." This type of questioning already introduces gender bias considering that it is most likely that her male colleague would be asked to comment on a matter simply as a lawyer and not as a male lawyer. In any case, both the female and male lawyers attend the same training to qualify as lawyers.

Of course, other women tend to be media shy and have to be persuaded and encouraged to deal with the press. However, failure to bring women voices on board has led to gender bias or insensitivity in coverage in the media on gender matters.

A deliberate effort has to be made to enlist women as news sources, and even equip them, through training, to ensure that the diversity of news sources accurately reflects the make-up of society.

THE MEDIA AS AGENDA SETTERS

The media plays an important part in shaping public opinion and also in setting the agenda for public discourse in every society.

Now, if this agenda has no input from one section of the community or concerns by a section of the community are ignored, it then means that the agenda set may inherently not be representative of the aspirations of the entire population.

As a result, many issues that are important to women tend to take a back seat because the issues are not deemed to be as important by the predominantly male managers that decide which agenda to pursue or not.

It is therefore difficult to see how inclusive agendas being pursued or being supported by the media can be when a large section of society is neither consulted nor represented.

GENDER MAKES MEDIA BUSINESS SENSE

Media enterprises are businesses that must be run profitably and sustainably. So, first and foremost, media managers are hired to run profitable businesses.

Women constitute a significant group of readers, viewers and listeners. It is in the business interest of every media house to ensure that such a group as this is catered for properly and of course it is fairly represented. As such, paying good attention to gender issues also makes very good business sense.

The situation where there is not enough coverage of women's issues, there are no women sources and women are not adequately represented in senior management positions does little to suggest that women are well regarded by such media houses. In fact it could easily lead to women walking away with their business to other media houses which respect them and treat them fairly.

When circulation figures of newspapers are either stagnating or actually dropping in the print media, many would argue that a critical look at the needs of the various segments of society and figuring out how to satisfy their demands should become a major pre-occupation of every media manager.

It may be that better attention to women and the issues that matter to them may provide a niche market and an opportunity for business growth for the media. Certainly, it does not seem good business sense to ignore such a significant market segment.

MEDIA AS DEFENDERS OF FREEDOMS AND JUSTICE

The media is not called the fourth estate for nothing. It plays an important role in holding to account those in positions of authority, defending freedoms and ensuring that everyone gets justice – more especially those that might otherwise not get it on their own.

Most constitutions around the world seek to eliminate discrimination of all forms including that based on sex. You have pronouncements such as “the state shall ensure that no one

is discriminated against on the basis of race, colour, creed, religion or sex...”, The media therefore has a duty and responsibility to play its part in ending all forms of discrimination including gender based discrimination.

Unfortunately, this is not possible if the media is also seen to be tolerating gender inequalities and practicing some form of discrimination against women. Worse still, the media loses the high moral ground to fight gender discrimination in other spheres of life if it is seen by the world as not sincere and cannot walk the talk on gender equality.

The media world over is known for agitating for better representation by women such as cabinet ministers, parliamentarians and other public appointments. But how can the media help put in order the gender imbalances of other institutions when its own houses are in disarray?

GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE AND THE MEDIA

One of the ills that is widely covered in the media is the issue of gender-based violence on women and children.

Sometimes the coverage of gender-based violence has left a lot to be desired. Coverage has ranged from treating women as victims to blaming them as the ones who put themselves in the line of danger.

A case in point is the notion that the way the women dress may have something to do with the increase in rape case when study after study has shown that most rape cases are pre-meditated with no knowledge at all of how the victim will be dressed on that fateful day.

Where there are no women represented at senior management levels in the media houses, who can help moderate such excesses, it is difficult to see how one can expect a fair gender portrayal and a sensitive treatment of issues affecting women. That is not to say there are no men who sympathise with the plight of women and are willing to stand alongside women to end gender violence.

WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The nature of journalism work exposes female journalists to the risk of sexual harassment. Journalists often work late at night and also go to remote places far away from the offices to cover stories.

The extent of this risk - and the consequences - became readily apparent with the #MeToo campaign and subsequent Time's Up Movement which swept the globe in late 2017.

Media managers should be sensitive to these risks and devise policies and programmes to ensure that the wellbeing of female journalists is safeguarded. Media organisations need to become zero tolerance environments to mitigate sexual harassment from within the newsroom through to the boardroom.

Beyond the policies, media managers should put in place measures on how to deal with sexual harassment such that it sends a clear message to would be perpetrators that such conduct would not go unpunished.

In 2018 WAN-IFRA released a practical handbook on sexual harassment that contains strategies and tools for media managers as well as media employees to confront and reduce incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace. The handbook may be downloaded at: www.womeninnews.org

WHAT CAN MEDIA MANAGERS DO?

There are many practical ideas that media managers can explore to address the gender equality concerns raised in this handbook and those that may be raised by female employees.

The starting point is the realisation and acceptance that there is a problem. The media could do a lot more to advance gender equality than it has so far done.

There are many isolated actions, which are not costly at all, which media houses can take almost immediately to begin to address the gender issues raised.

For starters, sensitization of newsroom staff on gender biases, stereotypes and discrimination in the newsroom would be a good starting point.

There is need for in-house advocacy to create awareness of issues surrounding women in the performance of their duties and their role in providing balance in newsroom decision-making.

However, the author recommends a more co-ordinated and a holistic approach rather than a piecemeal approach in dealing with gender matters. It is important that the solutions are institutionalized.

GENDER POLICIES IN THE MEDIA

Rather than approach the gender issue in a haphazard way, media houses need to consider a systematic approach by establishing gender policies for their institutions.

A gender policy is an important tool as it guides the conduct of both managers and employees. Expectations of the institution are made known through its policies. The gender policy should send a clear message that discrimination on the basis of gender will not be tolerated.

GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK

Rather than re-invent the wheel, there are many gender policy frameworks that can be easily adapted for media organizations. In particular, Gender Links has helped a number of media organizations to develop Gender Policies. These would particularly be relevant and applicable.

Gender policies vary in size, style, content and amount of detail they contain. However, a policy that is developed through a consultative process stands a better chance of success. The consultations will help sensitize both managers and employees. Generally speaking, the Gender policy will contain the following;

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This section serves to introduce the Gender Policy and put it in context. It would cover the process by which the policy was developed and how the organization arrived at a decision point to develop a policy. It will touch on why the Gender Policy has been crafted and what challenges it will attempt to address.

VISION AND POLICY STATEMENT

The vision in the gender policy captures the aspirations of the organization in establishing a Gender Policy. It is a clear manifestation of its intentions and commitment. The policy statement on the other hand spells out what the policy is all about and what it hopes to achieve. It sets the tone and direction of the policy.

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

This section outlines the underlying principles of the Gender Policy. It will also cite the sources of those principles, i.e. equality as enshrined in the constitution or any such other laws and national gender policies where they exist.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

This section describes how things are. For example the media by its very nature employees work late and travel a lot to cover events away from the office which may expose women to risks of sexual harassment.

At an enterprise level, how many women are in senior management positions and how has that impacted on the organization's work or standing? The situation analysis forms the basis of what needs to be done to address current challenges.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

The Gender Policy in a workplace is usually developed to tackle some or all of the employment issues cited below. The policy will spell out how it will address any gender inequality and how it will influence the practices below.

- How to get a fair representation of women.
- Reproductive rights and benefits for women
- Dealing with gender- based violence and sexual harassment.
- Recruitment practices and gender balance
- Promotions and gender equity
- Training and development of potential women

GENDER ACTION PLAN

This section captures the programme of action. This is what is to be done as part of the implementation of the Gender Policy. It is important to have a policy in place but a policy that is not implemented is not worth the paper it is written on.

So, the gender action plan will list action, aim, objective, input and indicators. Other policies will go as far as indicating level of responsibility and resources for implementation.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is good to have an intervention to address gender issues but how will progress be measured? Usually a set of indicators will be identified to monitor progress in implementing a Gender Policy.

A baseline study should be undertaken at the beginning of the process to measure the starting point and the indicators should be monitored, measured and recorded along the way. These results should be compared with the baseline results in order to assess whether progress is being made.

REALITY CHECKLIST

A checklist has been provided to gauge where your organization stands on gender matters. The list is not exhaustive in any way. Ideally, answers to each question should be a “Yes”. But we do not live in a perfect world and there are bound to be “No” responses – hopefully not too many. Any “No” response is a call to action. The more “No” responses your organization has, the more urgent it is for your organization to look into the gender matter.

GENDER REALITY CHECK		
CHECKLIST	YES	NO
Does your media house regularly review its content to check for gender bias and gender balance in stories?		
Does your media house have a database of contacts of women news sources and women experts?		
Does your media house have a programme on diversity and representation of women at senior management level?		
Does your organization have a policy to equip women so that they can be considered for senior positions?		
Does your organization have a policy on sexual harassment, procedures and processes for dealing with complaints?		
Does your organization have a Gender Policy and is this well known to all employees?		
Does your organization regularly sensitise staff on gender bias, stereotypes and discrimination on the basis of sex?		
Would your organization be interested to be assisted to develop a Gender Policy?		

CONCLUSION

There are no claims that this handbook covers everything you need to know about gender in the media. As it was already stated in the preamble, this handbook is intended as a starting point and other publications can build on it. Further information can also be searched on the internet.

Lastly, this is a living document. Feel free to suggest how it could be improved or provide feedback as to whether you found it useful to WAN-IFRA.

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