







## Gender Equality Policy

Free Press Unlimited believes that gender equality is central to achieving its overall long-term objective that media and journalists constitute a diverse and professional media landscape and function as change agents. As such, they contribute to the overall vision of a just, inclusive and peaceful society. Inclusive refers to men and women of all ages and backgrounds.

Free Press Unlimited's focus on equal access, opportunities and rights for men and women media practitioners is based on existing and persisting gaps and stereotypes in media and society that often benefit men over women. To contribute to bridging these gaps, Free Press Unlimited adopted the thematic area Gender & Media. Its vision of success is: 'Media actively advocate for gender equality and work towards increased participation and decision making of women in and through the media.'

The Gender Equality Policy reinforces this commitment and outlines the organisation's objectives and standards in relation to gender and the media. The objective of this policy is to promote gender equality in the programmes, in partnerships and cooperation with others, in the organisation itself and in external communication.

This policy will be supported by a Gender Implementation Plan that will guide Free Press Unlimited in translating the policy into operational plans, instruments and tools linked to results and targets. All staff members are accountable for the implementation of the principles and standards presented in this policy. Free Press Unlimited commits to reviewing the policy every five years, based on annual reports.



# The role of media in promoting gender equality

Worldwide, women and men have different access to resources, including information and opportunities, to make choices about their lives. That difference is rooted in existing norms, expectations and beliefs about men's and women's roles, responsibilities, rights, behaviours, relationships, and their sexual orientation – referred to as 'gender'<sup>1</sup>. This varies between different societies and within a given society differences may exist between men and women belonging to different classes, ethnic groups, or other social and cultural divides.

Media are increasingly seen as powerful actors in shaping, reproducing, as well as changing societal norms, expectations and beliefs that have an impact on women's

and men's opportunities in life. In promoting access to information that men and women need to develop and prosper, the information provided to both sexes should reflect the respective needs, interests and concerns of men as well as women.

Media play a critical role in this respect: providing an equal voice to women and men, reporting about issues that matter to women and men, portraying both women and men as individuals with valuable opinions and experiences, revealing (power) mechanisms that influence possibilities for the development of women relative to men, and showing that women as well as men can take advantage of (new) opportunities and expand their horizons.

## **Key international commitments on gender equality**

**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** and the optional protocol. The "women's bill of rights" is a cornerstone of all UN Women programmes. More than 185 countries are signatories to the Convention.

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA)**. Adopted by governments at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, this document sets forth governments' commitments to enhance women's rights. Member states reaffirmed and strengthened the platform in 2000 during the global five-year review of progress, and pledged to accelerate its implementation during the 10-year review in 2005, the 15-year review in 2010, and the 20-year review in 2020.

**UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000)** recognized that war impacts women differently than men, and reaffirmed the need to increase women's role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution. The UN Security Council subsequently adopted seven additional resolutions on women, peace and security: 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015). Together, the eight resolutions represent a critical framework for improving the situation of women in conflict-affected countries.

**Sustainable Development Goals 2030 agenda (SDGs)** – 169 targets that aim to end poverty, combat inequalities and promote prosperity while protecting the environment by 2030. Of the 17 main goals, goal 5 reads: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. They were preceded by the Millennium Development Goals from 2000 to 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Sex and gender are two different concepts. Sex refers to biological/physical characteristics of men and women which are universal, obvious, and, in general, permanent, while gender refers to what a given society ascribes to these biologically different persons: the roles, responsibilities, rights, relationships and behaviours they are expected to have or show.

# Gender inequality in the media

Gender inequality in the media refers both to the content that media produce as well as the operations in the media sector itself.

## Media content

Gender inequality comes to the fore in the visibility and audibility of women relative to men, the relevance and importance of themes and issues for women and men and the way men and women are portrayed and quoted. Women's voices are less heard than those of men and issues that are of women's concern are not or less frequently part of 'the news'. News is told largely through the eyes, voices and perspectives of men<sup>2</sup>.

Both men and women are subjected to stereotyping. Women leaders, if and when they find their way into the media, are often objectified and referred to mainly in relation to their looks and their successes, rather than on the basis of their policies or the values they stand for. Women are four times as likely to be identified by their family status instead of independent active participants with their own opinions<sup>3</sup>. Men are typically characterized as powerful and dominant with little room for alternative ideas of masculinity. The media tend to demean men in caring or domestic roles, or those who oppose gender based violence.

Gender equality in media content refers to fair gender portrayal in news:

- balanced presence of women and men;
- elimination of stereotypes and promotion of multi-dimensional representation / portrayal;
- coverage of gender equality issues;
- coverage of gender-based violence<sup>4</sup>.

## Media operations

Gender inequality is also reflected in the sector itself. The number of women working in the media sector is increasing although mostly at office based jobs.

Globally, 37% of the reports are produced by women reporters, a figure that hasn't changed since 2005.<sup>5</sup> When looking at subjects men and women journalists cover, patterns are clearly visible: men report about politics, economy and crime; women score highest in reporting on celebrities and arts. Research shows that men and women media practitioners' attitudes towards gender inequality do not differ significantly.<sup>6</sup> Both men and women reporters present stereotype gender portrayals although women reporters are more likely to challenge gender stereotypes.

In relation to decision making, the International Women's Media Foundation found that, overall, men occupy 73% of the top management jobs with substantial differences between regions and countries<sup>7</sup>.

A serious concern regards the safety of women media practitioners both in the field and at the work place. According to findings of the International News Safety Institute<sup>8</sup>, two thirds of women journalists are harassed and intimidated at their own office, mostly by their male colleagues and bosses on account of their gender, race, age or professional experience.

Gender equality in the media sector refers to<sup>9</sup>:

- gender balance in decision making
- work and workplace issues: equal treatment, equal pay, safe working environment for women and men, proper work-life balance
- institutional commitment to gender sensitive practises in organisations in relation to content output – reflected in ethical codes / editorial policies;
- gender balance in training: equal access and participation of men and women trainees/students; attention to gender equality awareness in curricula.

2 Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 Highlights. [http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports\\_2010/highlights/highlights\\_en.pdf](http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2010/highlights/highlights_en.pdf)

3 idem

4 Based on UNESCO (2012) Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media: framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content

5 Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project 2010. [http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmpreports/gmmp\\_2010-reports](http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmpreports/gmmp_2010-reports)

6 Research done in 18 different countries: Hanitzsch, Thomas & Folker Hanusch (2012) Does Gender Determine Journalists' Professional Views? A Reassessment Based on Cross-National Evidence. *European Journal of Communication* 27(3): 257-277.

7 Global report on the Status of Women in the News Media. International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), 2011, <http://www.iwmf.org/our-research/global-report/>

8 Barton, Alana and Helena Storm (2014) Violence and Harassment against Women in the News Media: A Global Picture. International News Safety Institute & International Women's Media Foundation <http://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Violence-and-Harassment-against-Women-in-the-News-Media.pdf>

9 Based on UNESCO (2012) Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media: framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content



## Free Press Unlimited gender equality goals

Free Press Unlimited formulated four gender equality goals to be achieved in the next five years.

1. Male and female media practitioners supported by Free Press Unlimited's programmes produce content that is gender balanced and gender sensitive, thus contributing to a fair gender portrayal in the news.
2. The majority of Free Press Unlimited's partners make demonstrated efforts to address gender inequalities in the specific context of their work and gender imbalances where they exist in their own organisations.
3. All staff members of Free Press Unlimited understand what gender equality is and use relevant instruments to address gender inequalities in their work.
4. All Free Press Unlimited's communication is gender sensitive, uses inclusive language and images, avoids gender stereotypes and demonstrates Free Press Unlimited's commitment and actions to addressing gender inequalities.

# Free Press Unlimited Gender Equality Standards

Free Press Unlimited has set a number of standards that contribute to achieving the four gender equality goals. These standards also act as benchmarks to enable measuring progress towards the goals. In line with the gender equality goals, the standards cover four areas:

- plans & programmes;
- partnership & cooperation;
- internal structures, systems and policies;
- communications & campaigns.

## **Area 1 - Plans & Programmes**

All strategic plans, thematic areas, programmes and projects will contribute to achieving the first gender equality goal. They will include:

- An *analysis* of the different opportunities and constraints of women and men (of different ages) to participate in programmes, including male and female media practitioners. Such analysis includes the safety situation differentiated for male and female media practitioners;
- *Approaches to overcome obstacles* that women (of different ages) face, relative to men, to participate in programmes and/or media work, including specific safety issues of male and female media practitioners.
- *Approaches to create awareness, knowledge, interest and willingness* among all parties involved in a programme in order to take voices of women as well as men seriously and involving both genders in all activities;
- Development of *media forms and content* that are relevant, interesting, accessible and available for both women and men (of different ages) and show a fair gender portrayal;
- Allocation of *human and financial resources* to address gender inequalities.

## **Area 2 - Partnerships & cooperation**

Free Press Unlimited undertakes activities and programmes with a variety of media organisations, networks and individual actors. The standards for cooperation will include:

- *Assessment* of the level of commitment of (potential) cooperating organisations and individual actors towards gender equality in the media, and of their achievements in creating change concerning gender equality, both at policy and programme level;

- *Cooperation* with like-minded organisations and actors, including civil society organisations, in terms of adherence to gender equality in the media and promoting change in this respect;
- *Creating awareness, knowledge, interest and willingness* among (potential) cooperating organisations and actors towards gender equality, with special attention to the safety of female media practitioners at the workplace and in the field.

## **Area 3 - Organisational structures, systems and policies**

Free Press Unlimited aims to ensure that its structures, systems and policies facilitate the standards of plans & programmes, partnerships & cooperation, as well as the implementation of the gender equality policy as a whole. The following standards have been set:

- *Assessment* of staff during recruitment and appraisal, where the gender sensitivity and awareness of applicants and staff will be assessed. The gender equality policy is actively brought to the attention of (potential) staff.
- Regular *trainings* to fill the gaps in staff's knowledge and skills (including the use of instruments to address gender inequalities) related to their specific tasks, but also to create commitment to addressing gender inequality; this will include learning through internal sharing on gender equality issues and trends of addressing gender inequalities.
- Adequate *human and financial resources* to implement workplace related actions needed to support the implementation of the gender equality policy<sup>10</sup>.

## **Area 4 - Communications & campaigns**

Through its external communication, Free Press Unlimited has the opportunity to increase awareness of the importance of gender equality in the media. Standards in external communication include:

- Free Press Unlimited's commitment to gender equality and, where relevant, its role in working towards gender equality is communicated and reflected in its campaigns, marketing, fundraising and media messages;
- Publications and communications will be gender sensitive and avoid stereotypes.

<sup>10</sup> Examples of such workplace related actions are: conducting (self)assessments, doing research on specific issues, developing instruments, coordinating gender-focused activities, programmes, or projects that are all meant to support the implementation of the gender equality policy. Additionally, such actions will help increase organisational performance in terms of gender responsiveness.



## Monitoring and Evaluation

Free Press Unlimited monitors progress towards gender equality in its programmes, partnerships and internal organisation.

In relation to its programmes, monitoring and evaluation includes collection of data dis-aggregated by sex and age, and an analysis of the information collected using a gender perspective. It will also include mechanisms for tracking and sharing lessons in addressing gender inequalities.

In relation to its partnerships, progress of Free Press Unlimited's actions towards increasing gender-awareness in partnerships will be monitored and instruments will be developed for this purpose. For the organisation,

progress will be measured based on the outcomes of a gender self-assessment (also called a gender audit) that reviews the gender sensitivity of procedures and practices within an organisation.

Gender (self-) assessments will also be instrumental in setting a baseline for assessing progress on the gender equality objectives and standards.

# Definitions

**Gender refers** to the socially constructed roles, responsibilities, rights, relationships, behaviours, relative power, influence, and sexual orientation of men and women. Socially constructed means that they are ascribed to men and women based on norms, expectations and beliefs within a given society and context, and that they are not biologically determined. Thus, roles etc. can vary according to age, class, race, ethnicity, and the like. They are learned from families and friends, in schools and communities, and from the media, government and religious organisations. Gender points to the dynamic nature of roles, responsibilities, etc.: they change over time and vary between and within settings.

**Gender gaps** are measurements of inequality that show the unequal distribution of opportunities, resources or outcomes between men and women, boys and girls. Gender gaps are usually revealed through the analysis of gender-disaggregated statistics that illustrate the extent of inequalities.

**Gender equality** means that women and men enjoy the same status in society, have the same entitlements to all human rights, enjoy the same level of respect in the community, can take advantage of the same opportunities to make choices about their lives, and have the same amount of power to shape the outcomes of these choices. Gender equality does not mean that women and men, or girls and boys, are the same. Women and men, or girls and boys, have different but related needs and priorities, face different constraints, and enjoy different opportunities. Ultimately, promoting gender equality means transforming the power relations between women and men in order to create a more just society for all.

**Gender analysis** is the systematic effort to understand the roles of men and women and the social, economic and/or power relations between the two genders within a given context, such as that of a household, community, region, or organisation. It includes the collection of sex-disaggregated data about tasks and responsibilities, workload, access and control to resources, participation in decision making, including organisation, identification of the needs and priorities of women and men, and the identification of existing opportunities and constraints to develop, grow and engage.

**Gender sensitivity** is the ability to recognise 1) gender needs, constraints and gaps and 2) men's and women's different perceptions and interests arising from their different social positions.

**Gender sensitive** can refer to both programmes and organisations – it means that gender gaps are considered undesirable and unjustifiable and that underlying causes of gender inequality need to be identified and addressed in a programme or organisation.

**Gender awareness** is often considered an advanced stage of gender sensitivity. It refers to a recognition of the differences in the interests, needs and roles of women and men in society and how this results in differences in power, status and privilege. Gender awareness also signifies the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination and the desire to take action to address them.

**Gender friendly** is mostly used for organisations where both men and women feel at ease in their work and working environment and have equal opportunities.

**Gender stereotypes(stereotyping)** are socially constructed and unquestioned beliefs about the different characteristics, roles and relations of women and men that are seen as true and unchangeable. Gender stereotyping occurs when such characteristics are persistently attributed to the roles and identities of males and females in society, shaping people's attitudes, behaviours and decisions.

**Gender concerns/issues** arise when an instance of gender inequality or a gender gap is recognised as unjust. For example, the fact that women have a higher rate of illiteracy than men is a gender concern and would need to be taken into account in a project that requires literacy skills. Other examples of gender-specific issues are: violence against women, denied access to land for women, and discrimination against men in family planning services to name a few.

**Gender-based violence** refers to physical, sexual, psychological and sometimes economic violence inflicted on a person for being male or female. Girls and women are most frequently the targets of gender-based violence, but it also affects boys and men, especially those who do not fit dominant male stereotypes of behaviour or appearance.

**Gender disaggregated data** consists of the collection of information and the analysis of results on the basis of gender, e.g. data on the status, socio-economic roles, and resources of different groups of men and women, or on the basis of sex, e.g. based on the biological attributes of women and men.

**Gender self-assessment** (also called **gender audit**) is a participatory reflection process that encourages staff to 'take stock' of all, or specific, elements of their work to see how far it promotes gender equality, using a set of particular methods and tools. The more staff that participates in the design, implementation and formulation of recommendations, the more an assessment truly becomes a self-assessment. It could focus, for example, on the gender-sensitivity of published documents or the organisational performance in terms of gender equality, or the gender responsiveness of programmes. Ideally, a gender self-assessment combines internal organisational structures, systems, policies, programmes and partnerships in order to decide on appropriate actions to improve the overall gender equality performance. A gender self-assessment could be instrumental in setting a baseline for assessing progress on gender equality goals and in working towards standards set by an organisation.

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