

The Media and Gender Equality



A Civil Society Collaboration Toolkit.

AGEMCS Fellowship

Excellence in Gender Reporting and Communication

**Developed by:
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFP	Advance Family Planning
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AJK	Association of Journalists in Kosovo
AMWIK	Association of Media Women in Kenya
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CoPs	Communities of Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EJC	European Journalism Centre
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting
FM	Frequency Modulation
FP	Family Planning
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IWMF	International Women's Media Foundation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WAN-IFRA	World Association of News Publishers
WIN	Women in News

Chapter 1: Overview

The media plays a myriad of roles, from reporting the news to shaping narratives, challenging limiting norms, monitoring the use of power, and lending a voice to the voiceless in society. In the context of gender equality, the journalists and media outlets play a crucial role in influencing how societies see and talk about issues like discrimination, representation, and rights. This notwithstanding, gender inequality is still a deep, complex issue that goes beyond headlines and breaking news. It's woven into policies, everyday experiences, and social systems that don't always make it into the spotlight. Gender equality CSOs on the other hand attempt to bridge this gap by working with grassroots communities, advocating for change, monitoring gender relations, collecting data, and telling the stories of those directly affected. They understand the nuances of gender-related issues in ways that many newsrooms simply don't have the resources or expertise to cover. But without media attention, their work can potentially remain invisible by being limited to reports and conferences, failing to reach the public. This toolkit offers some strategies through which the media can collaborate with gender equality CSOs to amplify their work, contribute to their advocacy efforts, while gaining expert insights and localized data on gender issues, to enrich coverage of gender issues. Through this collaboration, media professionals may create accurate, compelling, and impactful content that drives real change.

Purpose of the Toolkit

The goal of this toolkit is to provide journalists and communicators with a comprehensive guide on effectively engaging with civil society organizations (CSOs) around gender-related initiatives, including strategies for collaboration, key action steps for each strategy and tactic, and navigating current and potential challenges arising from aspects of media ownership and leadership structures. The toolkit, as a secondary objective, will provide a comprehensive mapping of gender equality CSOs in the country and their corresponding focus areas. The mapping will specifically identify organizations focusing on: Gender-based violence (GBV), HIV and AIDS issues related to women, land rights for women, children-related issues, humanitarian initiatives, conflict-related gender issues, among others.

The toolkit aims to offer practical guidance on navigating different organizational communication channels, understanding each organization's specific gender-related focus (such as gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, or women's land rights), and developing strategies for effective collaboration. By providing clear, experience-based insights, the toolkit seeks to empower journalists to not just report on gender issues, but to engage more strategically with organizations

working in this space. The ultimate purpose is to enhance media professionals' ability to accurately and sensitively cover gender-related topics while supporting the work of CSOs dedicated to gender equality and women's rights.

Audience

The toolkit is primarily targeted towards media practitioners, particularly reporters who specialize on the gender beat, the editors who process their stories, media managers who advocate for increased gender responsiveness in their media outlets, and other media professionals responsible for the development of gender responsive media content. In addition, the toolkit is targeted towards new media practitioners such as bloggers, vloggers, and influencers whose focus is producing gender responsive content. The toolkit is also useful to media trainers in institutions of higher learning as a reference resource on gender responsive reporting. Finally, this toolkit is useful to CSO representatives interested in collaborating with media practitioners to amplify gender equality issues through media outreach.

Organisation of the Toolkit

This toolkit is organised into two sections. The first section comprises five chapters, whereby chapter one presents the background and introduction to the toolkit, while chapter two lists a selection of gender-equality terms that journalists may encounter during their reporting on gender issues. Chapter three presents the strategies and tactics that journalists may employ in their collaboration work with gender equality CSOs, while chapter four presents a checklist for media practitioners who establish collaborative partnerships with the CSOs. Finally, chapter five highlights a few practical successful media-CSO collaborations on gender issues to demonstrate the potential for this collaboration to advance gender equality.

The second section is a mapping of the gender equality CSOs currently registered and operating in Kenya as well as their key focus areas. This offers a starting point for journalists to explore collaboration opportunities.

Chapter 2: Key Terms

This chapter presents the key terms¹ that journalists and media practitioners may encounter / of which they need to be aware in their gender responsive reporting. The chapter is designed to familiarise media practitioners with the key terms commonly used in gender equality communication and journalism.

Gender-Sensitive Reporting

Gender sensitive reporting is a practice of producing media content in a way that is sensitive to gender inequalities and portrays men and women fairly. This means that media content needs to accurately mirror societies and produce media content that is complete and diverse and which critically reflects the world as seen through the eyes of all genders. It also means media reporting that avoids the reinforcement of problematic gender stereotypes. Gender sensitive reporting is a key principle of ethical reporting, comparable to the ethics of accuracy and balance, and should be observed throughout the media content development process.

Gender-Responsive Journalism

Gender responsive journalism is an approach to journalism that guides the media as a critical instrument to create awareness about gender equality and the rights of women in society. It aims to combat stereotypes that have led to the marginalization or degradation of women. The approach can also be used to promote women's empowerment and their positive social roles.

Gender responsive journalism entails specific practices such as reporting on all sides of a story, conducting gender-sensitive interviews, having an equal number of men and women as sources, choosing images that address issues without propagating gender inequalities or stereotypes, ensuring the privacy of survivors of social vices such as GBV and sexual violence, among others.

Gender Lens

Gender lens is a term that is used to describe an analytical framework that takes into consideration the inherent existing differences between men and women, when analyzing situations or when developing specific programs. In the context of developing media content, adopting a gender lens leads to the creation of more nuanced and inclusive media representations by taking into account the distinct perspectives and experiences of men and women.

¹ These definitions and illustrations are adopted from: The European Institute for Gender Equality, Free Press Unlimited, UN Women, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Think with Google, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, European Commission, Medium, UNESCO, Development Gateway, Berkeley Haas, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Reuters Institute, The Guardian, UN Women Asia-Pacific, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), Fiveable Library, Taylor & Francis Tandfonline), ResearchGate, UN Peacebuilding Fund, and ArcoLab.

Gender Bias in Media

Gender bias refers to the prejudicial actions or thoughts based on the perception that women are not equal to men in rights and dignity. In the media, gender bias refers to gender inequality in media content, either through under representation or misrepresentation of women and men. One of the most prevalent gender biases in the media is the fact that men are far more likely to be quoted as journalists or experts or sources than women, and also to be portrayed in ways that their opinions are valued. Men's experiences and professions are also portrayed as being more valued than those of women. This reinforces harmful stereotypes, leading to unequal portrayal and skewed perspectives. It also contributes to discrimination against women.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality means, or refers to the complex interplay of various identity factors that can compound the challenges faced by individuals. Intersectionality therefore refers to the complex and cumulative way in which multiple forms of discrimination, such as racism, sexism and classism, combine or overlap or intersect to contribute to gender inequality. In the media, intersectionality takes cognizance of the fact that gender is not experienced in isolation but interlinks with other social identities such as race, class and sexualities in influencing how people are represented or otherwise marginalized in media reporting.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming refers to the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any action, including legislation, policies or programs in all areas and at all levels, with the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality. In reporting, gender mainstreaming refers to a strategy of integrating a gender perspective into all stages of media content development, from data collection to editorial and publishing content.

Feminist Media

A feminist media refers to media content that is created from a feminist perspective; it often explores and advocates for the rights and equality of women, challenges traditional gender norms and stereotypes, and addresses issues related to women's experiences in society. Feminist media may focus on promoting women's voices, perspectives, and stories, or critiquing existing media for gender biases and inequalities. Feminist media is aimed at raising awareness, creating dialogue, and contributing to the existing body of literature on gender inequality.

Underrepresentation

Underrepresentation in the context of media reporting refers to the situation where certain groups of people, particularly minority communities or marginalized groups, are depicted less frequently or in less significant roles in media compared to their actual presence in society. This leads to a lack of visibility, which can contribute to stereotypes, misperceptions, and a limited understanding of diverse cultures, and in turn, can perpetuate the inequalities and in the cultural diversity in the media reporting.

Media Gender Audit

Gender audits are voluntary tools used to assess compliance to gender equality policies and check the institutionalization of gender equality into organizations. Gender audits are conducted as a method for gender mainstreaming, and they help organizations identify and understand gender patterns within their structures, processes, culture, Human Resource management, and in their design and delivery of policies and services. Through gender audits, media institutions assess their internal organizational processes for gender equality and identify critical gender gaps and challenges, thus making recommendations of how these can be addressed through improvements and innovation.

Gender-Disaggregated Data

Gender disaggregated data is data that is subcategorized into a binary distinction of male and female and without which women and girls are often invisible. Gender disaggregated data provides visibility in programming in terms of setting targets and analyzing the impacts of programs on women and girls. In media reporting, the use of gender disaggregated data ensures that media reports or media products address gender disparities, ensuring inclusive reporting and promoting accurate and equitable narratives.

Inclusive Language

Inclusive language refers to the use of language whereby men and women and those who do not conform to the binary gender system are addressed through language as persons of equal value, dignity, integrity and respect. Gender inclusivity in media encompasses expressing gender relationships with accuracy, such as avoiding the use of language that refers explicitly or implicitly to only one gender, and ensuring, through inclusive alternatives, the use of gender sensitive and inclusive language. Some of the principles of inclusive language are; recognizing and challenging stereotypes, avoiding omission or making some people invisible, and being respectful to avoid trivialization and subordination.

G.E.S.I. - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a concept that addresses improving access to livelihood assets and services for ALL, including the women, poor, and excluded. It supports more inclusive policies and mindsets and increases the voice and influence of all including of the women, poor and excluded.

Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are generalized views or preconceptions about attributes or characteristics or roles that are ought to be possessed by or performed by men and women, or otherwise the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics or roles by reason only of his or her membership in the social group of men and women. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers or make choices about their lives. In media reporting, gender stereotyping refers to depictions of individuals or groups conforming to cultural expectations about gender roles and traits, or presenting gender in stereotypical and limiting ways perpetuating harmful societal norms and reinforcing preconceived notions about masculinity and femininity. This may involve depicting men in more professional roles more often while depicting women in non-working, recreational, or unpaid caregiving roles, especially in countries that have high levels of gender disparity.

Misogyny in Media

Misogyny refers to prejudice, hatred, and hostility towards women, especially women who challenge male dominance. It aims to control women into reinforcing sexist ideals and patriarchy. Misogyny may manifest in situations where girls are prevented from receiving quality education, for example, due to the misogynistic fear about them gaining knowledge and social power. Within the media context, misogyny manifests in various forms, including objectification of women, harmful stereotypes, and overt violence towards women.

Chapter 3: Strategies and Tactics

Introduction

At a glance, media companies and gender equality CSOs may appear to have vastly differing mandates; journalists, save for those working for state owned media, focus on the publishing of objective stories that cater to public interests while ensuring profitability of their media houses. On the other hand, CSOs are often deeply invested in advocacy, working tirelessly to push for policy change and social justice. However, the media and CSOs have great potential for collaboration, whereby the media offers visibility to otherwise abstract gender issues by turning them into compelling human stories that spark public debate. Meanwhile, CSOs provide the depth—research, lived experiences, and expert analysis that make reporting more informed and accurate. A single investigative report on gender-based violence, backed by a CSO's expertise and survivor testimonies, can move policy makers to act. A news feature on women's workplace inequality, supported by data from advocacy groups, can challenge harmful stereotypes.

Media - Gender Equality CSOs Collaboration Strategies

This section explores practical strategies for media practitioners to collaborate effectively with gender CSOs, ensuring that gender-focused storytelling isn't just a one-off feature—but an ongoing, impactful conversation.

Collaborate on the Development of Gender-Sensitive Content

Media reporters and practitioners could potentially collaborate with CSOs to develop content such as investigative reports, feature stories, and documentaries that challenge gender inequalities and gender stereotypes and promote gender inclusivity. By basing the stories on case studies, research, and community links sourced from CSOs, journalists would ensure their reporting is reflective of the accurate facts and nuances in the community contexts. In their report, 'Gender-Sensitive Indicators for media,'² UNESCO underscored the opportunities for collaboration between the media and gender equality CSOs to ensure balanced gender representation. At the same time, the UN Women³ encourages newsrooms to enhance gender sensitivity in their reporting through collaborations with CSOs. According to the Global Media Monitoring Project⁴ (GMMP), co-creation is a critical tool of combating gender bias in media coverage.

2 UNESCO, n.d. *Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media*. Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/gender-sensitivity>

3 UN Women. (n.d.) *Media Compact on Gender Equality*. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/media-collaboration/media-compact>

4 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP). (2020) *Global Media Monitoring Project 2020: Highlights*. Available at: https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/GMMP-2020.Highlights_FINAL.pdf

Incorporate Expertise from CSOs into Media Products

The media reporters are encouraged to ethically incorporate the voices of experts from the gender equality CSOs who could provide accurate and data-based insights, ultimately strengthening the gender-focused stories. This would ensure accuracy, eliminate bias, and lend visibility to underreported gender issues. According to a 2024 Reuters Institute Report⁵ CSOs provide critical expert analysis and fact checking. The International Federation of Journalists⁶ (IFJ) supports this sentiment, while outlining best practices for integrating CSO experts into reporting, including diverse sourcing, ethical collaboration, and incorporating grassroots insights from local CSOs.

Apply a Gender Lens to Reporting

Gender issues should be considered across all reporting, seeing as they impact almost every sector, be it healthcare, politics, economy, governance, among others. Journalists should therefore strive to work with CSOs to incorporate gender considerations across all reporting, not just reporting that is focused on gender inequality or women's issues. This approach would ensure journalism work continuously challenges outdated ideals and narratives, limit gender-blind reporting, and ensure diversity in media representation. Research⁷ demonstrates how applying a gender lens in reporting leads to more accurate, representative journalism.

Practice Advocacy Journalism

While some stories/media content are meant to only inform the public, others need to go beyond information and catalyze real change through strategies such as contributing to ongoing conversations around the issues, creating platforms for stakeholders to discuss the issues, highlighting the issues, among others. Journalists could collaborate with CSOs to tackle issues such as women's land rights, sexual harassment laws, gender pay gaps, and others. In this way, the CSOs' advocacy efforts get amplified, tackling harmful stereotypes, potentially influencing policy, and making gender issues part of the mainstream discourse. For instance, the UN Women's HeForShe⁸ campaign leveraged media partnerships to drive global gender advocacy efforts. The role of media in advocacy has also been supported by empirical research, such as the 2023

5 Reuters Institute. (2024) *Women and Leadership in the News Media 2024: Evidence from 12 Markets*. Available at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/women-and-leadership-news-media-2024-evidence-12-markets>

6 International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), n.d. *Tips for reporting on reproductive health*. Available at: <https://www.icfj.org/news/tips-reporting-reproductive-health>

7 Khan, A. and Ullah, R. (2022). Gender representation in media: An analysis of bias and discrimination. *Media Asia*, 49(4), pp. 243-258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718524.2022.2144100>

8 UN Women. (n.d.). *HeForShe*. Available at: <https://www.heforshe.org/en>

study by Mgomella, Kavinya, & Malombe on the role of media advocacy in catalyzing actions by decision-makers⁹.

Apply for Funding Opportunities Together

In order to conduct in-depth investigation and reporting on gender issues, journalists need access to resources, while CSOs need resources to implement gender-focused interventions. This presents a unique opportunity for collaboration, whereby media practitioners and CSOs may develop funding proposals jointly, so that as the CSOs implement programs in a particular area, the media practitioners carry out in-depth investigative reporting in the same area. This would enable journalists to transcend the surface level stories and produce high-impact and well researched media content. Organisations such as the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF)¹⁰, the Pulitzer Center¹¹, and the European Journalism Centre (EJC)¹² which offer grants specifically for investigative gender-focused journalism could be a starting point when exploring funding opportunities.

Use CSOs to Connect with Communities

Many gender-focused CSOs work directly with marginalized groups—a crucial resource for journalists seeking authentic, firsthand stories. Through collaborations with such CSOs, media reporting becomes more ethical and representative since it centers on lived experiences instead of distant observations. The merits of collaboration between media and CSOs geared towards connecting with grassroots communities have been widely explored by studies such as the 2022 research by Carvin, Simon, & Schmidt, who explored the modalities of, and justifications for, collaboration between the media and CSOs¹³.

9 Mgomella, G., Kavinya, T. & Malombe, D. (2023). *Media advocacy in catalyzing actions by decision-makers: The Advance Family Planning initiative experience in Kenya*. *Journal of Global Health Reports*. Available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10279857>

10 International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF). (n.d.). *International Women’s Media Foundation*. Available at: <https://www.iwmf.org/>

11 Pulitzer Center, n.d. *Gender and Media Investigative Journalism Grants*. Available at: <https://pulitzercenter.org/>

12 European Journalism Centre (EJC), n.d. *Grants for gender-sensitive reporting*. Available at: <https://ejc.net/>

13 Carvin, A., Simon, J., & Schmidt, T. (2022). *Cross-field collaboration: How and why journalists and civil society organizations around the world are working together#*. Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University. Available at: <https://collaborativejournalism.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Cross-field-collaboration-How-and-why-journalists-and-civil-society-organizations-around-the-world-are-working-together-MAR2022.pdf>

Fact-Check and Counter Gender Misinformation

Media professionals could collaborate with CSOs to challenge gender related misinformation, particularly concerning topics such as the gender pay gaps, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and the prevalence of domestic violence against men. Global NGOs such as UNESCO have attempted to proffer practical strategies¹⁴ for media practitioners to recognise and challenge false narratives targeting gender minorities and women, especially those that are spread online. At the same time, organisations such as the Poynter Institute develop fact-checking tools¹⁵ whereby journalists can verify claims on various issues including gender issues. Given the potential of gender misinformation to distort public perceptions and slow down gender equality efforts, journalists should explore these and similar collaborations with CSOs, who would provide fact based insights that would challenge the misinformation.

Form and/or Join Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Media professionals could form or join networks made up of other gender equality and equity journalists, as well as professionals from the gender equality CSOs. These platforms offer opportunities for knowledge exchange, management and curation, capacity building and enhancement through peer mentorship and support, coordinated advocacy action, thought leadership, as well as resource sharing. These platforms could also provide opportunities for co-development of tools and guidelines for inclusive media content. One example of a CoP is the Community of Practice on Training for Gender Equality by UN Women, an open forum for dialogue and knowledge exchange among gender equality practitioners. For journalists who may want to explore forming a CoP, one of the resources that they can consult is the Guidance Document on 'How to Set Up a Community of Practice for Inclusive Gender Equality' developed by INSPIRE.

Key Action Steps

The section above discusses the possible strategies that journalists can adopt in efforts to collaborate with gender equality CSOs. This section presents some proposals of particular actions that journalists may take to actualize each strategy.

14 UNESCO (2024) *How to combat hate speech and gendered disinformation online: UNESCO provides some ideas*. Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/how-combat-hate-speech-and-gendered-disinformation-online-unesco-provides-some-ideas>

15 Poynter Institute (n.d.) *Fact-Check It: Digital tools to verify everything online*. Available at: <https://www.poynter.org/shop/fact-checking/fact-check-it/>

Table 1: Media - CSO collaboration key action steps

Strategy	Key Action Steps
Collaborate on the Development of Gender-Sensitive Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create content with CSOs through editorial planning • Use gender checklists and language guides • Promote positive, empowering narratives • Conduct regular content audits with CSO tools
Incorporate Expertise from CSOs into Media Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use CSO experts as sources • Embed reporters in CSO programs • Reference CSO reports and briefs • Co-host media briefings or panels
Apply a Gender Lens to Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask gender-specific interview questions • Use gender-disaggregated data • Ensure diverse expert representation • Report on gendered policy impacts
Practice Advocacy Journalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover structural gender inequalities • Highlight solutions from CSO programs • Share access to services (e.g. helplines) • Publish joint op-eds with CSO voices
Apply for Funding Opportunities Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-develop grant proposals • Pitch joint storytelling projects • Launch shared gender media initiatives • Create reporter-CSO fellowships
Use CSOs to Connect with Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange ethical field access via CSOs • Build trust through intermediaries • Follow safety protocols for vulnerable groups • Translate stories with cultural nuance
Join Communities of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify common goals • Establish regular communication • Co-create content and campaigns • Share resources and expertise • Monitor and evaluate impact

Citizen Journalists, Bloggers, Vloggers, and Influencers - Gender Equality Collaboration Strategies

News curation and sharing has evolved dramatically in the digital age, and one of the most significant shifts has been the emergence of citizen journalism. While some citizen journalists are regular people who happen to be present when newsworthy events occur, for a crosssection of these, for example bloggers, vloggers and influencers, news curation is a deliberate effort geared towards the achievement of particular goals. With the advancement of the gender agenda globally, it is increasingly critical for these professionals to promote gender equality in their content creation processes. They can do this by collaborating with gender equality CSOs, using the strategies and key action steps presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: *Citizen Journalists, Bloggers, Vloggers, and Influencers - Gender Equality Collaboration Strategies*

Strategy	Key Action Steps
Co-Create Gender-Inclusive Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend CSO-led training/forums • Co-produce blogs/vlogs with real stories • Use CSO data and interviews • Challenge stereotypes in content
Leverage Influencer Marketing for Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote CSO campaigns on personal platforms • Launch branded hashtags or awareness series • Include donation/action links • Endorse gender justice efforts
Participate in Multi-Stakeholder Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join gender media coalitions/alliances • Attend CSO-hosted forums and roundtables • Promote collaborative campaigns
Engage in Capacity Building and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in gender reporting courses • Organize peer learning with CSOs • Share lessons through blogs or livestreams • Mentor peers with CSO toolkits
Collaborate on Storytelling Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce mini-documentaries or podcasts • Feature community voices and successes • Co-host storytelling contests • Offer multilingual, accessible content
Utilize Social Media Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Lives/Threads with CSOs • Translate CSO data into explainers • Run gender issue reels and graphics • Maintain gender advocacy online
Engage in Policy Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify gender policy in content • Create advocacy reels, vlogs, or blogs • Use their platforms to support reform actions • Promote CSO-led mobilizations

Media Ownership and Structural Challenges

Studies indicate that despite calls for gender parity, women still remain underrepresented in major decision making positions. In the media sector, this trend is evidenced by research such as the 2024 WAN-IFRA WIN's "Who Is Setting the News Agenda?" report, which found that women only hold 24% of business and editorial leadership positions in media houses across the 17 countries in which the organisation operates, located in Africa, the Arab Region, and South Asia¹⁶. These findings were consistent with the Reuters Institute's fact sheet, 'Women and Leadership in the News Media 2024: Evidence from 12 Markets'¹⁷ which analysed 240 news media brands globally and found that only 24% of the top editors in these brands are women. In Kenya, data from a 2022 study indicated that there were no female CEOs in the Kenyan media, while only 33% of the editorial lead positions were held by women¹⁸. Given that media ownership and leadership structures greatly influence the prioritization and framing of gender issues, and that these ownership and leadership patterns are reflective of broader power dynamics in the society, gender equality reporters need to navigate these realities in their reportage.

This section presents a few of the strategies that journalists could employ in efforts to navigate challenges arising from media ownership and leadership structures.

1. In cases where journalists may face resistance from the editorial team, they could collaborate with trusted CSOs to co-create content as well as amplify each other's work across platforms. This external support would lend more credibility to the journalists' work, since their stories would be informed by the CSO's data, community access, and insights.
2. Another strategy would be to publish the work on alternative platforms such as newsletters, blogs, Medium, podcasts, grassroots and niche media, and the like. This would circumvent the gatekeepers and help break the stories into audience - appropriate formats.
3. Thirdly, journalists could consider applying for grants from development

16 UN Women. (n.d.) Community of Practice: Training for Gender Equality. [online] UN Women Training Centre. Available at: <https://portal.trainingcentre.unwomen.org/courses/community-practice-training-gender-equality/>

17 INSPIRE Consortium. (2024) Communities of Practice (CoPs): Guidance for SPK Group 1. [pdf] Available at: <https://inspirequality.eu/sites/default/files/2024-02/SPKG1-CoPGuidance.pdf>

18 Soila, A. (2024) 'Kenya ranks lowest in newsroom women leadership, report says'. *Talk Africa*, 7 March. Available at: <https://www.talkafrica.co.ke/kenya-ranks-lowest-in-newsroom-women-leadership-report-says/>

partners who support gender equality reporting, which would enable them to explore topics that mainstream media do not cover.

4. Fourthly, journalists can rely on freedom of speech solidarity groups to address cases of suppression or being outrightly threatened.
 5. Finally, journalists should strive to align their pitches to the media house agenda and budget, keeping in mind how the ownership and advertisers shape the media house's priorities. This would help them reframe their pitches to fit broader editorial interests without changing the core messages in the story. A good practice would be tying stories to international events of days that are already part of the editorial calendar.
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Chapter 4: Checklist for Media-CSOs Collaboration

This section outlines some steps that journalists should consider taking in their collaborative reporting with gender equality CSOs.

Preparation.

This step involves identifying the CSOs that specialize in gender equality and whose focus is the subject matter that the journalist intends to cover or develop stories about. In this step, the journalists should research the particular CSOs' visions and missions, as well as their current interventions and any ongoing advocacy efforts to ensure that the media coverage aligns with the goals of the particular CSOs. The journalist should then establish clear objectives for collaboration. It should be clear what the journalist hopes to achieve through the media coverage and how the media coverage is going to benefit the particular CSOs. Additionally, the journalist should establish the correct channels of communication with the CSOs, keeping in mind that some CSOs prefer creating linkages through communication agencies before direct collaboration. Finally, in this phase, the journalist should review the internal gender policies of their media house as well as the reporting guidelines, to ensure alignment with the particular CSOs' policies.

Content Development

The second step involves developing the media content in collaboration with the particular CSOs. In this step, the journalist would be expected to work with the CSO representatives to identify the most relevant story angles, and to ensure that all the gender issues are covered accurately, taking into consideration

representation and contextual nuances. The journalists should do this through the use of gender sensitive language, which avoids reinforcing stereotypes, while also incorporating the experiences of the target communities through case studies and gender disaggregated data provided by the CSOs to inform their story. In this step, the journalist is also expected to fact check the gender related claims using reliable sources and resources, including reports research, and in interviews with gender experts. Finally, in this step, the journalists should credit the CSOs appropriately, especially given their provision of data, expert insights, and/or case studies.

Ethical Considerations

The journalists should ensure ethical and responsible engagement with the CSOs throughout the collaboration process. This entails gaining consent especially when interviewing survivors of social vices such as GBV or other vulnerable groups.

While the collaboration is beneficial to both the CSOs and the journalists, the journalists should ensure that they still maintain their journalistic independence, even while giving the CSOs a platform to share evidence-based data. Some considerations here would be to avoid tokenizing or offering tokens to the CSOs. They should be engaged as partners or sources of expertise, not just providers of arbitrary quotes.

Amplification and Impact

The fourth thing that the journalist should do is increase the amplification and impacts of the stories. Journalists should consider all the channels available to them for publishing or broadcasting their story, publishing on multiple platforms including TV and radio, social media, podcasts, among others, so that gender equality stories gain wider audiences. In the same breath, journalists and media houses should ensure avenues for audience engagement through live discussions, Q & A sessions, or interactive comment sections. In this step, journalists and media houses could also consider partnering with CSOs to conduct media literacy outreaches so that they can assist the public to identify and challenge gender misinformation.

Sustainability

Journalists and media houses should consider putting in place strategies for long-term engagement and sustainability. This involves building ongoing relationships with CSOs, rather than collaborating on single stories or single

projects. They could participate in or attend training sessions offered by these CSOs on gender-sensitive reporting, so that they can stay up to date with new developments and have access to research and tools relating to gender equality. Through this longer-term collaboration, journalists could also have access to upcoming opportunities from CSOs and NGOs, who occasionally list funding opportunities for gender-sensitive reporting. Finally, journalists and media houses should conduct regular Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) processes to identify best practices and challenges in their collaboration with CSOs, and develop strategies for improvement of outcomes. Some of the M&E processes to consider include tracking changes in gender-sensitive reporting, for example conducting content audits, feedback surveys, and audience engagement analysis.

Chapter 5: Practical Case Studies and Best Practices

This section highlights successful collaborations between the media and gender equality CSOs from Kenya, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Kosovo. The case studies demonstrate the potential of media - CSO collaborations, ranging from radio dramas to advocacy campaigns, to contribute to meaningful social change.

Girls not Brides - Kenya

The first case study is the 'Girls Not Brides' initiative in which the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) used the media to address Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C) and child marriages among the Kuria Community in Kenya¹⁹. This case study showcases the positive impacts of using the media to change attitudes and harmful gender norms related to female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in the context of Kuria, Western Kenya. It highlights successful approaches to promote the rights of girls and women and shares key insights from the Association of Media Women In Kenya (AMWIK). Successful approaches include mobilising families and communities through locally-produced content and debate, training journalists on ethical and gender-sensitive reporting, promoting partnerships and networks to collaborate and share learning, and influencing laws and policies.

¹⁹ Girls Not Brides (2021) *Using the media to address FGM/C and child marriage: The case of the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK)*. Available at: https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/documents/1459/Using_the_media_to_address_FGM-C_and_child_marriage_-_AMWIK.pdf

Advance Family Planning (AFP) initiative - Kenya

The second case study is the Advance Family Planning Initiative, an initiative launched in 2009 to increase financial investments and political commitments to ensure access to voluntary, quality FP through an evidence-based SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) advocacy approach. This approach is a guide to developing advocacy strategies that lead to quick wins by reaching the right decision-maker with the right message at the right time. In 2016, a media component was incorporated into the Kenya project to reinforce accountability on FP commitments. The project worked with journalists and editors from national and local media houses in 16 AFP focus counties (Kitui, Makeni, Kwale, Kakamega, Tharaka Nithi, Busia, Siaya, Homabay, Migori, Elgeyo Marakwet, Kisii, Nyeri, Narok, Kajiado, Baringo, and Nyamira)²⁰. The project engaged journalists and editors to highlight issues like adolescent pregnancy and access to contraceptives, which led to increased political commitment to reproductive health.

The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda - Cameroon

This is an initiative by the The Women's International League for Peace (WILPF) in Cameroon, which works with partners to advocate for women's full and meaningful political participation and address the gendered impact of increasing security challenges, and leverage the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda for action. As part of their mission to build sustainable peace with women as key strategic players, WILPF Cameroon has built partnerships with media houses to raise awareness on the WPS Agenda and sensitise communities for change²¹. As part of this initiative, WILPF Cameroon worked to boost the internationalisation of the WPS Agenda by building partnerships with media to strengthen political will for action, and rallying media houses' owners to be allies in the sensitisation and awareness raising process. As part of these efforts, WILPF Cameroon set up meetings with media houses' owners to adopt best strategies for boosting the process, trained media on UNSCR 1325 and the main provisions of the WPS Agenda, participated in TV and Radio programmes to raise awareness on UNSCR 1325, and wrote articles for newspapers and magazines as part of an ongoing outreach strategy.

20 Choge, I., Mwalimu, R., Mulyanga, S., Njiri, S., Kwachi, B. and Ontiri, S. (2023) 'Media advocacy in catalyzing actions by decision-makers: Case study of the Advance Family Planning initiative in Kenya', *Frontiers in Global Women's Health*, 4, Article 1168297. Available at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fgwh.2023.1168297/full>

21 Ndongmo, S. and Kumskova, M. (n.d.) *Good Practice Case Study: Engaging the Media on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Cameroon*. PeaceWomen. Available at: <https://www.peacewomen.org/resource/good-practice-case-study-engaging-media-women-peace-and-security-agenda-cameroon>

Promoting Gender Equality through Media Intervention - Ethiopia

This was an initiative sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) - Ethiopia, whereby, between 2020-2022, three national and FM radio stations broadcasted the Nekakat Serial Drama weekly. The magazine format drama broadcasted 338 episodes over the years, reaching 2,340,302 (1,167,811 men, 1,172,491 women)²². The drama was based on characters that navigate life with strength and humor. It challenged social norms and harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage, to change the narratives around them.

Gender Responsive Budgeting - Kosovo

In Kosovo, the Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AJK) collaborated with UN Women to implement a countrywide joint campaign under the banner of 'Reporting Week for Gender Responsive Budgeting'²³. The campaign aimed to introduce journalists and mass communication students to the main principles of Gender Responsive Budgeting, as a legal means of targeting the integration of a gender perspective in budgeting circulars, planning, implementing, and for monitoring public expenses, and to build capacities on how gender inequalities can be addressed through Gender Responsive Budgeting.

22 UNFPA Ethiopia (2023) 'Stories of change: Promoting gender equality through media intervention'. Available at: <https://ethiopia.unfpa.org/en/news/stories-change-promoting-gender-equality-through-media-intervention>

23 UN Women (2021) 'UN Women campaign highlights the media's role in promoting gender equality in Kosovo'. Available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/06/un-women-campaign-highlights-the-medias-role-in-promoting-gender-equality-in-kosovo>

ANNEXES

Gender Equality CSOs in Kenya

Table 3: Gender Equality CSOs in Kenya

Organization Name	Thematic Area of Focus	Website
African Gender and Media Initiative (GEM)	<p>Women’s human rights issues specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s health • Sexual and reproductive rights • Economic empowerment • Media advocacy • Research. 	GEM Trust.
African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Justice and Natural Resource Governance • Transformative Women’s Leadership • Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Justice • Economic Justice and Rights • African Girls and Young Women • Meaningful Engagement for Transformative Action (META) 	FEMNET
Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW Kenya)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ending Violence Against Women and Girls • Ensuring Universal Access to SRHR • Supporting Women’s Economic Empowerment • Promoting effective participation of women and girls • Resourcing the Women’s Movement 	CREAW Kenya
Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to SGBV and SRHR Services • Women’s Economic Empowerment • Women’s Leadership Development • Access to Justice • Institutional Development 	Coalition on Violence against Women
Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Kenya)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to justice • Women and governance • Knowledge management • Institutional strengthening 	FIDA Kenya

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE Kenya)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting girls' and women's education in sub-Saharan Africa in line with 'Education for All'. 	Forum for African Women Educationalists
Gender Links Kenya (GLK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic empowerment Gender based violence Energy and environment 	Gender Links Kenya
GROOTS Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassroots movement Leadership and governance Economic empowerment and justice Climate resilience Elimination of gender injustices 	GROOTS Kenya
Kenya Female Advisory Organization (KEFEADO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender equality and equity Gender-based violence Sexuality Human rights abuses Contribute in influencing behavior and attitude change in the community. 	KEFEADO
Kenya Legal & Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIV, TB key and affected populations Health and governance Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Strategic litigation Women land and property rights 	KELIN Kenya
Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social and economic empowerment Leadership and advocacy Institutional development and capacity building 	Maendeleo Ya Wanawake
MenEngage Kenya Alliance (KEMEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending men's violence against women and girls Advocacy Accountability Sexual and reproductive health and rights Youth Leadership and Engagement Climate justice 	MenEngage

Pambazuko la Wanawake Magharibi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights awareness • Economic empowerment • Capacity development on women and children rights • Anti FGM and child rights 	pambazuko la wanawake magharibi
Put Her Best Foot Forward Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with local schools, communities, organizations, and the government to provide educational resources, sexual and sanitary health, and job skills training to girls to empower them to reach their full potential. 	Put Her Best Foot Forward Africa
Rural Women Peace Link (RWPL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's human rights • Peacebuilding and conflict management • Leadership and governance • Girls' education support and mentorship • Women's economic empowerment 	Rural Women Peace Link
Sauti Ya Wanawake Pwani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women rights, leadership and governance • Girls' education and children's rights • Gender-Based Violence against women and girls • Peace building, emergency handling, and conflict resolution • Women economic empowerment • Countering effects of climate change 	Sauti Ya Wanawake Pwani
Sauti Zetu - Community Voices Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Education and mentorship • Livelihoods • Intersection of climate change and health 	Community Voices Network
Team Kenya	<p>Working with local primary schools, and the whole community that surrounds them to tackle the barriers that prevent girls from accessing quality education through the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality education for girls • Economic sustainability and food security • Advocacy for safe communities 	Team Kenya
Woman's Hope Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women empowerment programs • Family and community initiated programs • Youth leadership and mentorship programs 	Womans Hope

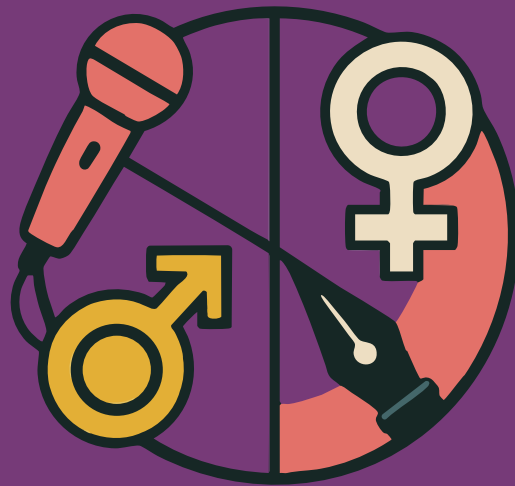
Women Empowerment Link (WEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformative leadership and governance • Elimination of violence against women and girls • Economic empowerment for sustainable livelihoods • Climate justice • Institutional development 	https://wel.or.ke/
Women Volunteers for Peace (WOVOP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth, women, peace and security • Adolescent sexual and reproductive health • Mental health • Climate adaptation • Covid response 	Women Volunteer For Peace
Womankind Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection and education • Climate change resilience and livelihoods • Peacebuilding and conflict resolution • Gender equality and social inclusion • Democracy and just governance 	Womankind Kenya
Young Women's Leadership Institute (YWLI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual and reproductive justice • Amplifying women's voices and agency • Strengthened network for greater impact • Young feminists organising 	Womankind Kenya
Youth Alive! Kenya (Y.A.K)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance and human rights • Economic empowerment and livelihoods • Social wellbeing and gender equality 	Youth Alive! Kenya

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