

4

Strategies and Recommendations for Action

The following are strategic areas in which action can be taken to advance gender equality in the information and communications sector:

- ◆ the policy environment;
- ◆ image and portrayal of women and men;
- ◆ employment, production and programming;
- ◆ outreach and democratisation;
- ◆ training;
- ◆ research; and
- ◆ gender-sensitive action tools.

In each of these strategic areas, a number of recommendations for action are suggested. Governments may wish to adapt these recommendations to suit their particular national circumstances and priorities. In addition, some specific tools are provided in this manual for use in carrying out the recommended actions.

Since in most countries the media are overwhelmingly male-controlled and portray women largely in terms of limited stereotypes, the strategies recommended here focus mainly on closing the gender gap for women. In countries where male marginalisation is an emerging problem, attention should be paid to the role of the media in reversing this trend. There is also a need to focus on the role of the media in re-socialising both women and men, and changing traditional attitudes, behaviours and roles that perpetuate gender stereotypes and inequalities.

The policy environment

- ◆ Review existing policies – legislation, guidelines, codes of ethics – with a view to integrating a gender perspective aimed at enhancing women’s skills, knowledge, access, and participation in all types of media, including on-line technologies (see Figure 2 and Appendix 1).
- ◆ Encourage the creation and/or strengthening of professional guidelines and codes of conduct or other self-regulatory mechanisms for the media with a view to eliminating gender-biased programming.
- ◆ Ensure gender balance in all government, parliamentary, state or public entities that consider media, advertising and telecommunications policy.
- ◆ Enact appropriate legislation against pornography and the projection of violence against women and children in the media.
- ◆ Abolish laws which effectively curb freedom of expression and/or freedom of association, and that result in discrimination against women.

Image and portrayal of women and men

- ◆ Promote balanced and diverse media portrayals of women as persons who bring to their positions many different life experiences – as politicians, peace negotiators,

Figure 2

Tool for Gender Analysis

This tool provides general guidelines for formulating and assessing gender in projects, training, and programming.

Basic questions to ask about how any particular activity, decision or plan will affect women and men.

- 1 **Who does what?** Analysing the division of labour between women and men in the system being analysed.
- 2 **Who has what?** Access to property, entitlements and decision rights over private and public resources in the system.
- 3 **What factors influence this gender arrangement?** Identify factors – culture, law, economics and political policy – that influence this gender arrangement, how they are changing if at all, and what needs to be done to promote change.
- 4 **How are public and private sector resources distributed and who gets what?** Which institutional structures are used, their degree of equity and efficiency, and how to make these more responsive to women and men.
- 5 **Are planners listening to women?** Don't ignore, discount or minimise their information and observations as 'women's complaints'.
- 6 **Are spaces being created for women to identify and articulate their own needs, strategies and solutions?**
- 7 **Is it recognised that women's lives encompass a variety of productive and reproductive activities which are often discounted in sectoral planning?**
- 8 **Is gender-based violence against women being taken into consideration in programme and policy design?** Prevention mechanisms against coercion and abuse of power should be incorporated into development initiatives.
- 9 **Is women's productive work being made visible?** Employ sex-differentiated data and comparative analysis to identify and measure women's contributions.
- 10 **Is analysis of gender relations being extended beyond the circle of kin and community to include such spheres as legislative bodies, international institutions and the global market?** Address the process of transforming gender relations at all levels: household, community, regional, national and international.
- 11 **Are personal gender biases being examined and internalised assumptions about women's and men's roles being challenged?**

professionals, managers, entrepreneurs and mothers – to provide role models for young women.

- ◆ Provide positive role-models for young males and avoid reinforcing stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity that perpetuate gender inequalities.
- ◆ Promote the use of non-sexist, gender-sensitive language (see Figure 3).
- ◆ Exclude stereotyped images, and violent and/or pornographic materials that discriminate against or that violate women's and children's rights in information, advertisements, marketing, and entertainment (see Figure 4).
- ◆ Increase the number of programmes for, by and about women.
- ◆ Increase women's participation, particularly in the portrayal of traditionally male-dominated areas of society linked to power and influence (e.g., politics, peace negotiations, economics, business).
- ◆ Broaden sources – women, youth, indigenous people can speak on any issue and on all aspects of life.
- ◆ Create and/or strengthen broad-based media monitoring entities and encourage easy access procedures for adequate consideration of consumer complaints lodged

with media enterprises or advertisers against media content or advertisements that portray women or men in a discriminatory way.

Employment

- ◆ Ensure equal employment opportunities for women at all levels of the media industry – management, production and programming, design, administration, technical, and education and training.
- ◆ Adopt positive action programmes, including equal pay for equal work, equal access to training, fair and transparent promotion procedures, targets and timetables to achieve a fair proportion of women in decision-making positions, and action against sexual harassment, so that women can reach their full potential as media professionals.
- ◆ Create opportunities to increase women's ownership of media houses and directorship of media organisations.
- ◆ Attract and retain women in the profession by devising family friendly support facilities aimed at easing the conflict women journalists face between taxing and unpredictable working conditions and family responsibilities. These could include job sharing and flexitime, easy access child care, parental leave, re-entry support, and telecommuting.

Production and programming

- ◆ Apply gender analysis to programming and develop editorial policies that are gender-sensitive and reflect gender equity, so that women's and men's perspectives are equally included in all topics.
- ◆ Provide incentives for creative, gender-sensitive programming in the national media.
- ◆ Disseminate information on development and social issues in local languages, using traditional, indigenous and other forms of media, such as story telling, drama, poetry and song.
- ◆ Devise media campaigns that promote gender equality, such as equal sharing of family responsibilities, and provide information aimed at eliminating domestic violence and all other forms of violence against women and children.
- ◆ Target gender-awareness programmes at both women and men.
- ◆ Sensitise media managers and professionals to increase coverage of women's points of view, especially in political, economic, business and scientific news.
- ◆ Recognise women as authoritative information sources, experts, and opinion makers – and therefore news sources on any issue, and not confine women to the role of speaking only on 'women's issues.'
- ◆ Introduce, support and extend community radio stations as a way of increasing women's participation and contribution to the media and local economic development, especially in areas of high illiteracy rates.

Outreach and democratisation

- ◆ Develop and support monitoring bodies and media watch groups that survey media and advertising content concerning gender portrayal.
- ◆ Include media women in media self-regulatory committees and other executive committees that draft programme guidelines, budgets, contracts and personnel documents.
- ◆ Support local, regional, national and international networks for women media professionals and promote active North/South and South/South co-operation between journalists' organisations, women's professional media associations, women's legal groups and women's political associations.

Figure 3

Guidelines For Gender-Sensitive Language

These guidelines provide alternatives to ambiguous and stereotypical words and phrases and traditional titles and forms of address. They can be used to build gender-awareness and sensitivity among ministry and media personnel.

<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Alternative</i>
Mr and Mrs John Smith	Jane and John Smith; Mr and Mrs Smith; Mr and Ms Smith
Miss, Mrs	Ms (female equivalent to Mr - does not indicate marital status, which is often irrelevant)
Chairman	Chair; Chairperson (Chairwoman or Chairman for specific cases)
girl	woman; young woman; girl-child
men and girls	girls and boys/boys and girls; women and men/men and women
man and wife	husband and wife; wife and husband
housewife	homemaker
lady	woman (unless the parallel is to 'gentleman')
emasculated	weakened; enfeebled; diminished; toothless; tame; watered-down
effeminate	delicate; feeble; fussy; soft; languid; affected; gentle
forefathers	forebears; ancestors
founding fathers	founders
authoress; poetess; actress	author; poet; actor
women's lib	women's movement
women's libber	feminist; supporter of the women's movement
businessman	business manager; executive; agent; representative (plural: business people; business community)
cameraman	photographer; camera operator (plural: camera crew)
foreman	supervisor
policeman/men	police officer (plural: police)
craftsman	artisan; craftworker
statesman	political leaders, statesman or woman
statesmanship	statescraft
spokesman	spokesperson; spokesman or woman (for specific person)
man-made	artificial; synthetic; manufactured; industrial
manpower	staff; labour; workforce; personnel; workers; human resources
salesman/girl	assistant; attendant (plural: salespersons)
steward/stewardess	staff; crew
man, mankind	people, humanity; human beings; the human race; men and women; homo sapiens; the public; society
brotherhood of man	human fellowship; human kinship; solidarity
primitive man	primitive people or peoples; primitive women and men
man a project	staff a project; hire personnel; employ staff
mother tongue	first language
committee of wise men	committee of counsellors; eminent persons; advisory panel

Adjective bias

a) ambitious/aggressive/outspoken/strident; b) cautious/timid/emotional/ hysterical – these words may apply to men, women, people or individuals but when either set is applied selectively to men (a) and women (b) they connote bias.

Pronouns

The pronoun 'his' when used in general situations – e.g., 'Anyone disagreeing with the statement should give his reasons' – should be pluralised (their) or used to a limited extent as 'his' or 'her' only when it applies to all. S/he may also be used where appropriate.

Roles

Avoid stereotyped assumptions about the roles of men and women. For example, the sentence, 'Research scientists often neglect their wives and children,' assumes that women are not research scientists, whereas a simple change – 'Research scientists often neglect their families,' acknowledges that women as well as men are research scientists; similarly, 'Transport will be provided for delegates and their wives,' assumes all delegates are men whereas, 'Transport will be provided for delegates and their spouses,' correctly recognises women as well as men in the role of delegate.

Source: "Fair Exposure Guidelines for the Constructive and Positive Portrayal and Presentation of Women in the Media", Status of Women Office, Australia, 1993.

Figure 4

Fair Exposure Guidelines

This tool provides suggestions for developing guidelines for the constructive and positive portrayal and presentation of women in the media:

- ◆ specific in nature but general enough to avoid the label of censorship (e.g. broadcasters, publishers, advertisers and media practitioners are encouraged 'to write, illustrate, edit and present with a sense of equality, appropriateness and dignity for both sexes.')
- ◆ alternatives to commonly used sexist language (e.g. 'homemaker' or 'houseworker' instead of 'housewife'; 'police officer' to replace 'policeman')
- ◆ checklist to help advertisers eliminate offensive advertising (e.g., Do your advertisements portray women as sex objects or contain double entendre particularly about sex or women's bodies? Do the ads portray women in situations which are potentially sexually dangerous, or as victims of violence?)
- ◆ contact list of people who should be addressed for complaints (plus a recommendation that copies be sent to the offending publication, advertisers or broadcast station)

- ◆ Develop and/or increase linkages with women's media networks including electronic networks and other new technologies of communication, and assist the financing of these networks.
- ◆ Advise smaller media, especially those reaching women in rural and marginalised urban areas, on questions such as available technology optimal for their needs.
- ◆ Interlink more effectively grassroots workers and volunteers, media researchers, NGOs, advocacy groups, alternative media networks and policy-makers concerning women and the media.
- ◆ Create networks among, and develop information-exchange programmes between NGOs, women's organisations and professional media organisations with a view to increasing women's participation in media.
- ◆ Promote media literacy programmes for the public at large in order to develop the critical faculties needed for analysing messages disseminated by the media, and to

prevent prejudice that may be caused by television's depiction of violence against women. Conduct these programmes through national education curricula and in informal education activities at community level with women and men, young and old.

- ◆ Encourage dialogue between the media sector and the field of education in general to raise public awareness of the portrayal of women in the media.
- ◆ Partner public and private educational institutions to disseminate information about, and increase awareness of, women's human rights, particularly in respect of all forms of violence against women.
- ◆ Work in co-operation with journalists' organisations to develop guidelines against gender-biased treatment of information, and checklists against gender-biased language for reporters and editors to use when writing and reviewing stories.
- ◆ Promote dialogue between organisations of journalists and media employers to discuss a joint approach to the ethics of gender portrayal.

Training

- ◆ Assign programme budgets to allow for women's and men's equal access to all forms of professional training.
- ◆ Include training modules in gender-awareness, local history and cultural diversity at all media training institutions.
- ◆ Train women media students and professionals in management and related subjects, such as interpersonal communication and decision-making skills, with a view to promoting women's media enterprises.
- ◆ Develop train-the-trainer programmes geared specifically for women in computing and all new communications technologies.
- ◆ Develop educational and training methodologies that enable women's organisations and community groups to effectively communicate their own messages and concerns and access to existing media.
- ◆ Encourage gender-sensitive training for media professionals including media owners and managers, to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women and men in the media.
- ◆ Sponsor short-term or longer term professional internships or exchanges to expand the professional skills of women media professionals.

Research

- ◆ Increase research into all aspects of women and media – including alternative, traditional, local, and folk forms, as well as new communications technologies used by women – to define areas needing attention and action.
- ◆ Undertake national studies on media audiences and the impact on viewers of the content of media products, especially in respect of violence against women. Include the development of follow-up and evaluation systems.
- ◆ Ensure all national statistics are disaggregated by sex, to facilitate national analysis and planning in the gender mainstreaming process. Aim to repackage research for wide dissemination.

Gender-sensitive action tools

- ◆ Build and make widely available a data base on women working in the media in all fields (see Figure 5).
- ◆ Publish pertinent studies – for example on women's portrayal by the media, women's employment in the media, listening, viewing and reading patterns, media policies and patterns of media ownership – that can assist in building the base for gender-aware evaluation and planning.

- ◆ Collect and distribute annual bibliographies on major research activities and findings concerning women in communication and development.
- ◆ Create a data base of resource materials produced by national women's machineries and women's alternative media networks at local, national, regional and international levels.
- ◆ Repackage legislation and international conventions on women in simplified forms and in local languages for wide dissemination.
- ◆ Facilitate the compilation of a Directory of Women Media Experts.
- ◆ Develop, and maintain with regular updates, a Media Directory of women spokespersons for use by journalists and media practitioners.
- ◆ Set up an international on-line network for exchange of information on portrayal of women in the media and information on women's media enterprises.
- ◆ Disseminate non-sexist language guidelines.
- ◆ Establish, in co-operation with broadcasters, an international video library on women for use in programming but also to be used in seminars and workshops aimed at raising awareness of media professionals and the general public.
- ◆ Circulate regular information sheets on funders interested in the development of communication projects relating to women, alternative media networks, independent women media professionals and NGOs working in popular media forms.
- ◆ Facilitate the distribution and marketing efforts of women's independent presses and newsletters focusing on women, gender relations and development.

Figure 5

Women Journalists'/Media Workers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire can be used to build a database on women working in media.

- 1 Do you, as a woman journalist, find yourself or your female colleagues facing obstacles that your male counterparts do not face? Yes No
- 2 If so, what are some of these obstacles?
- Lack of educational opportunities
- Lack of access to information
- Denial of equal pay for equal work
- Denial of access to assignments
- Lack of role models
- Balancing family/work
- Sexual harassment
- Other (specify) _____
-
- None
- 3 Are these obstacles generally considered to be a problem among women in your organisation? Yes No Don't know
- 4 In general, do your male colleagues believe that such problems faced by women are a problem for the company and/or the media industry? Yes No Don't know
- 5 In general, is the salary scale different for men and women journalists working at the same level? Yes No Don't know
- 6 Which of the following initiatives/mechanisms would you like to see strengthened or put in place to help remove the barriers that women face as media professionals:
- Legislative/legal
- Women's media associations/organisations
- Women's divisions in journalism associations
- Educational
- Other (specify) _____
-
- None
- 7 What is your view of how women are portrayed in the media?
- The media generally portrays women accurately. Yes No Sometimes
- The media generally misrepresents women. Yes No Sometimes
- The media often disregards women as leaders. Yes No Sometimes
- 8 Is there a women's journalism organisation available to you? Yes No