Amplifying women's voices

A Gender Balance Guide

For Media

Acknowledgements

women in news

WAN-IFRA
World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers

Sida
SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Women in News (WIN), an initiative by WAN-IFRA, aims to increase women's leadership and voices in the news. It does so by equipping women journalists and editors with the skills, strategies and support networks they need to take on greater leadership positions and editorial influence within the industry.

In parallel, WIN partners with media organisations to identify industry-led solutions to close the gap between men and women in their newsrooms, boardrooms and in the content they produce.

WIN is currently working with more than 90 media from 15 countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab Region and South East Asia (SEA):

WIN AFRICA: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

WIN ARAB REGION: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine

WIN SEA: Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam

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

WWW.WOMENINNEWS.ORG

WAN-IFRA is the global organisation of the world's newspapers and news publishers, representing more than 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites and over 3,000 companies in more than 120 countries. WAN-IFRA is unique in its position as a global industry association with a human rights mandate to defend and promote media freedom, and the economic independence of news media as an essential condition of that freedom.

WAN-IFRA applies a dual approach to supporting media freedom. It addresses political and structural constraints to media freedom through advocacy and at the same time works to strengthen the capacity and networks of the media and their representative institutions.

This dual approach allows WAN-IFRA to address challenges to media freedom from multiple perspectives, leveraging experiences and synergies between advocacy and development projects, partnerships and the wider expertise of WAN-IFRA's international community to encourage meaningful change.

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Foreword

Women in News advocates for a media industry in which women and men are equal. Equal in the way they are portrayed in news content and equal in their professional roles and treatment. WIN has been working towards this goal for nearly a decade, during which time, the issues of equality, safety and respect between men and women have come roaring into the public consciousness through movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp. This momentum has been sustained by brave individuals who have come forward and the dogged work of journalists around the world who continue to cover the topic, exposing injustices and holding perpetrators of inequality to account.

Paradoxically, we the media industry have played a direct role in perpetuating inequality by excluding women's voices, stories and opinions in content and using language which stereotypes women. While women represent more than half of the world's population, they are on average seen, heard and read in the media only 25% of the time.

Readers are increasingly calling out the media for this practice. In failing to change we risk alienating our audiences, harming our corporate reputations and brands, and negatively impacting our bottom lines.

Improving gender balance in content can be challenging, however. It takes conscious, thoughtful measures to recognise and dismantle unconscious bias. It takes a concerted effort to begin identifying and including new voices and opinions in our content on a consistent basis. Maintaining that focus can be a strain given the multiple competing priorities and the frequent firefighting that the media are engaged in today.

But making the effort to improve gender balance in content can and must be a priority. We hope that this practical guide helps newsrooms and media professionals throughout the world to address the issue head on. We look forward to continuing the conversation and action toward greater equality in our industry together.

This guide

This guide aims to equip media organisations and professionals with the necessary tools and insights to increase gender balance in their content.

It should help you to:

- Understand the importance of gender balance in content
- Identify the different ways in which the media gender stereotypes
- Understand how to avoid gender stereotyping
- Develop organisational strategies to improve gender balance in content
- Identify suitable metrics and tools to track their progress
- Learn from successful initiatives that have been implemented by other news organisations

GENDER DEFINITION AND A NON-BINARY GUIDE

This guide reflects Women in News' primary mission, promoting the leadership and voices of women in the media.

For the purposes of this guide, the term 'gender balance' is used to refer to the balance between women and men.

Women in News, however, understands that gender is not binary, but is a spectrum. While this guide focuses on the balance between women and men only, elements of the guide can be applied to the media's representation and portrayal of trans people and the LGBTQIA+ community more broadly.

WIN recognises the need for a more specific non-binary resource for the media industry and will be creating one in the near future.

1.

Why gender balance is important
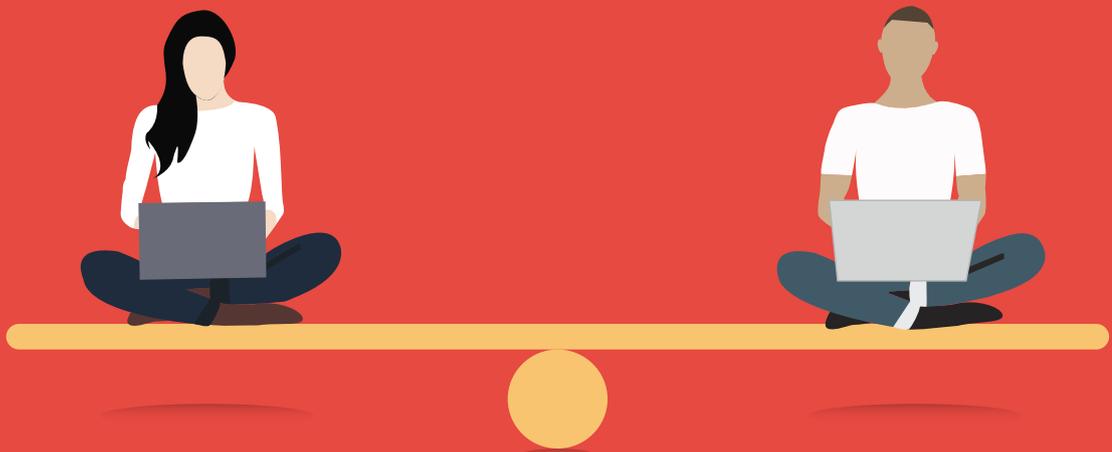
Responsibility to promote equality and diversity

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The media shapes what we think about, what we believe, and what we do. That means the decisions taken by those working in, and leading, the industry are of vital importance. If the media fails to represent women as equals and stereotypes them in their jobs, societal roles and attributes, they perpetuate and reinforce gender inequalities. This applies not just to women, but to trans people, sexuality, race, class, religion and ethnicity. In most of today's news media, women are much less likely to be featured as subjects of a story or quoted as experts compared to men. According to the Gender Equality Tracker[1], current statistics show that in US media coverage men are

News organisations have a responsibility to analyse the representation of men and women in the content they produce, determine if an imbalance exists and take action if it is needed.

mentioned twice as frequently as women. In Norway, Amedia discovered an average 34/66% split between women's and men's names across 660,000 local stories from 64 of its newspapers published during a 21-month period.

Doing so demonstrates an acknowledgement of the fact that the news has historically been made by men, for men, and a willingness to work towards representing men and women in a fair and balanced manner.

Women are an untapped audience – it makes business sense

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Making a deliberate effort to create more inclusive and diverse products makes business sense. After all, women make up 50% of the world's population. If a certain societal group cannot relate to the content you produce, be it because they feel underrepresented or because the topics you cover don't resonate with them, chances are they will not choose to consume it. That reality means that many news organisations are ramping up efforts to tap into women audiences and engage them more effectively. The BBC's R&D team conducted research among women in the UK aged 28 to 45 and found that they have a strong appetite for

stories that have direct relevance to their lives, and value practical information.[2] The research also suggested that local news becomes increasingly important when women have children. At the South China Morning Post, audience research revealed that topics such as diplomacy, regional news and society, which covers a broad range of social affairs, including education, issues of equality, and cultural trends, were of particular interest to women audiences.

Others have already found evidence which points to the ways in which increasing the visibility of women in content can have a positive business impact. Norwegian media company Amedia found that newspapers with more stories containing women sources had higher readership among women. At the Financial Times, a newsletter aimed at women achieved higher open rates on average than the publication's other newsletters. Bloomberg found that featuring more perspectives from women in its reporting gives it an edge over competitors.

Diversity of views makes for better content and products

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A diversity of voices and views leads to greater creativity and higher quality content, which in turn is good for business in an era when the media is fighting to remain financially viable and culturally relevant. Despite this, the media industry is still highly homogenous. In the US, newsroom employees are more likely to be men, white, and less diverse than the overall workforce, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of US Census Bureau data from 2012 to 2016.[3] While racial, ethnic, and gender diversity is higher among younger employees, the makeup of many newsrooms does not reflect their audiences, or their target audiences. Some, however, are actively working towards changing the status quo. The New York Times launched its Gender Initiative[4] to cover gender more deliberately and engage a more diverse audience. Outside Magazine has committed itself to becoming a more diverse and inclusive outlet from top to bottom, ensuring editors of each vertical are running an equal number of stories written by men and women and featuring women and diverse body types

1   http://www.prognosis.se/GE/USA/

2   https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/blog/2018-12-news-user-testing-young-people

3   https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/02/newsroom-employees-are-less-diverse-than-u-s-workers-overall/

4   https://www.journalism.co.uk/news/how-the-new-york-times-and-gizmodo-tackle-gender-diversity-in-the-newsroom/s2/a722938/

in photography and art.[5] At The Lusaka Sun, a standalone publication owned by the Daily Nation in Zambia, some 70% of employees are women. That has been a deliberate decision. According to the Daily Nation's executive editor, women reporters are better at getting in contact with and gaining the trust of other women in the community, making them feel comfortable enough to share their stories and experiences with the paper.

Sexism is bad for business

As the world becomes more aware of and more sensitive to content that is sexist and gender stereotyping, media organisations risk losing their audience if they publish it. The #MeToo movement has sparked a surge in awareness around gender equality on a global scale and has shown women (and men) how to effectively tackle and hold accountable the people and organisations who perpetuate gender inequalities and abuse. Audiences no longer remain silent when they feel a news organisation is publishing sexist or misogynistic content. Social media platforms have allowed them to voice their concerns and anger publicly. Numerous listeners of BBC Radio 4 recently took to Twitter to complain about BBC veteran John Humphrys after he claimed women were better at looking after babies than men.[6] Similarly, Jeffrey Goldberg, editor of The Atlantic, came under fire for suggesting that "almost exclusively white males" wrote 10,000-word cover stories.[7] Ironically this happened during an interview about how the magazine was diversifying staff.

Audiences no longer remain silent when they feel a news organisation is publishing sexist or misogynistic content.

These examples show that in today's climate, in part brought about by the #MeToo movement, outright or seemingly misogynistic statements are no longer considered acceptable. Research by The Economist has shown that companies whose employees have been embroiled in sexual harassment scandals have seen their shares dip.[8] In the case of Fox News, the network's show The O'Reilly Factor, hosted by Bill O'Reilly, lost more than half of its advertisers within a week after it came to light that he and Fox News had settled numerous sexual harassment lawsuits against him dating back to 2002.[9]

Sexism, harassment and abuse aren't simply morally and ethically wrong, they can have a direct impact on a company's bottom line.

5   https://www.niemanlab.org/2018/01/punchier-and-stronger-and-with-way-more-women-how-outside-magazine-got-to-be-badass-online/

6   https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/john-humphrys-sparks-outrage-after-saying-women-do-a-better-job-than-men-at-looking-after-children-a4213251.html

7   https://www.theguardian.com/media/2019/jun/06/the-atlantic-jeffrey-goldberg-white-males-10k-word-cover-stories

8   https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/09/27/sexual-harassment-scandals-are-hurting-companies-reputations-and-balance-sheets

9   https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/04/11/business/oreilly-advertisers.html

2.

How we stereotype in the media

The media plays a very important role in shaping public opinion, which means that any kind of gender stereotyping, subtle or not, has damaging consequences.

To change the way we work, and produce content which treats women and men equally, we need to examine our own biases and be more aware of the different ways in which we gender stereotype.

Gender stereotyping can manifest itself in a number of different ways, from the language we use to talk about women to the images we choose to depict them. While some examples of gender stereotyping are glaringly obvious, others are subtler and have become so common in news coverage that it can be difficult to identify them as such.

The roles we emphasise
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We often refer to women as wives, mothers or girlfriends, rather than CEOs, politicians, lawyers or activists in their own right. We frequently refer to a woman as a 'working mum' if she works and has children. We never describe a man this way.

The qualities and characteristics we highlight
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We tend to portray women as timid, weak, emotional, hysterical, or victims rather than confident, strong, or compassionate. We focus a lot on their age, looks and clothes. When they are successful, we describe the characteristics that make them successful in negative ways. For example: instead of being described as authoritative like men, women are bossy; instead of having booming or commanding voices, they are shrill or abrasive.

The language we use
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One of the subtlest and potentially most damaging forms of sexism is the omission of women in references that are meant to describe everyone. For example: mankind. We also tend to ascribe gender to job titles e.g. chairman or chairwoman; policeman or policewoman. We perpetuate stereotypes by adding a gender to neutral job titles, such as 'male nurse' or 'lady lawyer'.

The unequal references we make
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→ Refer to men by mental aptitude or profession, but women by physical attributes.
→ Define women by age, but not men.
→ Describe women and men as having stereotypical characteristics: timid vs. outgoing; emotional vs. sensitive; weak vs. strong;

hysterical vs. collected; middle-aged vs. silver fox; opinionated vs. knowledgeable; hormonal vs. angry.
→ Diminish a woman to her relationship with a man. We should refer to her as a person in her own right instead of the wife, girlfriend or daughter of a man.
→ Refer to a woman's family commitments. Women with children are 'working mums' and they are often questioned about their ability to hold down a job and have a family. Men are neither referred to as 'working dads' nor questioned about their ability to have a job and be a parent. We should use 'parent' instead of mother.
→ Focus on what a woman is wearing or her makeup vs. a man's accomplishments. Use courtesy titles that label women according to their relationship with a man/their marital status. Miss and Mrs define marital status, whereas Mr does not.

The images we use
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We use photos or videos of women that:

→ Focus or zoom in on women's physical attributes and flaws.
→ Portray men in suits, but women in bikinis.
→ Show women politicians with glaring and cold stares, but men politicians smiling and approachable.
→ Showcase women on front pages with very limited relevance to the articles themselves, in order to sell papers (this is backed by research).

The opinions and voices we use
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We use men sources more than women sources. When we do use women sources, they tend to be used more for personal experiences, opinions, emotional reactions or as witnesses, rather than as spokespeople, representatives or experts. Often men politicians will be sourced alongside women teachers or homemakers.

The stories we target at women
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We create separate 'women's' content and define 'women's issues' as celebrity, entertainment, fashion, crime.

The method of storytelling that we use
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We tend to tailor 'real news' and business and sports content to our men audience by using impersonal and factual reporting styles with limited visual content. Research shows that women respond better to more personal and visual content.

Common gender balance 'myths'

1 There are **not enough**, or any, **women experts** on substantive issues such as **politics** or the **economy**

Various news organisations have already debunked this myth, showing that highly qualified women experts are available to comment on any given topic area.

Several organisations have put together searchable databases featuring women experts with the aim of helping journalists diversify their coverage.

Some news outlets have even created their own internal databases, giving the entire newsroom easy access to women sources.

2 It is **hard** to find or access **women sources**

Finding women sources is only hard if you're used to solely relying on contributions from men. Expanding your network to include more women may require some initial effort, but it is a worthwhile endeavour that will help you diversify your coverage and gain access to new and interesting viewpoints.

3 Women sources are **less confident** speaking to the media

Historically, women have not been featured in the media as frequently as men and as a result have less experience.

But more and more news organisations are making a concerted effort to increase the number of women sources featured in their content. With its New Voices initiative, Bloomberg offers media and communications training to expert women in the business and finance industry

4 Editors always ask for men experts **to confirm what women experts say**

An editor requiring a man to confirm a woman expert's view is an example of gender stereotyping that stems from institutional gender bias. It is rooted in the belief that women are inherently less capable than men.

However, these women are experts in their own right who do not need men to validate what they are saying. While changing this type of ingrained behaviour and thinking is difficult, it can and must be challenged.

3.

Actions to improve gender balance

Without producing gender balanced content, the media perpetuate a skewed world view. Women make up 50% of the global population, but many news organisations feature women much less frequently in their content than men. This issue is not going to resolve itself. News organisations must commit to improving gender balance by actively seeking out and featuring women sources and experts, creating a balance of reporting by both women and men while steering clear of gender stereotypes, or sexist remarks and ideas. Your ultimate goal should be to treat women and men equally, both as employees in your organisation and as subjects in your reporting.

1 Make women prominent

MAKE WOMEN THE FOCUS OF REPORTING
Ensure women feature as main characters, or at least prominent characters in your reporting. This does not mean they have to be the subject of the story, they can be significant commentators, experts or narrators.

FIND THE WOMAN IN EVERY STORY!
If this is not possible, then make sure that you have another story that is about or features women, to balance it out.

2 Include women's voices and opinions

There are multiple angles here:

INCREASE YOUR WOMEN BYLINES
Make sure that you have women writing and creating your content, alongside men. Often this means that there is an automatic gender lens.

ON STORIES THAT MATTER
If your women reporters are only reporting on lifestyle, travel or celebrity stories, this is not gender balanced. Make sure that women are given bylines on substantive stories like politics, sports, business etc.

INCLUDE WOMEN SOURCES
Use women sources to ensure that their perspectives are included. Do not fall into the trap of quoting men politicians, but women teachers or homemakers. Avoid using women only for sharing personal experiences.

INCLUDE EXPERT WOMEN SOURCES
Make sure that you have a balance of women and men experts to bring a diversity of expert opinion. There are successful and knowledgeable women in all professions – there is no excuse for excluding women expert opinion.

BUILD A WOMEN EXPERT SOURCEBOOK
Create and curate a women expert sourcebook (if there isn't already one in your country or issue area). This should be a dynamic and evolving database – you should be using the database and seeking out new women expert sources on a daily basis. Media organisations such as the BBC and Bloomberg are doing this with great success. For an example of a comprehensive women sourcebook see SheSource (US/Global). In Zimbabwe, Gender Media Connect has created a similar women sourcebook called *According to Her.*

TRAIN WOMEN EXPERTS IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS
To increase the quality of content from women experts, some media corporations (including Bloomberg) are providing them (those who have no experience of appearing in the media) with media and communication skills training. This is particularly important for broadcast and audio-visual media.

3 Avoid gender stereotyping and sexism[10]

USE FAIR LANGUAGE AND PORTRAYALS
It's not just the stories we read in the media that influence how we think about the world. How things are described plays an important role too. Use appropriate language when talking about women and men and portray them in the same way to reduce gender stereotyping and sexism. See the box 'Gender Fair Language and Portrayals – a mini guide' on p. 12 to find out what this means in practice.

TRAIN NEWSROOM STAFF IN GENDER BIAS AND BALANCE
All employees should be aware of the importance of gender balance, and have the practical know-how to produce gender balanced news content. Training should include both the 'parallelism' and 'reversibility' techniques explained on p. 13.

CREATE A STYLE GUIDE
With a gender balance style guide, all of your newsroom staff are aware of appropriate and inappropriate language (as above). You can use existing resources, such as:

- *Name It. Change It. The Women's Media Center's Media Guide to Gender Neutral Coverage of Women Candidates + Politicians,* WMC
- *UNESCO Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language,* UNESCO
- 'Glossary of Terms' in *Unspinning the Spin: The Women's Media Center Guide to Fair and Accurate Language,* WMC

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10   Adapted from:
Name It. Change It. The Women's Media Center's Media Guide to Gender Neutral Coverage of Women Candidates + Politicians, WMC
UNESCO Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language, UNESCO
'Glossary of Terms' in Unspinning the Spin: The Women's Media Center Guide to Fair and Accurate Language, WMC

4 Appeal to women

REPORT IN WAYS THAT APPEAL TO WOMEN

Women and men respond differently to different news subjects and reporting styles. Studies show that women relate more to personal, emotional and visual content. However, this does not mean that women only want to read about celebrity insights. You can tell a political story from a personal angle. The South China Morning Post, for example, found that women were interested in topics such as diplomacy, regional news and society, which covers a broad range of social affairs including education, issues of equality, and cultural trends. Women also consume more content via social media (although research on this in the news media context is limited). Consider the different modes and styles of reporting that may be more appealing to that 50%.

## AIM FOR GENDER BALANCE IN NEWSROOM LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

If you improve gender balance in leadership positions and give women equal opportunity to influence your organisation's news agenda, you are more likely to create more diverse and inclusive products. An initiative called NewsMavens put this to the test and explored how the news agenda changes when women make all editorial decisions. Women journalists from across Europe were invited to contribute the top stories of the day to a common platform. They found that the articles women curators deemed most important often differed from what would normally feature on the front page of a mainstream publication. They included stories focused on marginalised groups, or the impact of big politics and business on the lives of regular people.[11] Chances are that the stories women editors in your organisation care about will resonate with your women audience.

CONDUCT AUDIENCE RESEARCH:

Most media houses do not have the resources to conduct large scale audience research. However, you can conduct smaller scale audience research exercises to understand how you might better tailor your content to women.

GENDER FAIR LANGUAGE AND PORTRAYALS

A mini guide[12]
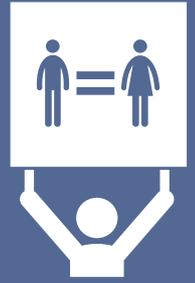
DO NOT USE LANGUAGE THAT EXCLUDES WOMEN

Use inclusive language. Make sure that your language includes all genders, sexualities and identities:

- Make general references neutral: Don't use the word man to refer to both women and men. e.g. use humankind instead of mankind or artificial instead of man made.
- Use collective pronouns: Avoid using gendered pronouns when referring to both women and men. E.g. each farmer was given his subsidy by the government. Instead use collective or neutral pronouns: such as 'they', 'their', 'one', 'you', 'your', etc. You may need to reword your sentences to do this.
- If you are quoting a source, ask what their preferred pronoun is.
- Replace language that makes assumptions about roles or relationships: E.g. employees' wives – there are several assumptions here: only men work, all employees are in a couple and all employees are in a heterosexual couple.

DO NOT USE LANGUAGE THAT LIMITS EITHER SEX

- Avoid highlighting gender as a defining characteristic. When describing a person's achievements, goals and situation, most of the time his or her gender is not relevant.
- Avoid using clichés that perpetuate stereotypes: Such as 'just like a man', 'man up' or 'drama queen'.

AVOID JOB TITLES THAT PERPETUATE STEREOTYPES (AND EXCLUDE WOMEN)

- Make job titles neutral: E.g. police officer rather than policeman, chairperson rather than chairman, etc. Also use actor instead of actress or waiter instead of waitress.
- Don't add gender labels to job titles: A woman who is a lawyer is a 'lawyer' not a 'lady lawyer'. Similarly, a nurse who is a man is a 'nurse' not a 'male nurse'. These labels reinforce the stereotype of specific jobs or roles being reserved for only men or women.

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12   Adapted from:
Name It. Change It. The Women's Media Center's Media Guide to Gender Neutral Coverage of Women Candidates + Politicians, WMC
UNESCO Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language, UNESCO
'Glossary of Terms' in Unspinning the Spin: The Women's Media Center Guide to Fair and Accurate Language, WMC

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11   https://en.ejo.ch/comment/what-does-happen-when-women-choose-the-news

HOW TO TREAT MEN AND WOMEN EQUALLY

✓ Dos:

- Describe women using the same sorts of adjectives that you would for a man. E.g. knowledgeable vs. opinionated; sensitive vs. emotional.

- Use courtesy titles that promote gender equity: Use Ms instead of Miss or Mrs (which label women according to their relationship with a man/their marital status). Never use a husband's name as a courtesy title e.g. Mrs Nick Smith.

- Apply the above to audio-visual content in the same way as it is to print content.

✗ Don'ts:

- Focus on a woman's age unless you would do the same for a man.

- Describe or portray a woman's physical attributes, but a man's accomplishments.

- Diminish a woman to her relationship with a man. Refer to her as a person in her own right instead of the wife, girlfriend or daughter of a man.

- Depict women as timid and men as brave or use similar stereotyping terms e.g. hysterical, emotional, weak, timid, weeping vs. strong, brave, accomplished, sensitive, successful.

- Refer to a woman's family unless she wants you to. Women with children are often referred to as 'working mums' and questioned about their ability to hold a job position and have a family. Men are neither referred to as 'working dads' nor questioned about their ability to hold a job and be a parent. Use 'parent' instead of mother.

- Focus on what a woman is wearing or her makeup unless you would do the same for a man.

FIND OUT WHETHER YOU ARE TREATING WOMEN AND MEN THE SAME

The rules of reversibility and parallelism are very effective ways to determine whether or not you are gender stereotyping.

Reversibility: Would you depict a man in the same way, or could you depict a man in the same way, without seeming ridiculous? If the answer is no, then you are stereotyping. E.g.

- Women are 'brunettes' but men have 'brown hair'
- Hillary Clinton was described as having a 'shrill voice'. The tone of Donald Trump's voice was not referred to
- 'The 37-year-old Meghan Markle married Prince Harry in May'

Parallelism: Have you treated women and men the same in the titles, descriptions, attributes etc. you have assigned to them? E.g.

- *'The reading list included Jane Austen, Joyce, Proust, and Virginia Woolf'* vs. *'The reading list included Austen, Joyce, Proust, and Woolf'*
- *'The usher seated Mr Trump and his lovely wife Melania'* vs. *'The usher seated Mr and Ms Trump'*
- *'Her parents, Judge Nicholas Smith and Mrs Smith, were both at the wedding'* vs. *'Her parents, Nicholas and Karen Smith, were both at the wedding'*

NEVER USE OVERTLY SEXIST LANGUAGE OR IMAGES

This includes any jokes, language or images that degrade women, are offensive or reduce women to sexual objects or extreme stereotypes. This includes explicit terms and phrases such as 'pussy', 'bitch', 'banging body', 'nice piece of ass', 'little wifey', 'she belongs back in the kitchen' (the examples are endless). There are no gender-neutral alternatives to these. The same rules also apply to images that purposefully highlight aspects or features of a woman's body. E.g. cleavage, cellulite, wrinkles.

RECTIFY THE PROBLEM IN THE QUOTES AND SOURCES YOU USE

Often the problem lies in the sources we use. If a source or reference is gender biased, sexist or gender stereotyping then you should do one of the following:

- Paraphrase the quote using gender sensitive language.
- Draw attention to the issue: 'Thomas Jefferson stated, 'All men are created equal.' Of course, had he written during current times, he surely would have said all people are created equal?' (Taken directly from UNESCO resource).
- Delete gender biased, stereotyping or sexist content. Cut the quote or source entirely.

4.

Organisational strategies

Garnering leadership support and implementing clear organisational strategies are two of the most crucial elements when it comes to successfully improving gender balance in content. This way, employees at every level of the organisation are aware of the issue, know what targets to focus on, and can be held accountable if they fail to implement necessary changes. Try to be as transparent as possible about how your initiatives and strategies are progressing. Share data with staff to unite the organisation behind a shared goal of improving gender balance.

1 Leadership commitment

Processes to increase gender balance in content need a committed senior management team. If the push is coming from the top there is an automatic line of accountability. It also means that the value is immediately recognised and staff and resources can be directed more easily without significant efforts to justify decisions. Sometimes committed individuals within an organisation can bring about change, but if there is resistance from leadership then an initiative can be completely paralysed.

2 Appoint a lead person

While the ambition needs to come from the top, somebody needs to be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day work required to increase gender balance in content. It helps if this person reports directly to senior management. It reinforces the importance of the initiative and makes uptake and implementation more likely to succeed.

3 Set targets

There are differences of opinion on this point. One approach is to start off pragmatically with low hanging fruit – the sections or departments where it might be easiest to achieve gender balance. Alternatively, you can vary targets depending on the department, setting lower targets for sports reporting for example. A hard-line approach is to mandate that gender balance means gender balance across the organisation i.e. 50:50 (this is the approach taken by the BBC).

4 Set timeframes

Similarly, there are different viewpoints regarding timeframes. Setting short timeframes can mean that change happens quickly and with some amount of disruption. But being unrealistic can

mean setting yourselves up to fail, undermining the entire initiative before it has even begun.

5 Editorial & management buy-in and accountability

It is important that your management and editorial staff are committed to increasing gender balance in content. The strategies you use here should be based on what currently works or has worked in the past for your organisation. Ultimately, you want gender balance in content to be part of editorial culture.

6 Regular staff training and resources

Staff (including management) will need training on how to report in a gender balanced way. Other helpful resources could include a gender balanced style guide and a women expert source database. Gender balance could become part of performance assessments.

7 Increase gender balance in your workforce

Increasing the number of women reporters and editors across news categories leads to more diverse content, perspectives and styles that appeal to – and more accurately reflect – women. Ensure that your women employees are being given the same opportunities as men and can rely on a support system to help them thrive in newsrooms dominated by men.

8 Measure your progress!

Knowing how well you are doing is extremely important. Having this data means that people and departments can be held accountable for their performance. If you are doing well, the data reinforces success and can be shared to inspire others within the organisation. If you are not making as much progress as you hoped, the data serves as a driving force to increase efforts or change tactics. It can also help you to understand where you are falling short.
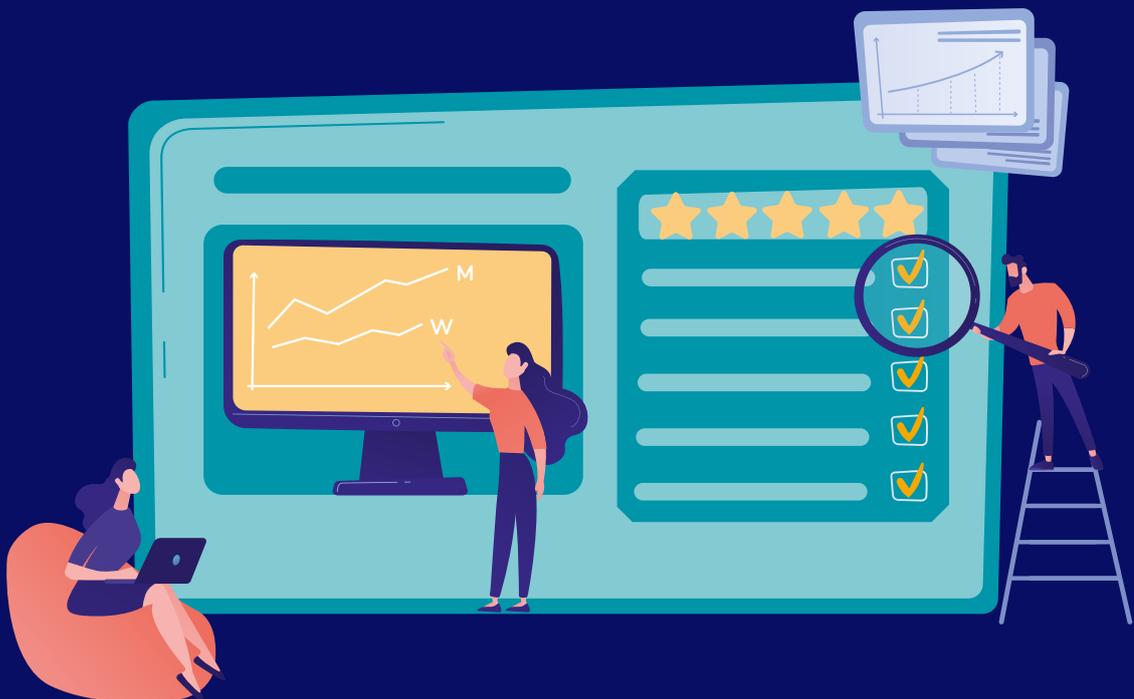
DEVELOP AN ORGANISATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO:

- Make women prominent in your content
- Include women's voices and opinions
- Tackle sexist and stereotyping language and images
- Make content more appealing to women and understand a women audience
- Track your progress

5.

Tracking gender balance

Tracking progress is a critical part of achieving gender balance, but it is not the ultimate target. Rather, the data you collect serves as a tool to motivate employees, hold everybody accountable and ultimately ensure any success you make is maintained.

There are a range of hi-fi and lo-fi approaches to measure gender balance from off-the-shelf online tools, to bespoke in-house tools to spreadsheets and basic manual counts. There are a number of options to choose from to fit your organisation's resources.

Automated tools

Automated tools allow news organisations to easily measure the gender balance in their content without significantly increasing staff workload.

WIN GENDER TRACKER[13]

Women in News has created an internal tool to track gender balance in content against several of the indicators showcased in Chapter 5. WIN uses the Gender Tracker to analyse news content in WIN focus countries and to track trends and progress over time. It is currently being used as an internal tool with plans to make it available to the media industry in the future.

GENDER EQUALITY TRACKER[14]

The Gender Equality Tracker monitors the representation of men and women in content across several news organisations in a specific country. The software reads newly published articles and counts how many times it finds men's or women's names or pronouns.

INFORMED OPINIONS[15]

Similar to the Gender Equality Tracker, Informed Opinions' Gender Gap Tracker publicly ranks Canadian news outlets based on the ratio of women to men sources quoted in online coverage. It asks readers to contact the respective outlets to encourage them to pay more attention to gender balance.

GENDERMEME[16]

GenderMeme is an open-source tool which can conduct large scale analyses of gender balance in content using natural language processing. It can also be used by organisations that want to build their own tools.

HER HEADLINE

Her Headline is a Chrome extension to highlight sexist language in sports media. The extension picks up gender biased words and phrases and explains why they are problematic. Her Headline is a Unesco initiative developed with the support of Cambridge University Press.

Manual approach

Measuring gender balance doesn't have to be complex. Albeit more time-consuming and better suited for small-scale analyses, keeping track of sources using an excel spreadsheet is a simple and readily available alternative to automated or bespoke tools.

BBC 50:50

Teams participating in the BBC's 50:50 project[1] keep track of the number of men and women contributors featured in their output and share the data with each other on a monthly basis. Due to the diversity of the programmes involved, the metrics and measuring system can be adapted to keep things fair.

WIN GENDER BALANCE METRICS

You can also use WIN's metrics and suggestions outlined in this guide. You can pick and choose from the list of metrics or adapt them based on your own needs. We've also developed a simple, but handy excel tool to help you record your data and show progress over time.

13   http://wanifra.moselaymdserver.com/
14   http://www.prognosis.se/GE/USA/
15   https://gendergaptracker.informedopinions.org/
16   https://www.gendermeme.org/

17   https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/reports/policies/5050#project

What to track

There are a number of different metrics that can be used to measure gender balance. The below are options which you can pick and choose from and adapt. It is important to track text as well as images:

Prominence of women

MENTIONS OF WOMEN

A simple way to track how prominent women are is to compare the number of women mentioned in an article vs. the number of men mentioned. A 'mention' includes any reference to a man or a woman. This could be a name, a pronoun (she, he, her, his, him, etc.), a title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Sir, Lady, Dame, etc.), a gendered noun (girlfriend, boyfriend, daughter, son, wife, husband, etc.). You could adapt this metric to count names only, or specific pronouns such as she vs. he.

Metric	% mentions of women vs. men
Formula	# mentions of women DIVIDED BY total # mentions of women plus men
Target	50%

WOMEN AS MAIN CHARACTERS

Comparing the number of women who appear as main characters in a story vs. the number of men is another simple measure of the prominence of women in your coverage. A 'main character' can be the subject or one of the subjects of the story. Or it can be someone who is quoted, sourced or mentioned repeatedly throughout. A story can have more than one main character.

Metric	% main characters that are women
Formula	# women main characters DIVIDED BY total # main characters (i.e. women PLUS men)
Target	50%

WOMEN AS MAIN SUBJECTS IN IMAGES

You can assess the prominence of women in images by looking at the proportion of 'people images' with women as the only or main subject. A 'main subject' can be the only subject or one of prominent subjects in an image. This does not include women in the background. An image can have more than one subject.

Metric	% people images where women are a main subject
Formula	# images with women as main or only subjects DIVIDED BY # images of people
Target	50%

Inclusion of women's voices and opinions

UNIQUE WOMEN SOURCES

Tracking the proportion of women sources gives a clear idea of the level of inclusion of women's voices and opinions. A 'source' can be someone giving an account of a personal experience or opinion, a witness, a spokesperson or an expert. A 'source' includes someone who is quoted directly or indirectly and is measured by counting the number of direct and indirect quotes. It is also possible to count direct quotes only, for ease. A source should only be counted once, regardless of how many times they are quoted. To get an accurate measure, sources where the gender is unknown or a plural is used should be excluded.

Metric	% unique women quotes
Formula	# unique women sources DIVIDED BY total # unique sources
Target	50%

EXPERT WOMEN SOURCES

Focusing on expert sources rather than sources overall highlights the inequality in the types of source being used. An 'expert source' is someone with expert knowledge or power to influence, quoted directly or indirectly. This could be a judge, an academic, a CEO or business person with sector knowledge, a politician, a police chief etc. The approach to measurement is the same for 'sources' above, with an expert source only being counted once, regardless of how many times they are quoted.

Metric	% unique women expert quotes vs. unique men expert quotes
Formula	# unique women expert sources DIVIDED BY total # expert sources
Target	50%

WOMEN AUTHORS

Author voice is an important indicator too. The proportion of women bylines is a simple and powerful metric. It is best if this is analysed by the category of news content as well as the overall publication, as there tends to be a women byline 'deficit' in 'heavy' content categories such as politics, business and sport. Bylines where the author is not known should be excluded from the overall count.

Metric	% women bylines
Formula	# women bylines DIVIDED BY total # bylines (DISAGGREGATED by category)
Target	50%

Gender stereotyping language

SEXIST OR GENDER STEREOTYPING LANGUAGE

Assessing whether content contains gender stereotyping and sexist language requires a nuanced understanding of what this means (see section X). This is a difficult category to measure because it can require subjective decisions. A basic method is to count any article with one or more instances of gender stereotyping or sexism. There is a difference between gender stereotyping language that is mild and unintentional vs. overt and offensive sexist language and so you may want to track these separately or to score articles based on the number of instances of language found.

Metric	% articles containing sexist or gender stereotyping language
Formula	# articles with 1 or more instances of gender stereotyping or sexist language DIVIDED BY total # articles
Target	0%

SEXIST OR GENDER STEREOTYPING IMAGES OF WOMEN

Images can also be used to measure the degree of gender stereotyping. This involves calculating the proportion of images of women that are sexist or gender stereotyping. It is possible to adjust this metric to differentiate between mild, medium or strong gender stereotyping/sexist images.

Metric	% sexist or gender stereotyping images of women
Formula	# images of women that are gender stereotyping or sexist DIVIDED BY total # images of women with women as main or only subjects
Target	0%

1

2

3

Considerations when tracking gender balance

|	
Leadership and accountability	Who drives the process and who is accountable for success or failure is extremely important. Ultimately it is best if the ambition is set by people in leadership roles, but value has to be acknowledged throughout the organisation. Getting buy-in at all levels is key.
Resources	Most organisations are stretched financially and do not have budgets for these sorts of exercises. Choose the metrics and approach that work for your organisation from a time and resource perspective.
Who does it?	This matters. Is it done by one person, many people or everyone?
Manual or automated?	You will need to choose whether to use a manual counting approach or automated tools. Your choice may also depend on whether you are analysing print or online content.
Scope	Which metrics? What's your sample size? Print or online (online means you can use automated tracking tools more easily). Do you just look at your home page? Do you look at all categories of news? Being able to break down by category is helpful. Also, how accurate do you want your data to be? The smaller the sample, the less representative it may be of gender balance in your content as a whole.
Frequency	How frequently you collect data depends on all of the above factors: who does it, the time and resources they have available and the scope of the project.
Recording data	How do you record your data? Who is in charge of keeping it? Is it a centralised and closed database or a collaborative database?
Communicating and sharing data	When you are starting out, it is probably wise to keep your data internal. This doesn't just mean within senior management, however. It is important to be transparent within your organisation so that the people who are making and editing content are aware of the issue and what the progress is. Being transparent means that organisations are forced to turn their commitment to fixing a problem into actually doing something about it.
	Once you start seeing change, publishing and sharing your numbers widely can have a doubly positive effect. It can encourage other institutions to follow suit and it can positively reinforce the successes of your staff and reporters.
Implementation and onboarding	It is wise to have one person or one team overseeing the 'project'. There are different ways to get departments on board. This could either be through blanket policies driven from the top – for example through a new gender balance editorial policy – or you could choose an **incremental or voluntary approach** where departments come on board when they are ready. You could start with a willing pioneering department or desk and get buy-in that way. This was the case for the BBC's 50:50 project. Many programmes signed up voluntarily after seeing how the programme that kickstarted the initiative, Outside Source, successfully improved gender balance in its output.

6.

Gender balance champions
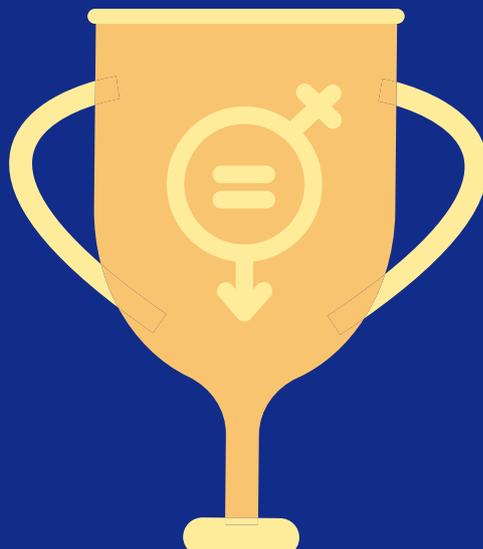
Champions acknowledging the link between gender balance and business impact

AMEDIA

Norway

Even in Norway, widely perceived as progressive and egalitarian, gender imbalance in content is a reality – that's what media company Amedia found after investigating its own output. The publisher also discovered evidence to support their belief that better gender representation makes business sense. After analysing stories from 19 newspapers published across a 21-month period, they found that publications which featured more stories containing women sources had higher readership among women. This interesting correlation was identified as part of a wide-ranging investigation into gender balance across 660,000 stories from 64 newspapers published over the same 21-month window – a massive endeavour, made possible through data science and automatic classification. Using natural language processing techniques, Amedia was able to automate the process of identifying and counting the number of women and men mentioned in its content. They first identified so-called entities referenced in stories, such as people, businesses or organisations, in order to be able to differentiate between, say, a business with 'Nina' in its name, and an actual person named 'Nina'.

The second step involved matching recognised names with Statistics Norway's public database of men's and women's names. With this data in place in their centralised data repository, they were able to run analyses towards all aspects of data.

They found that across the 660,000 stories, on average, only 34% of names mentioned belonged to women. But further analysis of the individual newspapers revealed significant variation. They found that the content of smaller publications tended to be more gender balanced than larger, regional ones.

For instance, the top performer had a 42% share of women's names. The differences in gender balance became even more apparent when they mapped gender across different story topics. In 'Education', which encompassed some 30,000 stories, 47% of all names belonged to women, compared to only 21% for the 37,000 stories under the topic "Disasters, emergencies and accidents'. The category dubbed 'Society', which covers topics such as communities, families, and welfare, was the only one in which women's names were in the clear majority.

These differences in gender representation may well be a result of authority figures skewing towards being women or men in different sectors. However, they could also stem from journalists' own gender biases influencing who they choose to interview.

Future plans include offering all of Amedia's journalists and editors running data on gender imbalance. Some editorial teams already use a specially developed dashboard, which informs them about the gender gap in readership in real-time.

Champions tracking gender balance

BBC 50:50

UK, Global

The BBC releases its *50:50* challenge impact results annually[1]. In late 2016, BBC presenter Ros Atkins started to experiment with improving the gender balance of the sources featured on his TV programme, Outside Source. His team started to collect data on who appeared in each broadcast, identified subject areas and stories where women were underrepresented and expanded their network of highly qualified women sources. As a result, women sources featured on the programme went from 29% to 51% in the space of four months. And while the BBC's broadcast rankings went down 2% in two years, Outside Source's rankings went up 25%. Since then, more than 500 BBC programmes have joined the project, dubbed 50:50, and more than 20 external media partners have signed up to replicate the idea.[2]

The methodology behind the 50:50 project is relatively simple. Production teams independently collect data on the gender balance of their broadcasts, using a measuring system adapted to the nature of their programme. Data is shared each month among all those who participate. Given that the programmes which take part range from news to music to politics, the measuring system can be adapted to suit the nature of each broadcast. For instance, in a television show where the presenter is controlled by the network, he or she would be excluded from the final count, whereas a production team that can determine who presents the programme may include presenters in their figures. Atkins' reasoning for allowing these adaptations is that teams are more likely to trust and act upon the data they collect if they have a say in establishing the methodology.

Naturally, the data collection has to be credible enough for teams to believe in the numbers, but the data itself is not the end goal of the project. Rather, it serves as an engine to help drive change and motivate participants to increase the number of women in content.

FINANCIAL TIMES

UK, Global

When the Financial Times (FT) defined the size of its women audience for the first time in 2016, it found that it was relatively small and disengaged. Viewed as both a concern and a business opportunity, this realisation brought about several projects aimed at changing women subscribers' perception of the brand, increasing women engagement and driving internal cultural change. One of these projects is the JanetBot, a machine learning tool that uses facial analysis software to identify the gender of people in images used by the FT. It shares gender classifications with editors via coloured on-screen flags and gender balance data via a Slack channel.

Within the organisation, the bot's goal is to raise awareness of gender imbalance in home page pictures and encourage journalists to increase the number of images featuring women. It also serves as a tool to boost engagement among their women audience – FT analysis shows that women are more likely than men to click on stories illustrated with pictures of women. The FT has learned several lessons from launching the JanetBot. For starters, those who will be using the product need to be involved in the design process from the start. Once it has been developed, ironing out features that users find unhelpful can be hard and that hasn't been possible with the JanetBot due to limited resources.

As a result, the bot's purpose has now shifted towards raising awareness of gender balance among newsroom staff rather than data collection, reminding journalists to consider the gender balance of pictures early in the life of a story. The FT has also been experimenting with bots to track the number of women and men contributors featured in stories to help journalists achieve a more balanced split.

The bot She Said He Said, launched in 2018, keeps track of the gender balance in sources by counting men's and women's pronouns and names, sharing data automatically with FT teams. However, encouraging them to look at this data and take action has proved challenging. This has led the FT to explore a manual approach to tracking and improving gender balance instead, having signed up to the BBC's 50:50 project this year. Although the experiment is still in its early stages, the 50:50 methodology seems to raise awareness of imbalances and engage colleagues more effectively than the automated approaches.

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1   See 50:50 Impact Report 2020: https://www.bbc.com/5050/impact2020

2   https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2019/5050-project-results

Champions increasing the visibility of women

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST
Global

With a series of company-wide initiatives, the South China Morning Post (SCMP) is making a concerted effort to boost women's readership and increase the visibility of women across all of its products. The development and implementation of the initiatives were put in motion following the SCMP's 2018 Hackathon, which highlighted the gap between men and women readership, the disparity between women and men sources in stories and the difficulties in finding expert women sources in various fields. Building on the findings from the project, the SCMP launched a campaign asking readers, partners, and external contacts to nominate women experts via an online form promoted via direct outreach, social media and newsletters.

To date, the SCMP has received nominations for women with expertise as diverse as nanotechnology, economic empowerment, retail, cloud accounting, gender equality and healthcare. The nominated experts are verified by an internal team and made available to the entire newsroom in a searchable database. With regards to tracking gender balance, the SCMP has taken advice from the BBC's 50:50 project and uses some of the same metrics and guidelines.

Collaborating with other news organisations provided the SCMP with invaluable advice and helped them avoid some of the problems others faced. "I was inspired by the response we got when we reached out to other organisations who are so willing to share their experiences," says Laura Warne, the SCMP's digital editor. "Everyone can do better in this area. It isn't about competition. It's about improving the media landscape around the world."

BLOOMBERG
Global

Bloomberg is pursuing the same goal and implemented a company-wide mandate in 2018 to increase the representation of women sources in both online and on-air content. The 2,700 journalists and analysts working for the editorial division in 120 countries were asked to get to know the women experts in their beats to help establish a database the entire organisation can draw on. It now features more than 2,300 names, up from 500 at the start of 2018. At the same time, Bloomberg is trying to increase the number of women who are media trained and approved to speak to the media by their employers via its New Voices initiative. As part of this, Bloomberg offers and funds media and communications training for senior women and other diverse executives from leading financial firms.

In 2019, the company is sponsoring training for 12 women executives in each of the programme's locations: New York, San Francisco, Toronto, London, Dubai, Mumbai, Hong Kong and Sydney.

RINGIER GROUP
Switzerland

The Ringier Group launched its EqualVoice initiative in November 2019 setting an important precedent within the Group. At its core is the EqualVoice Factor – a measurement tool which provides data on the proportion of women and men in articles across Ringier's media titles.

The initiative, however, is more than simply measurement and tracking. The initiative includes plans to launch a series of events, a special magazine and online channels (across all titles) on equality. A group-wide list of female experts is also currently being developed and a nationwide call for a photo challenge is being launched to depict the reality of women and men in the world of work and to equip image databases with these images.

The EqualVoice initiative is chaired by publisher Michael Ringier and CEO Marc Walder, and supported by members of the Ringier Group Executive Board and a dedicated Advisory Board.

Champions tapping into women audiences with engaging content

FINANCIAL TIMES

UK, Global

In addition to tracking gender balance and raising awareness internally, the FT has also launched several content-related initiatives to boost engagement among women subscribers. With its Long Story Short newsletter, the FT targets women subscribers with stories that interest them in a format that they have said they enjoy. Tailored to be a catch-up newsletter for busy women, it is sent out every Friday and combines the biggest stories and best reads in one email. For each edition, a different woman journalist from the FT handpicks the story, sharing her personality, expertise, and interests while offering a 'behind the scenes' look at FT stories and the reasons they have caught her eye. The choice of stories is also informed by data on what women have been reading during the past week and includes both news and features on a range of topics. The reason for broadening coverage areas features is that the FT heard from women readers that they perceive the brand to be 'just about finance'. The tone of the newsletter is deliberately distinct from that of the core FT brand, more informal and conversational.

It also differs visually from the core product, featuring a different logo and colour palette as well as a more diverse range of people in the images used. It is not, however, explicitly branded as a women's product. So far it has proved successful among the FT's women audience, while also engaging men subscribers. Data from the third quarter of 2019 showed that it has a bigger audience among women than the FT average, and has higher open and clickthrough rates, up 3.5 percentage points year on year and 1.8 percentage points, respectively.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Global

Another initiative that grew out of the SCMP's Hackathon focuses on generating targeted content for women, finding innovative ways to distribute it and building a community around it through a diverse set of platforms. Last month, the SCMP launched Lunar. It showcases content from across the newsroom as a curated package "with news, interviews and in-depth features about women, by women and for women". In line with the cross-departmental and collaborative approach that characterises the SCMP's gender balance initiatives, the team in charge of Lunar also encourage newsroom staff to think about developing stories that suit the platform, and shaping them in a way that might increase engagement among women.

The SCMP conducted audience research in order to better understand what type of content appeals to women readers. Some of the topic areas that stood out were diplomacy, regional news and society, which covers a broad range of social affairs, including education, issues of equality and cultural trends. "Women are interested in a really diverse range of content," Warne says. "We don't want to limit this or be narrow in our approach. We're looking at content that not only features women but that interests and affects them. We want to be very broad in our definition of this."

LUSAKA SUN
Zambia

Creating engaging content for women is also a priority at the Lusaka Sun in Zambia, a standalone publication targeted at the country's lower income class, and launched by the Daily Nation in January this year. Rather than focusing on political coverage, which is common among other Zambian news outlets, the Daily Nation's executive editor Mary Mbewe says The Sun set out to highlight topics such as social issues, injustice and trade. Some 70% of the paper's staff are women and one of the publication's main audience category are traders, the majority of whom are women. Having such a high number of women employees was a deliberate decision. "I feel that women are more empathetic to what is happening in the areas that we are targeting," Mbewe says. "It's easier for them to talk to fellow women in the compounds, for instance, or at the market, and for those people to open up, and tell their story and their struggle, and how they are managing to make it."

As part of one of The Sun's policies aimed at increasing gender balance, they publish at least one positive and inspiring story per week which features a woman as the main subject. The initiative has generated good readership, according to Mbewe, and led to more women coming forward to share their stories. To further encourage women's participation and visibility, The Sun also launched a platform where they can share their stories, images or leave their information to be contacted in the future. In addition to the website and an epaper, which is currently under development, The Sun is working on a platform for mobile which will make it easier for its audience to access the paper's content.

ARA
Spain

At ARA, a Catalan daily newspaper, three journalists launched ARA Feminismes, an initiative aimed at creating and distributing content with a focus on gender perspective. Wanting to find a broader audience for the gender balanced stories they were already producing, the three journalists behind the idea, Lara Bonilla, Marta Rodríguez and Thais Gutierrez, started work in the months leading up to 2019 International Women's Day on March 8 and timed the launch to coincide with the event.

Now, ARA Feminismes actively distributes its content on ARA's website, a weekly newsletter and via a Twitter and Facebook page with some 3,500 and 7,500 followers respectively. The grassroots initiative has garnered support from management and the trio behind it, who are leading the project in an unofficial capacity in addition to their other work, offer advice to colleagues on how to write gender balanced content. They encourage the newsroom to submit stories that would fit the ARA Feminismes brand. As part of the project, the team also launched several calls to action on the website in a bid to solicit input for stories from women. One of these led to a successful interactive article about problems and issues new mothers are experiencing, giving them an opportunity to voice their opinion about a rarely discussed topic in mainstream media.

Having found that women experts are more hesitant to speak to the media, regardless of their competency compared to their counterparts who are men, they next want to put together a database with women sources which the entire newsroom can draw on. Another company-wide initiative includes an analysis of gender balance in the newsroom and content, conducted by an external company.

By Kesewa Hennessy, Digital Editor for Audience Engagement, Financial Times

Why the Financial Times began women engagement projects
The Financial Times' (FT's) gender projects started with data. This has proved crucial in helping us understand our women audience and work towards meeting their needs.

In 2016, for the first time, we were able to define the size of our women audience using the inferred gender model. The data confirmed that this audience was relatively small and disengaged. We saw this as both a concern and a business opportunity. Follow-up research helped us understand why this audience was not engaging with the FT (for example, women readers told us they found the FT a masculine product) and how we could try to change this. The inferred gender model also allowed us to see which stories women were reading, further increasing our understanding of this audience.

We refocused the remit of the role of Digital Editor for Audience Engagement to include setting up and running a series of gender projects which have two broad aims:

1. **Externally:** To change women subscribers' perceptions of the FT, increase their engagement in the long run and build loyalty in the audience.
2. **Internally:**
   a. To better understand what our women audience consumes.
   b. To encourage culture change among colleagues to better meet the demands of that audience.

These projects are aimed at engaging *existing* women subscribers rather than reaching a bigger women audience for the FT. But we also hope that a possible corollary of some of these projects will be to change the perceptions of women who don't yet read the FT.

OUR OVERALL PROGRESS

One of our key metrics for determining women's engagement with a story, topic or section is the **proportion of women readers** and how this compares with the overall benchmark. We are always aiming to increase that proportion and raise the overall benchmark.

■ **Active women subscribers**
1.2 percentage point increase between Q1 2017 and Q3 2019.

■ **Average percentage of women readers for an FT story**
3 percentage point increase between 2017 and 2019 year on year.

THE FT'S WOMEN ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS

PROJECT XX

The project: We decided to promote stories that women want to read in prominent slots; that is, stories that we think are likely to exceed the average percentage of women readers for an FT story ('over-index') based on past engagement with that topic.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The home page editors and Digital Editor for Audience Engagement together select one piece a day likely to do well with women. The story is promoted at the top of the home page, in a popular daily news digest email with a high proportion of women readers, and on social media. We then track how our Project XX choices perform with women.

WHAT'S THE GOAL?

1. **Externally:** To change women perceptions of the FT by trying to ensure women are more likely to spot the kinds of stories they want to read.
2. **Internally**:
   a. To learn more about women subscribers by tracking the performance of Project XX stories and to share the information with relevant teams.
   b. To encourage culture change among relevant teams. For example, home page editors to promote a wider range of stories and to consider 'success' in terms of metrics other than page views; commissioning editors to commission a wider range of stories.

HOW DO PROJECT XX STORIES DO WITH WOMEN?

The average proportion of women readers for a Project XX story is several percentage points higher than for an average FT story. The goal is to continue to increase that difference.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

Primarily, bringing about culture change on the home page, one of the most valuable parts of the FT. Here are a few examples:

‣ Encouraging home page editors to accept a new practice, especially one with the potential to be seen as interfering with news judgment and independence.
‣ Encouraging a focus on metrics other than total page views (e.g. % of women page views).
‣ Promoting stories not seen as 'core' FT (often described as 'niche', 'soft', 'fluffy').
‣ Broadening ideas about who 'the FT reader' is and what they want to see on the home page, using both data and a wider range of journalistic perspectives.

- Challenging preconceptions about what women FT subscribers read –and equally about what men subscribers read (however high the percentage of women readers, FT stories above our benchmark number of total page views are read by more men than women).
- Gaining an understanding of the practices and decision-making processes of the team that runs the home page. These are not always clear to those outside the team.
- Establishing workflows, as well as rapport and trust between the home page and AE teams.
- Embedding a controversial practice with status somewhere between compulsory and voluntary, ultimately relying on colleagues' goodwill.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT FROM PROJECT XX:

- **Cultural change can be slow but it happens.** The kind of stories home page editors consider home page material has shifted as they've seen Project XX stories perform extremely well in terms of page views.
- **Project XX has helped expand the range of stories that perform well for the FT.** In particular, it has helped show home page editors that work-related topics previously seen as 'niche' will often gather high total page views as well as over-indexing with women. Greater interest in promoting new kinds of over-indexing stories in turn encourages commissioning editors to produce more. These topics include fertility, menstruation, menopause, parenting, sexual harassment, racial discrimination and LGBTQ+ issues.
- **Incentives help win editorial support.** Examples include the opportunity for additional promotion, as well as information on which stories could attract more readers for them and insights into what home page editors want.
- **Share personalised data with colleagues.** To engage colleagues (and to help the new project take root in the early days), we let people know how their stories fared with women readers. Good news is always welcome.
- **Face-to-face communication is important with new/ controversial projects.** Understanding colleagues' team culture, and hearing their ideas (and concerns), is an essential part of the project design process.
- **Start with a small trial.** You can extend it, adjust it or drop it if it doesn't work. You'll always learn something.
- **Leadership matters.** Signalling and support from senior editorial colleagues, explaining what's happening and why it matters, is important. Some acknowledgment of colleagues' extra efforts helps too.
- **Data shows us that our preconceptions about women (and men) are often wrong.** While stories on 'women's' topics (fashion, style, beauty) over-index with women, the same stories are always read by a higher percentage of men. This is also true of articles on topics from managing your career to femtech. This reflects the makeup of our subscriber base, which is about 75% men. Some of the FT's more specialist financial content over-indexes with women (financial regulation, fund management).

The project: We wanted to target women subscribers with FT content that we know women read in a format they told us they liked.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

We send out a newsletter every Friday, combining the biggest stories and best reads in one smart email. It's handpicked by a different women FT journalist each week.

WHAT'S THE GOAL?

To meet the needs of women who told us they tended to be time-poor, wishing they could engage more with the news. We approached this in several ways:

1. **Format:** Tailored to be a catch-up newsletter for busy women. It offers them an opportunity to read the stories we think they shouldn't miss, over the weekend.
2. **Content:** The curators' choice of stories is informed by data on what women have been reading during the past week. Because women readers told us they saw the FT as 'just about finance', we include both news and features on a range of topics – the best reads as well as the biggest stories. They are all FT stories we think are relevant to women, which might otherwise have been missed.
3. **Curators:** To make the newsletter feel more relevant to an audience of women, a different women journalist curates every week. This highlights our women journalists and offers women perspectives on the news.
4. **Tone:** Deliberately distinct from that of the core FT it is informed but also informal, engaging and conversational; designed to be an enjoyable read. Each curator brings her personality, expertise and interests to the week's edition, offering a 'behind the curtain' look at FT stories and the reasons they have caught her eye.
5. **Visually:** To set it apart from core FT, we chose a specially commissioned, hand-drawn logo and a different colour palette. The images feature a more diverse range of people.

HOW IS LONG STORY SHORT DOING? *

It has a highly engaged audience that is more women than the FT average.

- 8.2 percentage points more women readers than the average FT newsletter.
- Average open rate is 3.5 percentage points higher.
- Average clickthrough rate is 1.8 percentage points higher.
- Month-on-month growth in subscriber base since launch in early 2018.

Data from Q3 2019

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

- Designing a newsletter format for an audience with which we were relatively unfamiliar.
- Finding a new design and tone of writing appropriate for the audience, while retaining an FT feel.
- Working with a wide range of authors and still maintaining a consistent feel.
- We wanted to ensure this newsletter had a diverse line-up of authors.
- Establishing a new editing platform to enable a more flexible design.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT FROM LONG STORY SHORT

- **Explicit 'women's' branding is not essential.** This product engages women, even though it's not branded anywhere as a women's product. We don't know what effect 'women's' branding would have, positive or negative.
- **Men read 'women's products' too.** This newsletter is designed to engage women but also engages men subscribers.
- **Direct feedback is limited.** The audience for this newsletter doesn't interact directly with the authors so our feedback at present is largely restricted to engagement metrics. We're not sure why, though it could be because it's hard for readers to build a sense of a personal relationship with such a large number of rotating authors.

JANETBOT

The project: We wanted to find a way to get a better gender balance of pictures on the FT home page.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

JanetBot is a machine learning tool that uses facial analysis software to identify the gender of people in photographs in FT stories. The bot shares gender classifications with editors via coloured on-screen flags. It also shares gender balance data through a Slack channel.

WHAT'S THE GOAL?

1. **Externally:** To increase women engagement. Our analysis shows women are more likely than men to click on stories illustrated with pictures of women.
2. **Internally:** To raise awareness of gender imbalance in home page pictures and to prompt FT journalists to take action to increase the number of pictures featuring women.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

- The underlying facial recognition software/database appears to have particular trouble classifying non-white faces, reflecting biases reportedly common in AI.
- The bot requires frequent correction' of classification from users, which is beyond newsroom resources.
- Convincing colleagues to look at the automated data and integrating this task into their workflow.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- **To design a product that secures newsroom engagement, editorial users need to be involved at the inception.** It can be hard to iron out features that users find unhelpful once a product has been developed and launched. In this case, limited resources mean it has not been possible to do so.
- **JanetBot has therefore proved more useful in raising awareness of the gender imbalance (via the on-screen flags) than as a data-collection tool.** We hope to use JanetBot's awareness-raising capabilities in future projects, switching the focus from published output to reminding journalists to consider the gender balance of pictures early in the life of a story.
- **It's hard to get newsroom users to change their behaviour using automated processes.** We are now aiming to move towards a more manual approach.

SHE SAID HE SAID AND 50:50 PROJECT

The project: We wanted to help FT teams include a better balance of men and women contributors in their output.

What's the goal? To build on FT analysis showing that articles produced by teams that quote a high proportion of women are well read by women. In addition, teams that quote a high proportion of women also feature more women in their pictures.

How does it work? We began with automated sharing of data with colleagues, intended to raise awareness of the gender imbalance. This year we've shifted our focus to a more manual approach:

- **She Said He Said (launched 2018):** A bot that tells us the gender balance of sources quoted in published FT articles. It uses pronouns ('she said… he said…') and first names to determine whether a source is a man or a woman.
- **50:50 Project (launched 2019):** A simple, voluntary system of self-monitoring, where teams track the gender balance of their contributors in published stories. Launched in partnership with the BBC as a follow-up to She Said He Said.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

- **She Said He Said:**
  Getting colleagues to look at automated data in the first instance, and to act based on this data.
- **50:50 Project:**
  - Identifying a colleague in a journalistic role to take the lead, which is helpful in encouraging other journalists to take part.
  - Finding ways to keep momentum going among participants, especially when their percentage of women contributors starts from a low base, improves only slowly, remains static or gets worse.
  - Personal communication with those taking part is proving vital, to identify and correct any misapprehensions about the goals of the project and to discuss ideas. Six commissioning desks have so far opted into the project. However, these desks deal with many of the FT's hundreds of reporters and editors. Finding an effective way to communicate with such large numbers is a challenge.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- **The manual approach is more engaging.** At this early stage in the 50:50 Project, it seems to raise awareness of imbalances and engage colleagues more effectively than automation. It also appears to be a better way to get discussion going, in turn raising awareness across the newsroom.
- **Work with people who want to be involved.** 50:50 seems to 'give permission', a focus and structure to those already keen to bring about change.
- **Personal contact with colleagues matters.** The voluntary and team-led approach allows colleagues to take ownership, which appears to increase commitment. Where the project has at first been interpreted as a top-down edict, enthusiasm has sometimes been limited. By contrast, when teams have been invited to discuss their difficulties and share ideas appropriate to their own work, enthusiasm and engagement has increased.

amedia

WHO ARE AMEDIA?

Owner of more than 70 titles, Amedia is Norway's largest publisher of local newspapers and reaches a daily readership of some 1.8 million people.

WHY DID AMEDIA BEGIN DATA ANALYSES ON WOMEN ENGAGEMENT?

In 2016, Amedia began a concerted effort to analyse the data coming from their newsrooms to better understand their audience and the content that audience was paying attention to. In the first instance, they spent around two months working with chosen newsrooms, looking at different topics the publication covered in order to enhance the experience for their readers and better understand how to balance free articles and those behind the paywall. The analysis was expanded to other areas, including gender data. One of the main learnings Amedia has taken away from these projects is the importance of relevance when it comes to creating content for its readers and subscribers. A number of factors influence what stories readers are interested in, such as their age or geographical location, meaning Amedia newsrooms need to produce a variety of content that is relevant to these different audience segments in order to keep them engaged. In the case of gender, Amedia looked at articles from 19 newspapers published across a 21-month period and discovered that publications which featured more stories containing women sources had more women readers. This correlation was identified as part of a wide-ranging investigation into gender balance across 660,000 stories from 64 newspapers published over the same 21-month window. It revealed that, on average, only 34% of names mentioned in a story belonged to women.

WHAT WAS THE GOAL?

The ultimate goal is to better serve all segments of the population who choose to read Amedia's newspapers. Improved gender representation also has the potential to attract more subscribers and increase revenue.

1. **Externally:** To use the data to attract women readers, deliver more clicks in the short term and encourage more women to read and subscribe to Amedia's titles in the long term.

2. **Internally:**
   ‣ To encourage newsrooms to use the data to understand which stories are more relevant to women, and act to increase engagement among women subscribers
   ‣ To encourage culture change in Amedia newsrooms, making it possible to implement the desired change and have a real impact

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Amedia used natural language processing techniques to automate the process of identifying and counting the number of women and men mentioned in its content. They first identified so-called entities referenced in stories, such as people, businesses, or organisations, in order to differentiate between, say, a business with 'Nina' in its name and an actual person named 'Nina'. The second step involved matching recognised names with Statistics Norway's public database of men and women names. With this data in place, they were able to run analyses on content published by Amedia newspapers.

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

While Amedia's analysis of 660,000 stories revealed that, on average, only 34% of names mentioned belonged to women, a closer look at the data revealed significant variation in a seemingly consistent picture. For one, gender balance differed across the 64 newspapers that were part of the analysis. The top performer had a 42% share of women's names in its stories, while the newspaper at the other end of the list had a 28% share. In general, the content of smaller publications tended to be more gender balanced than that of larger, regional ones. Given that the latter more often work on regional and sometimes national topics, this could indicate that the authority figures they interview are more often men, which could be as much of a contributing factor as the choices Amedia's journalists make. The differences in gender balance became even more apparent when Amedia mapped gender across different story topics.

In 'Education', which encompassed some 30,000 stories, 47% of all names belonged to women, compared to only 21% for the 37,000 stories under the topic 'Disasters, emergencies and accidents'. The category dubbed 'Society', which covers topics such as communities, families, and welfare, was the only one in which women's names were in the clear majority. Again, these differences in gender representation may well be a result of authority figures skewing towards being women or men in different sectors. However, they could also stem from journalists' own gender biases influencing who they choose to interview.

Lastly, Amedia discovered evidence to support their belief that better gender representation makes business sense. After analysing stories from 19 newspapers published across the same 21-month window, they found that publications which featured more stories containing women sources had higher readership among women.

HOW DO WOMEN RESPOND TO THESE STORIES?

Amedia used their data to identify stories and subject areas which are more relevant for women readers. This helped them understand what they need to do in order to produce content that is more relevant to women and increase the number of women subscribers.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FACING AMEDIA?

The biggest challenge is to ensure that the data changes everyday behaviour and is used by editors and journalists. The response amongst staff differs dramatically. Some embrace the new information while others ignore it. Most people in the newsroom do understand the value of the data and are using it to think about how they can better reach their audiences, but others remain focused on short-term deadlines and their specific areas of interest – they choose not to prioritise this initiative. The key to success is to drive internal culture change and convince everybody within the organisation that this is a priority. That will take time, but within a year or two Amedia hopes that this work will lead to significantly more women sources appearing in stories and more engaged women readers.

WHAT HAS AMEDIA LEARNT?

- **It takes time** to get to a position where data is informing the choices being made by people working within an organisation.
- **Findings** are being introduced to news editors who will have a responsibility to translate the findings into action.
- **Gender balance differs across publications and topics.** Smaller titles are generally more gender balanced than larger, regional ones. Women are better represented in topics such as health, education, and society, but are featured much more rarely in categories like emergencies and sports.
- **The differences in gender representation** may well be due to authority figures skewing towards being women or men in different sectors. However, they could also stem from journalists' own gender biases influencing who they choose to interview. In short, the answer is not clear cut.
- **All newsrooms are different and have different priorities.** The project's impact will really start to be seen next year, when a significant number of newsrooms have had time to use this data to change gender representation in their stories.
- **Newsrooms are spending a lot more time on gender discussions,** and data analysis is driving an increased focus on gender balance.
- **Work to reach shared gender equality goals** is also good for business, leading to more readers and subscribers.

7.

Glossary

GENDER[1]	The socially constructed characteristics that a person is given by society, such as norms, behaviours and relationships. Most societies define gender as binary, where a person is either a man or woman. However, our gender is irrespective of whether a person is born male or female. ** As our understanding of gender as a spectrum rather than binary increases, this definition will continue to evolve.*
GENDER STEREOTYPE	Preconceived ideas of what women and men's attributes, characteristics and roles should be based on their gender.
GENDER BIAS	Actions or thoughts that are prejudiced (consciously or unconsciously) because of preconceived ideas of what women and men's attributes, characteristics and roles should be based on their gender.
SEXISM	Attitudes and actions that discriminate against people based solely on their gender.
GENDER AWARE	Ability to view how society assigns gender roles and relationships and the ability to understand the effects this has. Related terms: gender sensitive
GENDER BALANCED (LANGUAGE)	Language that is not gender specific and which considers people in general, with no reference to women and men or at least equitable representation of women and men. *Related terms: gender fair language, gender neutral language*
GENDER NORMS	The established gender binary in societies that defines the gender of a person as a man if he is born male or a woman if she is born male. Persons who do not fit the gender norms are often discriminated against and stigmatised.

GENDER IDENTITY[2]	Gender identity is each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their sex at birth.
NON-BINARY[3]	Most people – including most transgender people – are born either male or female. But some people don't neatly fit into the categories of 'man' or 'woman', or 'male' or 'female'. For example, some people have a gender that blends elements of being a man or a woman, or a gender that is different than either male or female. Some people don't identify with any gender. Some people's gender changes over time. *Related terms: trans, transgender*
TRANSGENDER[4]	Is an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that differ from stereotypical gender norms. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, trans woman (male-to-female), trans man (female-to-male), transsexual, cross-dresser, gender non-conforming, gender variant or gender queer. *Related terms: trans, non-binary*
CISGENDER[5]	Cisgender is the term used for people whose gender identity matches their sex at birth. For example, a person who identifies as a woman and was born female. This term is used as an opposite to transgender.

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1   *Definition adapted from World Health Organisation: https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender*

2   *Definition adapted from https://www.genderspectrum.org/quick-links/understanding-gender/*

3   *Definition adapted from www.transequality.org*

4   *Definition adapted from GLAAD: https://www.glaad.org/about*

5   *Definition adapted from GLAAD: https://www.glaad.org/about*

WWW.WOMENINNEWS.ORG