



REPORT

Shaping the Future of News Publishing

# WINning STRATEGIES

Creating Stronger News Media Organizations  
by Increasing Gender Diversity



# IMPRINT

## **WINNING STRATEGIES**

CREATING STRONGER NEWS MEDIA  
ORGANIZATIONS BY INCREASING GENDER  
DIVERSITY

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## Women in News

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Women in News (WIN), WAN-IFRA's Gender and Media Freedom Strategy addresses the gender imbalance in media, while mobilizing the industry to collectively create an environment that supports conditions for women in media, and their organizations, to succeed. It does so by applying a combination of capacity building actions involving training, career coaching, peer mentoring and networking, alongside peer-led advocacy that emphasizes education, sensitization and developing practical tools as a means to find industry-driven solutions to correct the gender imbalance in the media.

Women in News is operating in the Middle East and North Africa (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) through a consortium of funding and implementation partners including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Implementation partners include Fojo Media Institute and International Media Support (IMS).

[www.womeninnews.org](http://www.womeninnews.org)

## About WAN-IFRA's Media Freedom Work

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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 applies development to strengthen the capacity and networks of the media and their representative institutions. This dual approach of applying advocacy and development 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 within societies.

[www.wan-ifra.org](http://www.wan-ifra.org)



# Introduction

The production of this handbook on media success stories in gender diversity is part of WAN-IFRA's Women in News: Gender and Media Freedom Strategy, a four year-initiative made possible through funding by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

The handbook seeks to shine a spotlight on media organisations that have prioritized gender equality within their organizations, leadership teams, and within their audience, and as a result, have seen a positive return.

At best, we hope these stories inspire media to take concrete action to prioritize gender equality and inclusion in their management structures and newsrooms. At the very least, we hope they start a broader conversation around this important subject.

WAN-IFRA has been dedicated to protecting media freedom for over six decades, providing development and advocacy support to media worldwide. As a representative organ of the newspaper industry, 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.

In recent years, our organisation has increasingly turned its attentions to the intrinsic link between the principles of freedom and those of gender equality. As a result, we recognize that our global fight to protect media freedom must also include advocating for equality of voice and opportunity between women and men.

**WINning Strategies** will be the first in a series of handbooks WAN-IFRA will develop to support media to create more gender aware organizations, in our pursuit to galvanize our industry to collectively find solutions to bridge the inequalities within our news and boardrooms.

For further information about Women in News, please contact:



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# Building a WINning organisation

Around the world, organizations that have women in leadership positions and that model strong, consistent gender diversity tend to have better financial outcomes, be more innovative, and contribute to social stability in their communities.

In fact, a report released in conjunction with the January 2016 World Economic Forum, *When Women Thrive*,<sup>1</sup> notes that “the link between women’s participation in the workforce and economic growth has never been clearer.” Like earlier work published by Catalyst,<sup>2</sup> that study highlights the positive business outcomes from achieving gender balance in organizations ... and having women fairly represented at all levels.

Common business results from gender parity typically include increased financial performance, enhanced operating results, and greater return on sales.

News media organizations that achieve gender parity yield even more significant results.

- Including news about women helps build audiences and, thus, revenue and impact.
- By increasing the skills and leadership abilities of women working in media, news organizations improve the journalism product, have access to more diverse sources, and become more competitive.
- This combination puts these news organizations in tune with their communities and enables them to break news.

- And by increasing news for women, it helps build strength in local communities and becomes an important “go-to” source for women readers, viewers and listeners.

That said, there are also reasons why gender diversity can be hard to achieve in journalism organizations.

- **Societal forces** put pressure on all journalists, but particularly on women. Conflict zones pose dire threats of bodily harm, sexual violence, and reprisals against family members. Such conditions can cause managers to resist putting women into these situations, as well as trigger self-censorship on the part of women themselves to protect not only their careers but their lives. Mexico, parts of Africa, and some areas of the Middle East are particularly troubled in this regard.
- **Cultural norms** also constrain women’s participation. Societies have specific and deeply-held expectations about women’s behaviors. Those can include everything from the appropriate age for marriage, the role of women in child-rearing or parental care, whether women can travel or have interaction with men outside their families, whether men will accept working for women in leadership roles, and more. The list is long. Women in media risk repercussions when violating these norms, which may include delayed or non-existent prospects for marriage or children.



- **Family obligations** conflict with journalism's unpredictable time demands. This exists in every society and culture in varying degrees. Where family leave exists, it is disproportionately assigned to women (as maternity leave) and rarely to men as paternal leave. The message is that child-rearing is not a shared parental responsibility and that women must or should modify their career paths to accommodate family care. This results in long-term reduction of wealth and security for many women as they spend years as freelancers or contract employees without benefits. It also leads to the continual drawing of female journalists from among the economic elites who have the means to pay for all the activities women are usually expected to provide for free.
- **Compensation.** Women are paid less. Disparity in compensation for women journalists continues everywhere, not just in developing countries. For example, Jill Abramson, a distinguished journalist dismissed in 2014 from her job as editor of the New York Times, discovered a substantial salary gap between herself and top male editors at the newspaper.
- **Limited self-advocacy.** While there are

many reasons for this, women are sometimes not strong enough advocates for their own advancement. To some degree, the energy supporting newsroom gender diversity is highest among those who are journalism veterans and are at the senior level of their careers.<sup>3</sup>

- **Women only cover “women’s news.”** This perception, that women cover what is thought of as women’s news ...implies its opposite: that men cover the rest of it; that somehow women’s news is not part of the larger story. Observed one of the media leaders interviewed for this book:

“There is a strong point to be made that cultural roles are determinant of the lack of women in top positions .... These are further reinforced by the perception that only women can cover women – or only members of a certain group can credibly report on that group, whether racial or ethnic minorities; gays or members of the LGBT community; or religious minorities. We must do away with the perception that if you aren’t part of my group, if you haven’t fit my unique circumstances, my unique pain, then you can’t report on those things. Except for the fact that we are all human beings.”<sup>4</sup>

## Winning the battle for gender equality – Lessons learned

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Despite these odds, many organizations achieve gender diversity and create powerful, influential media organizations.

What do they have in common? The case studies in this handbook examine that question from many angles and with perspectives from around the world. Common points emerge from those examples.

- The commitment to diversity starts at the top of the organization and is built into all of its levels, among all employees, from the loading dock to the newsroom to the executive suite.
- It is consistently and forcefully communicated, especially by recognized leaders widely respected throughout the organization.

- It is actively managed. Results are measured and managers are held accountable. There are repercussions when goals aren't met, including financial consequences.
- There have to be enough women at the entry and middle levels of the company to select from and promote in order for there to be parity at the most senior, decision-making levels.
- Pay equity is vital.
- Women must occupy all roles, and not be limited to those defined by social or cultural norms.
- Mentoring and development programs are essential. Gender equity occurs, and will be preserved, only when women are actively cultivated, supported and promoted.
- It can go "backwards" fast. Gender gains are fragile. They need sustained, active commitment, with universal buy-in. Even in well-run organizations with good intentions, gains can erode quickly.

## Case studies from media leaders around the world

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Here are ten case studies shared by media leaders from around the world. They represent a wide range of experiences: from building diversity into major news-gathering operations with national and global reach ... to those concentrated in a region, a country, or a state.

These are stories of vision, discipline, and success. They are the stories of people and

organizations that operate with courage, persistence, and moral clarity, and with the understanding that gender diversity is directly connected to the organization's performance.

And they have all committed to bringing women's voices into journalism and journalism entities.

We are proud to share their stories.

## Ten Case Studies:

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*Mint*, India

*La Silla Vacía*, Colombia

*Die Tageszeitung*, Germany

*The Zimbabwean*, Zimbabwe, United Kingdom, and South Africa

Gannett Co., Inc., USA

South Kivu Women's Media Association (AFEM), Democratic Republic of Congo

Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), Jordan

Bloomberg News, USA

*Making Every Voice Count*, Gender Media Policy, Botswana

British Broadcasting Corporation, United Kingdom



# Mint, India

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A startup often provides opportunities to implement best practices from the outset. Business newspaper Mint launched in February 2007 in India and women have contributed substantially to its growth. Embracing a policy pledging equal employment opportunity from the outset was a key element of the company's thoughtful business plan. The company also recognized gender's capacity to extend and enrich its brand. Now, a newsroom that is 50 percent female, along with the appointment of gender editorial consultant with content responsibility, make Mint a standout in what has typically been journalism territory dominated by men.

# Mint, India

“In one way, we don’t worry about gender at all,” says Sukumar Ranganathan, editor of *Mint*. “We started off as an equal opportunity employer.”

It’s all there in black and white in *Mint*’s lengthy ethics policy, which establishes equality of employment opportunity as a corporate principle, along with detailed expectations of maintaining a respectful, safe workplace in which everyone can thrive. Ranganathan makes it clear, however, that leadership is what makes the fine points of the ethics policy work.

“I think the person running the newsroom has to have as much a personal connection as possible with the people in it,” he says. “We have about 150, 160 people here. If you have more than that, it would be difficult – you’d have to take notes to keep track of everyone. But it’s up to the newsroom leader to make it work.”

That involves confronting the demands journalism places on its practitioners and providing flexibility. Among *Mint*’s journalists are young parents who periodically have work-life struggles. “I think it’s manageable and newsrooms have to do that extra bit,” he says, making adjustments when staffers need them. He was dismayed when he learned that the company didn’t extend maternity leave to adoptive mothers. He extended it to a staffer anyway, and the policy has since been revised to include them.

(There is presently no policy for paternity leave.)

Fifty percent of *Mint*’s journalists are female, including six of Ranganathan’s 16-member leadership team. Their assignments include an executive who oversees bureaus in three cities; the editor of *Mint Lounge*, the weekend edition; the editor of *Mint Money*, the daily personal finance and investment section; and editors who oversee coverage of the media, marketing and advertising, and corporate social responsibility, NGOs, and philanthropy. The bureau chiefs in Mumbai and Bangalore are women who succeeded men in those posts.

Mentoring is largely informal (“I’m a firm believer in managing by walking around,” Ranganathan says, and *Mint*’s New Delhi office has a large, open-plan newsroom to facilitate this), but there is also a twice-yearly review process for employees during which they can discuss goals and receive guidance on how to reach them.

Ranganathan says his 50-50 female-to-male newsroom evolved without a lot of effort, “but had the ratio been 10 or 20 percent, I would have had to focus on bringing women in,” he says. “I think as long as you have the ideas and the intent, you can make a lot of difference.”

That also means bringing gender issues into *Mint*’s content. “Gender is a big issue in India,”

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“AS A BEAT, GENDER IS BURSTING,”  
BHANDARE SAYS. “IT’S THE MOST  
EXCITING BEAT TO COVER TODAY IN  
INDIA, MAYBE IN THE WORLD”

Ranganathan says. “Gender is political, social, economic, and we don’t write enough about it. We always believed we should do more of this from the time we were set up. We have a broad definition of news, and we want to write about it in an engaging way.” That approach makes *Mint* distinctive among its peers: “Our emphasis on gender [in content] sets us apart from other big newsrooms that focus on business, finance, the economy, banking,” he says.

To that end, he appointed a consulting gender editor, Namita Bhandare, after she pitched him with the idea. Bhandare, a veteran reporter, editor, and columnist for the *Hindustan Times*, was motivated after the notorious 2012 gang rape of a woman riding a bus in New Delhi,

an incident that made headlines around the world. Bhandare began writing more about gender, even making a documentary about the case and circulating an online petition calling for faster processing of sexual violence cases, stiffer sentences, and more protections for women. Gender was an issue everywhere and in everything, she realized.

Bhandare contacted Ranganathan and asked him if he was looking for a gender editor. “To his credit, he got back to me in about 10 minutes,” she says. Initially, he offered her a page for her work, but she persuaded him that gender could be an issue in every aspect of *Mint*’s coverage. He agreed, and Bhandare began pitching ideas to the *Mint* political editor to whom she reports,

### **SUKUMAR RANGANATHAN**, Editor

Sukumar Ranganathan serves as editor of *Mint*, an English-language business publication owned by HT Media Ltd, a company whose flagship *Hindustan Times* reaches more than 4.5 million readers daily. He was on the founding team of *Mint*, joining HT Media in October 2006 from The India Today Group where he had been managing editor of *Business Today*. He started his career at *The Hindu Business Line* where he became the marketing editor. He then spent a little over nine years at *Business Today*, with both strategic and operational leadership of India’s leading business magazine.

### **NAMITA BHANDARE**, Gender Editor

Namita Bhandare is a journalist with close to 25 years of reporting experience for various publications including *Sunday* magazine, *India Today* magazine, and *The Hindustan Times*. She has a Master’s degree in journalism from Stanford University. At *Mint*, she is India’s first consulting editor on gender for a daily newspaper and also writes a fortnightly column on social issues for *The Hindustan Times*.

In her role, Bhandare writes and commissions stories on gender issues. These include a range of issues from acid violence and trafficking to workplace gender gaps. In December 2012, following the brutal gang-rape of a young medical student that shocked India, Bhandare launched a campaign on the website Change.org called *Stop Rape Now*. The campaign quickly went viral and collected more than 600,000 signatures. Following this campaign, Bhandare made a documentary film with Miditech for Channel News Asia called *Silent Screams: India’s Fight Against Rape*.

and lining up reporters to take on stories. Two of their series, on human trafficking and gender and sport, have won Society of Publishers of Asia awards.

“As a beat, gender is bursting,” Bhandare says. “It’s the most exciting beat to cover today in India, maybe in the world.”

“We are very inclusive where women are concerned. We often have discussions about stepping up reporting on the less privileged groups in Indian society. I think that’s an area we need to focus on more,” Ranganathan says. “A good reason to [increase] diversity in a newsroom is because a newsroom has to report on diversity.”

## Resources

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1. Skype interview with Sukumar Ranganathan, January 27, 2016
2. Skype interview with Namita Bhandare, February 1, 2016
3. “Media and Gender in India,” Part of the IFJ Media and Gender in Asia-Pacific Research Project, March 2015 <https://samsn.ifj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/INDIA.pdf>
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7. Representative reporting from *Mint*:
  - “The missing workers of urban India,” <http://www.livemint.com/Specials/RtjiAHQRw3u5z-VpUu05PDN/The-missing-workers-of-urban-India.html>
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# La Silla Vacía, Colombia

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In a country where the voices of major media houses are tightly controlled by powerful interests, La Silla Vacía (a news website) speaks with an authentic and direct voice. It views war, drugs, crime and corruption through the lens of power and its influencers. Now reaching an educated audience of nearly a million unique users, Director Juanita Leon uses her leadership role to create a close team of diverse staffers. Together, they have crafted a news organization trusted for its insightful reporting. They have proven that having a diverse staff with diverse voices creates a competitive advantage in a news environment where, too often, news is a monologue.



# La Silla Vacía, Colombia

Juanita Leon has held many of the most enviable roles in Colombian journalism at both the weekly magazine *Semana* and the influential daily *El Tiempo*, as well as being the author of numerous important and timely works. She has won major international awards and recognition.

Yet in 2009 she felt compelled to leave those roles in order to fill an important gap in the news spectrum by starting her own online publication. *La Silla Vacía* reports on the way power is exercised in Colombia and on the ideas (and people) behind major policy decisions. It speaks with a unique voice in a country where much of the media is closely owned; where corruption is commonplace; where the powerful have traditionally chosen what is said about them; and where reporting can be censored not by government, but by media owners.

“When I covered conflict,” she said, “I covered the victims, the guerrillas, the front lines. But not the big people behind the conflict who were profiting from it.” After a book idea covering those topics was turned down by editors, that changed.

“I needed to be my own boss. I needed to tell the truth in my own stories.”

Committed to bringing forth fresh viewpoints and unheard voices, Leon put together a reporting team that reflects the country’s regional,

ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity.

Initially, and not deliberately, her staff was all female. Today, it looks different; the staff is more diverse. And that diversity helps create a competitive edge.

“Our diversity is not just age or gender,” Leon observed. “Having diverse people brings us into contact with diverse sources .... We can reach into the many different communities that comprise Colombia. We have entry into the economic and political elite, to the Colombia coasts, to the gay community. We are more connected to young people, to the tech environment.”

*That edge has earned the publication a well-respected niche in the country’s news media landscape. During 2015, La Silla Vacía’s audience reached nearly a million unique users. (In contrast, El Tiempo had 8 million.) Yet it is disproportionately influential. In a recent annual poll of Colombian leaders, La Silla Vacía was ranked third-highest as a primary source for political news and reporting -- behind Semana, ahead of El Tiempo.*

Internally, this high level of diversity has created a unique company culture.

“In a way,” said Leon, “it is more like a social club. The common denominator among all of us is our thoughts, our ideas; not our social class. Talent is more important than other things. As a result, as a group, we have fun.”

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“DO WHAT YOU DREAM OF AND FORGET ALL THE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULDN’T DO IT.”



## “HAVING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES MAKES WORK MORE PRODUCTIVE AND MORE FUN.”

The topic of having fun together - sharing meaningful work among smart people – punctuates Leon’s comments. While that creates a good environment in which to work, it also brings significant benefits to the organization.

*The workforce is productive. Everyone has the opportunity to dig deep and cover important stories: assignments are made independent of a reporter’s gender. Employees are deeply engaged with their work and care about getting it right. Even when offered bigger salaries and rewards, they tend to stay with La Silla Vacia.*

A partial explanation for that level of employee retention might also include the company’s approach to compensation. “As a feminist, I

want to run a business that is coherent with my values,” said Leon. “That is why I pay people similar wages, both men and women.”

Was it easy to break out of successful and prominent roles to start off on her own? Leon met with resistance from many fronts, including – surprisingly – her friends.

“When I started *La Silla Vacia*, a lot of my friends were opposed to it; a lot of them gave me ‘ten reasons why it would fail.’

“But I decided to risk it,” she said. “Listening too much to the people you love can be a bad idea. They don’t want you to get hurt.

“Sometimes you see things other people can’t see. You have to believe in that.”

### JUANITA LEON

Founder and Director, La Silla Vacia

Juanita Leon is a leading Colombian journalist who has covered the country’s many conflicts, including the civil war and the drug trade. She received her law degree in Colombia and her M.S. from the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York. As a journalist and editor, she has worked for leading publications including *Wall Street Journal Americas*, *El Tiempo*, *Semana*, and *Flymedia.com*. A published author, her books and articles have focused on Colombia’s indigenous populations and the country’s armed conflicts, and her work has helped uncover the links between a number of Colombian politicians and paramilitary groups. She has taught at New York University’s Graduate School of Journalism; was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University; received the Lettre Ulysses Award (3rd prize) for reporting; and has been an Open Society Foundation Fellow. She founded *La Silla Vacia*, a news site about power in Colombia, and currently serves on the Board of Global Voices.



## Resources

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# Die Tageszeitung, Germany

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Die Tageszeitung, or the taz as it's known to its readers, broke ground with a quota system mandating a 50-50 gender parity split in newsroom employment at every level. To achieve that level of gender parity required setting and communicating clear goals, and then being disciplined about achieving them. This “no excuses” mentality meant that taz needed to think – and manage – ahead. It actively recruited enough women into entry-level positions so later on there would be a pool of well-prepared female candidates for promotion.



# Die Tageszeitung, Germany

It took a minor revolution at *Die Tageszeitung*, the left-leaning German daily, for women to move into the ranks and up the ladder. In 1981, fed up with low-prestige assignments and lack of advancement opportunities, female staffers went on strike for a week, bringing production of the *taz* to a halt. They emerged with a policy that the *taz* would hire and promote equal numbers of women and men, and that the paper's editor would be a woman.

That policy has been maintained, modified only recently to permit a male in the editor's role.

The editor who preceded him is Ines Pohl, who held the top editorial job at the *taz* for six years and is now a U.S. correspondent in Washington for Deutsche Welle, German's

state-operated international broadcaster. Pohl remains convinced that quotas are the way to ensure equality of opportunity and quality of content in the news workplace.

Pohl says at least three things are essential to the workability of a quota policy: support and mentoring for people at the outset of their careers, a consensus among employees that the policy is necessary to create a diverse talent pipeline, and a mechanism for making managers accountable for sustaining the policy.

"Many, many women feel they aren't skilled enough to take the next job or the next assignment," Pohl says. "Men are quick to put their hands up, women worry they're not ready. That's why, besides having a quota, you have to develop a

## “ONCE YOU ARE FORCED TO HIRE WOMEN, YOU CAN FIND GOOD WOMEN.”

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system of support, a mentor to walk them through their career.” Identifying talent early, and nurturing it, is key to filling the pipeline with women who will be prepared to advance, she says.

Pohl rejects excuses she’s heard from managers elsewhere who say finding qualified women for open positions is often difficult: “Once you are forced to hire women, you can find good women.” The *taz* is employee-owned, so Pohl says it’s the employees themselves who set the quotas and enforce them. “If the quotas aren’t met, the next open position will be filled with a woman, no exceptions,” Pohl says. “We must draw the famous clear ‘red line.’ It is a public declaration; it is known to everyone.”

She expresses concern that younger women who have benefited from the policy are not passionate about protecting it. “They must be careful to keep fighting for their rights,” she says.

The *taz*’s 50-50 parity policy is unique, singled out in 2012 as a model during “Pro Quote,” a campaign by 250 German journalists to persuade media executives to adopt a more modest 30% female employment parity goal. The campaign was launched, in part, after *Handelsblatt*, a leading business newspaper, committed to a

30 percent quota. Writing in support of “Pro Quote,” Pohl said, “Few of the people in our [*taz*] office would doubt that this solution works out well for everyone. It helps women because it guarantees that their perspective, their expectations and individual problems are given due consideration. And it’s a plus for most of the men, too, that the work culture of our newspaper is now shaped by both sexes: even more introverted men now get a word in.” At that time in 2012, Pro Quote noted that only 2% of all editors-in-chief of 360 German daily and weekly newspapers were women, a number Pohl – then one of the 2%, and the only female editor of a daily -- said was “embarrassingly small.” In a 2016 interview, she said little had changed: “At the top level, Germany is a disaster.”

The results at the *taz* speak for themselves: the growth of the *taz*’s reputation as a source of news and commentary, some of it refreshingly irreverent (the *taz* has been singled out for having many female voices on its opinion pages); maturing from a counter-culture newspaper to a mainstay of Germany’s publishing sphere, with a newsroom staff of approximately 140; and 50,000 subscribers.



## INES POHL

Foreign Correspondent, Deutsche Welle

Ines Pohl joined Germany's international broadcaster Deutsche Welle in 2015 as a foreign correspondent based in Washington, D.C. A 2005 Nieman Fellow, she served as chief editor of the Berlin-based German daily *Die Tageszeitung* from 2009 until joining Deutsche Welle.

Under Pohl's leadership, the taz launched a new weekend edition and restructured its website, taz.de, now one of Germany's most popular news sites. She also promoted the use of social media to deepen the connection between digital audiences and journalists.

A frequent guest on national TV news shows in Germany, she has produced a monthly commentary for Deutschlandfunk, one of the country's leading radio broadcasters. She also has appeared on the English-language foreign affairs show Quadriga on Deutsche Welle, as well as CNN and MSNBC.

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# The Zimbabwean: Zimbabwe, UK, and South Africa

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In 2005, Wilf and Trish Mbanga founded The Zimbabwean, an authoritative and independent newspaper to create a “voice for the voiceless.” Key among those were rural women with limited – or non-existent – access to news. The Mbangas’ approach combined three elements: strong reporting about women, fact-based reporting for women, and a smart distribution strategy that crossed a deep urban/rural divide and, as a result, reached women.

# The Zimbabwean: Zimbabwe, UK, and South Africa

Independent news is politically and economically suppressed in Zimbabwe, where Freedom House ranks the media environment “Not Free.” Journalists are subject to both legal and extra-legal repression; independent media compete against powerful state-owned enterprises for revenue; and women, especially rural women, are disproportionately affected in a culture dominated by men.

Focusing on women was, to the Mbangas, “just common sense.”

“In most countries in Africa,” said Mr. Mbanga, “women play a secondary role to men. Politics are dominated by men. The workforce is filled with men. In the villages, it is men who discuss and decide things while the women cook. But the population is comprised of a majority of women.”

Thus, while providing the political and international news that male audiences expected, *The Zimbabwean* also actively cultivated female readers.

It brought women’s issues and voices to the fore. Each edition of its weekly newspaper contained

a four-page supplement, “Our Voices,” that highlighted the views, perspectives, concerns and successes of Zimbabwean women. The section also contained empowering information: news about economic opportunities, health, and social equality. It celebrated role models and successes.

“Our stories have life-changing impact,” said Ms. Mbanga. “If you educate a woman, you educate the family. If you upgrade women, you upgrade society. Women are a powerful economic force.”

What were some of those stories? “Lifeline for cancer-prone women”; “Recycled plastics spin money for women”; “Business training equips single mother for success”; and “Income-generating projects for sex workers.” There were stories on teen pregnancies, coping with disabilities, acquiring water pumps and interacting with officials. There were stories of resilience, courage, and hope.

In the absence of standardized audience research, *The Zimbabwean* commissioned professional research to gauge its impact among

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“OUR STORIES HAVE LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT. IF YOU EDUCATE A WOMAN, YOU EDUCATE THE FAMILY. IF YOU UPGRADE WOMEN, YOU UPGRADE SOCIETY”



all its audiences, male and female. Researchers interviewed readers and provided verbatim comments.

Noted one reader: “*The Zimbabwean* carries stories pertinent to us as women. We are encouraged... to read those stories and I can say that they have helped us in knowing our rights as women and being creative in fending for our families.” Another credited the newspaper with giving her motivation to start a business. “I have been inspired to start a chicken-rearing project after reading week after week [about] different money-making projects other women in different parts of the country are doing.”

Yet these stories were not read exclusively by women; survey results also showed a surprising number of positive comments from men. For example, a male driver from Shurugwi said *The Zimbabwean* helped him find a civic society organization dedicated to helping survivors of gender-based violence. He obtained help for an aunt who had problems with her husband, a prominent businessman.

Yet it was not enough to write these stories: to have impact, they needed to be read.

*The Zimbabwean* developed a smart and comprehensive distribution system.

In much of Africa, countries are divided into two very different realities: media-rich urban

areas and media-impoverished rural ones. To reach the urban areas, the newspaper had print, mobile and online distribution. To reach beyond urban areas, the newspaper developed an intricate network of distributors and NGO partners who placed a minimum of 2,000 free issues of the newspaper each week with rural women’s groups and cooperatives.

Those copies had a “cascading” effect: once read, they were then shared widely by dozens – and even hundreds - of other readers.

The *Zimbabwean* also provided audiences with daily updates via email subscriptions, daily Facebook posts, SMS messages, YouTube and other social media. Readers commented and offered feedback via Whatsapp, Twitter and email. One woman reported sharing each day’s newspaper with her network of Facebook friends, 80-plus strong.

To get the stories, and to get them out, required a strong organization. The Mbangas were passionate about developing that team. The newspaper hired and trained journalists, and became a proving ground for some of the country’s finest reporters.

“*People would start with us; we mentored and developed them. Now there are many of our ‘alums’ who are serving as editors and senior leaders in a wider variety of media,*” said Ms. Mbanga. “*We actively mentored them even if*

*we could only connect through email or Skype.”*  
[Note: reporters were in Zimbabwe while the Mbangas and others operated in exile]

“And we trained our women reporters on all facets of reporting,” added her husband. “They were not confined to ‘women’s topics.’ We had women covering sports, politics, business ... every aspect of journalism.”

They also actively recruited and trained women to work on the business side of the operation.

In 2015, the Zimbabwe economy imploded; media revenues sank to unsustainable lows; and donor funds for exiled news media ended. *The Zimbabwean* moved to digital-only media. However, before shuttering its print operations, the organization published one last edition of “Our Voices.” 40,000 copies were distributed – and then passed along to others – showcasing the courage, resilience and hard work of Zimbabwean women.



## WILF AND TRISH MBANGA

Wilf and Trish Mbanga started *The Zimbabwean* in 2005. It operates in exile and offers an alternative to the state-controlled propaganda under President Robert Mugabe. The print edition (closed at the end of 2015) was published in South Africa and distributed in the UK and Southern Africa, reaching deep into Zimbabwe’s rural areas. *The Zimbabwean* continues to use numerous platforms for promoting dialogue and distributing content, including its own website, mobile apps, and a variety of social media.

**Wilf Mbanga** is founder and editor of *The Zimbabwean*. He originally led an independent newspaper in Zimbabwe, *The Daily News*. In that role, Mbanga was arrested (but later acquitted) on charges of anti-government activities; the newspaper was banned; Mbanga received death threats and subsequently left the country in self-imposed exile; and he was labelled an “enemy of the state.” *The Zimbabwean* was later founded with support from international donors to provide authoritative, accurate reporting.

**Trish Mbanga** is co-founder and chief sub-editor of *The Zimbabwean*. She has a long background in journalism, communications, and publishing, and currently heads the company’s business operations. Previously, she was the Inaugural laureate of the (Netherlands’) Prince Claus Award for Culture and Development.

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# Gannett Co., Inc., United States

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While Gannett Co., Inc. had an ethical commitment to diversity, it understood that having a diverse workforce – and reflecting those viewpoints in its reporting – was also good business. Gannett sought to make that commitment a sustainable part of the company’s culture across its extensive newspaper, television, and (later) digital holdings.

With consistent focus and vocal support from a succession of CEOs, its Human Resources leadership increased employee diversity with clear goal-setting, formal measurements, executive compensation, consequences for non-performance, and audience benchmarking.



# Gannett Co., Inc., United States

Former Gannett Chairman Allen H. Neuharth grew up in a home where his widowed mother was the sole income earner. Her hard work and commitment, which were seldom fairly compensated or valued, taught him lessons he never forgot.

Later, as a journalist, he felt that media companies, especially in the newsroom, needed to reflect the wide diversity of the communities they served and covered. He knew that having a diverse workforce was both the right thing to do ... and good business.

Integrating those convictions into the corporation required a systematic approach.

Madelyn P. Jennings, a highly-respected human resource professional, led that effort. Over the course of two decades and, ultimately, five CEOs, Gannett became renowned for its industry-leading commitment to diversity. As one of America's largest diversified news and information companies, and publisher of USA TODAY, its workforce spanned the country and came to reflect the composition of its many communities,

large and small. While the changing business climate for newspaper businesses affected Gannett during recent years, as it has many other newspaper organizations, its culture of diversity has persisted. Following a number of staff reductions mandated by a worsening economic environment for newspapers, Gannett was still able to report that it was continuing to meet diversity goals across the board and in its "Top 4" employment categories. Prior to its split into two corporations in 2015, Gannett was headed by a female CEO, Gracia Martore. She remained CEO of a new entity, Tegna, and the new Gannett Company currently has twelve top executives, 4 of whom are female.

To create such a deep level of commitment to diversity, Gannett employed a full set of management tools.

"We had to get into the pocketbooks of the managers," said Jennings. "And to do that, we had to set goals and measure their performance."

Previously, Gannett's system for allocating annual bonuses for executives and managers

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"WE HAD TO GET INTO THE  
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was almost entirely driven by whether a business unit achieved its revenue goals. While that was a critical objective, it was also important for the company to ensure that it was building long-term strength while achieving short-term goals.

With her team, Jennings implemented a system of “Management by Objectives,” or MBOs. Each manager and executive had a clear set of objectives to achieve during the year. Those goals not only focused on growing revenue, but also on growing each business unit in smart, sustainable, and responsible ways.

By adding diversity goals as a factor in assessing an individual’s overall performance, it put achieving those on an equal level of importance

as revenue, although it was not the largest factor. Achieving a balanced workforce was discussed at all levels of the company; if a business failed to meet those goals, its leadership felt it in their paychecks.

To set diversity goals, each newspaper or television station had a demographic profile of its community drawn from U.S. Census data identifying the population’s overall composition. It included statistics on male, female, minority, age and income levels. The profile of each business unit was then required to reflect that same demographic distribution.

Moreover, it was required to reflect its community’s profile at all levels in the organization, not

just in low-level positions. Employees in the “top four” job categories (officials and managers; professionals; technicians; and sales workers) also had to reflect the markets they served.

“Our focus was on moving women and minorities up, not keeping them in minimum wage jobs,” said Jennings.

This created a “pipeline” of talented people across the company prepared to move into larger jobs and roles. While Jennings points with pride to specific individuals who rose to top leadership roles as a result of these policies, the overall impact was more important. “The whole company was lifted by diversity,” she noted.

Was it good business? For Gannett: yes. Financially, having a diverse workforce supported improved financial performance. It also supported better community reporting: in audience surveys, the company measured readership gaps between male, female and minorities and then worked to close them with targeted content and inclusive reporting.

When asked what it takes to implement such a wide-ranging program, Jennings quickly ticked off a list of key variables.

“It takes having consistent, visible, and vocal priority from the CEO and other top executives,” she said. “It has to be a process, not a person. It has to be built into how the company operates,

not just be dependent on one person’s priorities or vision. And it has to be seen by everyone as an essential part of business strategy and overall competitiveness.”

The company’s Board of Directors was deeply engaged. It played an essential role in keeping the company’s promise alive by making diversity statistics visible to the public in shareholder briefings and in the annual report.

The Board also supported corporate-wide communications efforts that kept the diversity message relevant and top-of-mind. It backed that commitment with funds to train and seek out highly-qualified women and minority candidates. The company invested in a wide range of development programs to help workers become more effective and to prepare them for larger roles.

Did everyone embrace these ideas? Not immediately. “There were certain people I had to be diplomatic with, both adamant and conciliatory. But they all knew that the CEO meant it,” said Jennings.

“What would I do differently? I would have communicated even more that people ‘should do the right thing’ in order to make diversity part of the culture. I did a lot of that, and a lot outside the company, but I would have done even more.”



## MADELYN P. JENNINGS

Madelyn P. Jennings is a founder of the Cabot Advisory Group and President of the McGregor Links Foundation. She is the retired Senior Vice President of Personnel at Gannett, Co., Inc., and previously held senior executive roles at Standard Brands and General Electric.

Formerly Co-Chair of the Freedom Forum, she holds emeritus rank on the boards of the Freedom Forum and its affiliates, the NEWSEUM and the Diversity Institute. She also serves on the Defense Business Board (U.S. Department of Defense), George Washington University Business School's Board of Advisors, and the boards of the National Museum of Women's History, the Center for Productive Longevity, Yaddo (an artist and writers' colony), the National Academy of Human Resources Foundation, and The Women's Center. She has served on numerous other Boards of Directors and is a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academy of Human Resources, and an Executive of the Year in the Society of Human Resource Management.

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# South Kivu Women's Media Association, Democratic Republic of Congo

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Rich in mineral resources and torn with conflict, the Democratic Republic of Congo has solidly maintained its position near the bottom of world press freedom rankings: in 2015, Reporters Without Borders placed it #150 out of 180 countries worldwide. Violence there uniquely targets women by employing rape as a tool for destroying communities.

For many years, those crimes occurred with impunity in a country where the culture both stigmatized rape ... and silenced women's voices. Reporter Chouchou Namegabe, and the South Kivu Women's Media Association (AFEM) she founded, have brought women's voices onto the airwaves, into the mainstream of national reporting, and before the International Criminal Court at The Hague. By giving women voice, AFEM gave them power.

# South Kivu Women's Media Association, Democratic Republic of Congo

(AFEM/ *Association des Femmes des Médias du Sud Kivu*)

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Growing up, Chouchou Namegabe heard only men's voices on radio. "In our culture, it was forbidden for women to speak in public," she said. "When I started in radio [1997] as a young reporter, it wasn't seemly." At that point, all media were owned by men and only men covered stories; in the whole country there were perhaps five women journalists.

But women's voices needed to be heard. And Namegabe was determined to make that happen.

As militias competed to harvest the country's vast mineral wealth, women were uniquely targeted. Commanders knew that if soldiers destroyed women, both physically and psychologically, they would also destroy communities and thus gain control of mines. Women were beaten, raped, and tortured in front of their children. These attacks occurred without consequences. They were crafted with intentional brutality to send a message.

Namegabe fought back against that message. She started a talk show on a local station (Radio

Maendeleo) to air the voices of survivors. She later founded the South Kivu Women's Media Association to create a center that brought women's voices out of silence by training women as both professional and citizen journalists. Since founding the association in 2003, hundreds of women have shared their experiences on-air, helping to heal wounds and create a collective strength.

"We formed 'listening clubs,'" she said, "where women, especially in rural areas, gathered around radios and listened together, then discussed what they heard. When women first started telling their stories, they were stigmatized and rejected. Now that is no longer the case. Listening to ... and telling these stories ... has helped heal the wounds."

When they started the listening clubs, there were no words to describe what was going on. Literally, the language "had no vocabulary to describe the crimes we saw, the rape and sexual violence." They began to create that language, share its use, and report on what was an increasingly widespread tactic of war.



## “TO SPEAK ABOUT IT IS TO ACT,” SHE SAID. “WE DON’T HAVE GUNS, BUT WE CAN TALK.”

Many of the women involved in listening clubs then became sources of local news; AFEM trained them as citizen journalists. AFEM has also trained 81 young women aged 18-25 to become professional journalists in an effort to make women’s voices a more prominent and balanced part of national reporting.

How were they trained? “We used many resources” said Namegabe. With a limited budget, AFEM was entrepreneurial. It took advantage of local journalists; sought regional trainers; and when international reporters came to town, they were invited to help out. “We trained our reporters on everything: how to report, how to gather facts, how to use a camera.”

Over time, they also developed a regional network of women journalists – and women journalist associations – that collaborated and produced joint reporting.

To get its stories out, AFEM coordinated and paid for distribution on a wide variety of stations. That proved to be expensive. In 2015 it launched a revamped website and in 2016, AFEM plans to debut its own radio station, Mama FM, featuring reporting on - and by - women.

This progress has not come without a price. Namegabe and her colleagues have been frequently endangered, and continue to receive death threats and promises of violence against themselves and their families. They take security very seriously. In a country where there has been impunity for criminals, there has also been no protection for journalists.

Yet the voices of women survivors and reporters have had power. In 2006 Namegabe urged the International Criminal Court to include rape and sexual violence in its charges against former commander Thomas Lubanga. Her petition was supported by hundreds of AFEM’s radio broadcasts from survivors. In 2012, Lubanga was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to jail. Namegabe’s goal was – and remains- to train journalists and report on the causes of sexual violence, not just its casualties.

“To speak about it is to act,” she said. “We don’t have guns, but we can talk.”





## CHOUCHOU NAMEGABE

Founder and Director

Chouchou Namegabe is a radio journalist, media trainer, and director of the South Kivu Women's Media Organization (AFEM in French), an organization she founded in 2003. She has trained both rural and urban women in DRC as journalists. Her work has helped "Congo's women broadcast to the world."

Namegabe has testified at The Hague and before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She has been recognized many times for her contributions, including receiving the Knight International Journalism Award (2009); receiving the Vital Voices Global Leadership Award (2009); and being named among "150 Fearless Women" (2012, *Newsweek-The Daily Beast*); "100 Most Influential Africans" (2012, *New African Magazine*); and "150 Women Who Shake the World" (2011, *Newsweek-The Daily Beast*).

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# Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ): Jordan

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In an environment where all press freedoms are rapidly eroding, and barriers against women journalists have grown higher and harder to scale, Rana Sabbagh has courageously changed the playing field. By starting an innovative organization supporting investigative journalism, its reporters are bringing important stories to light.

Sabbagh founded Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), operating in nine Arab countries, to train journalists, foster professionalism, coordinate investigative reporting, and help distribute their reports. Women journalists, often unable to work in news organizations captured by political and commercial interests, find a platform and a voice within ARIJ.





# Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ): Jordan

ARIJ and its members operate in a bad and worsening environment. Press freedoms are shrinking in Jordan and Egypt. Fines, intimidation and arrests are common. Anti-terrorism laws are used to suppress reporting and ensure that the state's narrative is the only one heard. Censorship is on the rise. Where ISIS is active, journalists are in extreme danger. ISIS has beheaded journalists and broadcast their murders.

Within that environment, women reporters face the same and even greater constraints, including sexual harassment, restrictive social norms, shaming, discrimination, defamation, lack of access, and family pressures.

Rana Sabbagh, head of ARIJ, has faced those challenges.

Her decision to pursue journalism was unusual. When she started her career, female reporters were viewed as loose women, sexually available: the kind of women who would be alone with a male source, look him directly in the eye, go to meetings in the evening, or travel out of town without their husbands. "Men, at that time, all wanted to touch us, to feel us," she said. Even so, she persisted. "I often looked weird; I wore boxy clothes, nothing that revealed my shape, and wore no make-up."

“Measuring impact by journalists and the stories they produce is always a challenge. Like social change generally, there is often not a direct line from a single person or action and the movement for reform that results. But occasionally a person comes along whose work is so pioneering, so meaningful, and so dedicated that most of us can agree they have contributed something extraordinary to human progress.

-One of those persons is Rana Sabbagh.

“Rana has almost single-handedly created the infrastructure to support investigative journalism that stretches from Iraq to Morocco. Before, during, and after the Arab Spring, she has laid the seeds that have produced many of the Arab world’s best journalists, reporters who have gone after the lack of accountability, the dysfunction and corruption that are rife in too much of the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, she has empowered women journalists, trained them, and brought their work to an international audience. There is no tougher environment to do the work Rana does than in the Middle East, and yet she has persevered and left a legacy that will endure .... We are in her debt.”

*David E. Kaplan, Executive Director  
Global Investigative Journalism Network*

Few role models were available but she benefited from strong mentoring while working for Reuters. International editors helped her develop high professional standards and learn what it takes to produce top-rate journalism.

When she finally married, social expectations and family pressures forced her away from reporting, at least for a while. Later, as top editor for The Jordan Times and in other reporting roles, she would come home from work only to find that she lacked support.

Her situation was not unusual.

Beyond a woman’s family, there was no

infrastructure to support working wives; picking up and dropping off children at the limited child care locations could take four hours a day. Husbands expected their wives to prepare and eat lunch with them. Families did not want their female relatives to report on sensitive issues that might affect business or bring unwanted visibility.

After her divorce, everyone blamed her, not just men. “Women blame women,” she said. She took a number of roles in mainstream media but eventually left them after colliding with government attempts at interference with content or intelligence-gathering.



She knew there had to be a different way to make an impact. She started ARIJ with help from international funders.

“I did it,” she said, “to redeem my life.” ARIJ is now 10 years old; has mentored many of the Arab world’s leading investigative journalists; has trained more than 1,600 reporters; and has helped produce more than 300 investigative reports. It

has supported the use of social media and internet platforms as a way for stories to have greater local and international impact. To keep these efforts moving forward, ARIJ has a succession plan in place for growth and transformation.

The stories ARIJ reporters have uncovered have brought significant change and international awareness. In Jordan, following an



## RANA SABBAGH

Executive Director

Rana Sabbagh is a reporter, journalist, trainer, columnist and media leader. She is the founder and executive director of ARIJ, an organization established to support investigative journalism throughout a nine-country region. Under her leadership, ARIJ coordinates reporting projects, offers workshops, educates reporters, and fosters networking among journalists and media professionals. It seeks to bring professional standards of reporting and “accountability journalism” throughout its nine country region of Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Hundreds of Arab journalists have been trained to produce in-depth reporting supporting government transparency and the rule of law. ARIJ’s training also helped prepare them to fight for their rights and negotiate the minefield of state censorship.

Sabbagh is a former Reuters correspondent. She helped start Jordan’s independent newspaper, *Al Ghad*. In 1999, she became the chief editor of *The Jordan Times*, a newspaper owned by the government-controlled Jordan Press Foundation (also owner of the Arabic newspaper, Al-Rai). As such, she was the first Arab woman to head a daily newspaper in the Levant. Her tenure there was short-lived, however. Rana was terminated in 2002 after publishing stories about rioting in the southern city of Ma’an and showing support for the reform agenda.

She is a columnist for various news organizations; is the Jordan correspondent for *The Times* of London; is on the board of the Global Investigative Journalism Network; and sits on the jury for the UNESCO international media prize.

ARIJ-supported report, laws that allowed a rapist to marry his victim are being changed. Medical clinics providing unproven and expensive “treatments” to autistic children have been shut down. Reporting in Yemen has brought scrutiny to the mafia rings that conscript children into begging. Each year, ARIJ’s annual award ceremony showcases its members’ high-impact reporting and courageous journalism.

Even as those reports are produced, the larger environment for all reporting continues to deteriorate. “There is an ISIS in everyone’s brain,” said Sabbagh, referring to increased religious extremism in the region and its effects on daily life.

What kind of women succeed in that journalism environment? Women who will operate both inside and out of traditional media organizations. Women like Sabbagh.

“They have to be special,” says Sabbagh, “and they must have the support of their families. They must have confidence and an education.” They also have to have personal fortitude. “You have to be good. You have to work doubly hard as a man; triple if you are a minority; four times as hard if you are from a rural area; and five times as hard if you aren’t a religious conservative.

“A woman must be a worker, a fighter; she must have ambition. She must have a mission in life. Nothing comes free.”

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# Bloomberg News, United States

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Convinced that securing increased women’s perspectives in business reporting makes its journalism product more competitive and enhances leadership prospects for its female news staffers, Bloomberg News has committed resources to both. This commitment started at the top of the organization and has become integral to its total operations; women sources and their voices are mainstreamed into reporting rather than sidelined in “special initiatives” or as “women’s projects.”

# Bloomberg News, United States

In 2010, executives at Bloomberg News began turning a conversation about the dearth of women in the business media giant's coverage into an initiative that would give Bloomberg a competitive edge in the thing journalists value most: breaking news. Beating the competition.

The method: A companywide effort asking 2,300 reporters (150 news bureaus in 70 countries) to get to know the women on their beats who would, in time, become the ones every reporter would want to have access to. Have a women's voice in every article, and try for 50-50 female-male voices. Consider how a story could be approached so that its impact on women would be compellingly told. Add input from women to obtain more robust, complete reporting of every type of story.

A crucial element of the Bloomberg program's success in changing the corporate culture has been to do this with existing resources. Rather than making efforts to increase women's voices as an add-on or a peripheral "special project," Bloomberg changed the core of its reporting efforts. It was - and remains - everyone's responsibility, reflecting a change in thinking and core business approaches.

There would be another benefit to this, according to Editor Emeritus Matt Winkler. He was concerned not only about gender imbalance in reporting but also about "the relative paucity of women in senior positions at Bloomberg News. I saw the two situations as linked, but they were not mutually exclusive," Winkler said at a United Nations panel discussion in 2015.

The emphasis on adding women's perspectives to news coverage "started to influence the internal - the opposite of what one might expect," says Lisa Kassenaar, who headed up the global women's coverage effort under Winkler. "We didn't put women in charge and then expect the product to change - we put more women into our journalism and that spurred the internal program to get more women into Bloomberg management."

Advancing more female Bloomberg newsroom staff was accomplished in part by allowing flexible work hours for parents, setting specific targets every year for increasing women team leaders in the newsroom (doubling their numbers in just four years), and building a mentoring system. Bloomberg's highly competitive internship program has also proved to

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"WE DECIDED TO WORK ON RAISING AWARENESS OF HOW WE CAN FIND THE MOST IMPORTANT WOMEN AND WRITE ABOUT THEM."

“WE DIDN’T PUT WOMEN IN CHARGE AND THEN EXPECT THE PRODUCT TO CHANGE – WE PUT MORE WOMEN INTO OUR JOURNALISM AND THAT SPURRED THE INTERNAL PROGRAM TO GET MORE WOMEN INTO BLOOMBERG MANAGEMENT.”

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be a productive intake system for female talent, Winkler says.

The paradigm shifting fell to Kassenaar, who began working with Bloomberg journalists on how to broaden their ideas about what makes a good story. “What if we take a bottom-up look at how women are included in every person’s coverage of their beat?” she asked. “We decided to work on raising awareness of how we can find the most important women and write about them.” With top-down reporting, writers reach for the most senior -- usually male -- executive. With a bottom-up technique, reporters improved their chances of encountering rising stars who are women – and someday, will be CEOs.

That happened with succession at General Motors. Bloomberg Detroit reporter Tim Higgins had cultivated a relationship with Mary Barra, a GM electrical engineer who had been a fix-it specialist in the field and in a number of GM corporate departments. Because of Higgins’s reporting relationship with Barra,

Bloomberg got the exclusive, being the first to report that Barra would become the first female GM CEO. This, Kassenaar says, is the kind of competitive advantage Bloomberg’s Women’s News Project was designed to foster.

To measure progress in integrating more women into coverage, Bloomberg created a code, “NI Women,” and asked reporters to begin coding stories that met the new criteria (stories where the lead actor is a woman, or a trend story affecting women) so the number of articles could be tracked. The count has moved up from a few hundred annually to more than 4,000. There is also an effort to make sure Bloomberg’s commentary sections, Bloomberg View, features women’s voices.

Bloomberg’s gender diversity goal-setting goes beyond the newsroom. In 2014, globally, women accounted for 32% of the Bloomberg workforce and 27% of managers. CEO Peter Grauer has set a goal of increasing the percentage of women in the 1,000 key leadership positions from its current 17% to 30% by 2020.



## LISA KASSENAAR

Editor-at-Large, Global Women's News Coverage,  
Bloomberg News



Kassenaar is a former senior feature writer for *Bloomberg Markets* magazine. Her cover stories on Wall Street firms throughout the financial crisis detailed the inner workings of the world's biggest banks. She previously was an editor and reporter covering banks and the U.S. and Canadian bond markets. Kassenaar joined Bloomberg in 1995.

In 2006, she won a Newswoman's Club of New York Front Page award for a story on families moving into the historic bank towers of Lower Manhattan.

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7. Photo of Lisa Kassenaar © Dave Cross Photography

# Making Every Voice Count, Gender Media Policy, Botswana

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There is strength in numbers.

Four print media houses and three broadcasters in Botswana came together in 2009 to devise and sign off on the Botswana Media Gender Policy, Making Every Voice Count. It pledged to increase the number of women reporting and producing news, and improve and expand women's presence as news sources and experts.

The effort was distinguished by two critical factors: buy-in from the top of each media organization and a continuing system of accountability. Annual scorecards and media monitoring began in 2012 and continue to inform the program's progress.

What has made it work? Persistence. Old practices, deeply ingrained in both work and community cultures, do not change overnight. The heartbeat of the effort is Beata Kasale Kabango, publisher of The Voice in Gaborone.

# Making Every Voice Count, Gender Media Policy, Botswana



Beata Kasale sees two complementary keys to success in news reporting and management for women: strong backing by management and personal advocacy and ambition by women journalists themselves. In her view, the combination is necessary, and unbeatable.

Working with South Africa-based GenderLinks, and with funding from UKAID, Kasale moved the project forward as a consultant/facilitator, bringing together media house executives to craft a policy, and then commit to it in writing, that would mainstream gender diversity in news content and in the makeup of their institutions. The policy set targets: 30% female staffing, including in decision-making roles, by 2015, or 50%, a higher figure endorsed by the Southern African Development Community.

The gender policy cautions against specific, problematic patterns in recruiting, advancing and retaining women in the newsroom and elsewhere in media institutions. The policy also

identifies persistent deficiencies in news coverage: women are infrequently asked to be expert sources or consulted on their views of current events, and when they are, it is usually in connection with matters considered to be in the women's sphere, such as health, parenting, and household management. The policy requires management to devise a plan to remedy each of these.

The gender policy also acknowledges that freelancers and contract workers are frequently women, and that this form of employment deprives them of benefits and security. Signers pledged to reduce this disparity by balancing the gender of their permanent employees.

Seven media houses, *The Voice*, *The Echo*, *Mmegi*, *Sunday Standard*, *Yarona FM*, *Gabz FM* and *Duma FM*, developed and signed this gender policy.

Matching the signed document to results

## “IF I WERE TO RELOCATE, IF I WERE TO LEAVE, I WOULD NOT WANT THIS TO DISAPPEAR.”

requires continual checking, networking, and encouragement, Kasale says. “It’s a labor of love. You go away for six months, it changes. You have to be on their backs, make sure women are invited to be interviewed for job openings. Five years ago that thinking just wasn’t there. Now it is. Media houses are conscious now that they have to bring in women.”

Kasale has walked the talk herself at *The Voice*, where the publisher, editor, marketing manager, and operations manager are all female, she says. The general manager is male, as is the head of IT. Men are employed in administration, which in many businesses is typically female-dominated. While below the top level most other managers are men, within *The Voice*’s leadership it is about 70% female, Kasale says.

And then, there is ambition, self-confidence and assertiveness. Kasale believes, strongly, that women have to possess these traits and advocate for themselves.

Kasale urges women to put themselves forward for assignments other than soft features. She is critical of women who prefer “light reporting” and decline more demanding assignments covering politics, government, crime, and economics. She doesn’t accept excuses from women who, in her view, don’t work hard enough, or use family responsibilities as a reason to avoid assignments that require a bigger commitment of time but that also would help their careers. Kasale is not

unsympathetic, but says women should find ways to take advantage of the career opportunities the gender policy affords them.

Recognizing that employee success requires a respectful environment, *Making Every Voice Count* goes into considerable detail on appropriate behavior for staffers, favoritism, what constitutes sexual harassment, and the obligation of the employer to intervene when these situations arise.

Kasale says she’s aware that a change in leadership in a news organization can mean slippage in the emphasis put on mainstreaming gender. “We have achieved at least half of what we set out to do, which is to get women into content, have them in some leadership positions, and see them move into harder beats.”

Kasale feels it’s important to continue workshopping “to keep the spirit going.” She would like to see four or five professional workshops annually to foster professional development and collegiality among news staffers, and keep gender diversity in the conversation.

This continuous, broad-based effort of workshops, media monitoring, and reports by the participating media houses is needed in order to cement the role of gender equality and diversity in news organizations, Kasale says. “If I were to relocate, if I were to leave, I would not want this to disappear.”

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### BEATA KASALE

Owner/publisher of *The Voice*, a leading newspaper in Botswana.

She has worked extensively with organizations such as the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF), African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnership (ACHAP), Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Press Union (CPU), Steps for the Future, GenderLinks, Panos Institute, Open Society Initiative (OSI), Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA) and AMARC. Kasale has been a board advisory member for WAN-IFRA’s Women in News.

Kasale has served as the chair of the Botswana Publishers Forum. She is a human rights activist who works with the San of Botswana in lobbying the government to recognize them as an integral part of the society deserving of the benefits the country awards to every other citizen.

She authored a children’s book, *The Treasure in the Garden*, published by Heinemann, UK, in 2001. Kasale is a recipient of the 2010 Presidential Certificate of Honor for her contribution to the development of Botswana through media and human rights advocacy.





# British Broadcasting Corporation, United Kingdom

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A rebuke from a British Parliamentary commission has compelled the BBC, which since the 1980s has undertaken efforts to recruit and promote women, to step up efforts to end persistent gender discrimination, particularly against older female employees. Efforts, once started, must be a continued source of focus and be updated to be current with the evolving workforce. It requires both the employer and employees to be vigilant about maintaining a strong role for women in news organizations.

Even in a sophisticated news organization, gender diversity is never a project that is marked “complete.” It remains a priority as long as people come in and out of the workforce; as long as people are promoted, and as long as organizations change to meet new market requirements. Gains, slow to achieve, can go backwards ... and go backwards fast.

# British Broadcasting Corporation, United Kingdom

The momentum for advancement of news-women at the BBC has been slowing, according to a 2015 House of Lords investigation that found women were poorly represented in BBC news and current affairs reporting as staff, sources and experts, and that senior women were less valued for their years of experience and talent. Some senior women's careers were cut short for reasons that can only be attributed to sexism and ageism.

The BBC, founded in 1922, is Britain's public broadcasting company with a worldwide reach. It operates under a royal charter and is funded by a license fee paid by viewers and listeners. Remarking on the BBC's "special status" as a public entity and its broad influence "on shaping social norms," the House of Lords launched its own investigation into gender discrimination complaints and subsequently ordered the BBC to "do better."

The House of Lords commission heard evidence from women who alleged, among other issues, bullying and harassment and losing out to men on high-profile assignments.

"Gone are the days when women were seldom heard or seen in news and current affairs broadcasts," said the commission report. "Nevertheless, in this era of equality, we were surprised and disappointed at how much further broadcasters, Ofcom [the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries] and the government have to go to achieve genuine gender balance."

Lord Best, the commission chair, laid out recommendations for action by broadcasters and regulators and a time frame for documenting improvement. "We believe that, as well as broadcasters adopting more helpful and flexible practices, Ofcom should play a greater role in this area. The regulator used to play a key part in influencing broadcasters' behavior in this respect, but the Broadcasting Equalities and Training Regulator (BETR) was disbanded in 2011. We recommend that Ofcom should ensure the collection of all the data needed to monitor progress toward short, medium and long-term targets to ensure a better gender balance. If this hasn't materialized within a year, we would call on Ofcom to revive the model of a separate entity like the BETR and delegate responsibility for gender equality issues to this body."

The Commission also made these recommendations:

- Broadcasters should safeguard a gender balance in their wider workforce to enable the coverage of issues which affect both men and women in varied ways;
- There should be greater transparency around broadcasters' recruitment and progression processes;
- Broadcasters should have flexible working practice policies which encourage women with caring responsibilities to have fulfilling careers, and ensure that women returning from maternity leave receive appropriate support;

- Urgent steps should be taken by broadcasters to eradicate any opportunities for gender discrimination and bullying of any kind.

For its part, the BBC said its efforts to recruit and advance women have paid off over decades, with nearly half of the BBC's news and current affairs workforce now female, and with more than a third in leadership positions.

Laudable as that is, female employees have banded together for mutual support. Global Women in News, a voluntary networking and development group for BBC newswomen founded by employees in March 2014, has grown to more than 1,000 members. GWiN organizes programs on career advancement techniques (including mentoring pairings) and motivational events. GWiN sees advancement of women at the BBC as pluses not only for them for them but for the audience as well. "Half our audience are women and they need to see themselves reflected in our output, so

it matters that women are well represented in decision making," says co-founder Liliane Landor. GWiN has collaborated with the BBC's year-long Women in Leadership program for 15 senior women designed to foster their mobility in the organization.

To help, in the BBC's words, "address the poor representation of women as experts on the air," in 2013 the BBC launched BBC Expert Women. These are free training days that provide preparation, coaching and networking opportunities to women with expertise in various professional fields to ready them for on-air appearances.

Despite these activities, the movement to increase diversity in its ranks fell short. Specific targets were needed. In April 2016, the BBC promised that by 2020 women will comprise half of its employees, including those in executive, management, and leading on-screen roles. Goals for minority representation in staff and leadership were set at 15% and from lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) people at 8%.

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# Quotes for Discussion

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# Quotes for Discussion

#1

**ACHIEVING GENDER DIVERSITY IS “A PROCESS, NOT A PERSON.”**

-Madelyn P. Jennings

#2

**“IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.”**

-Trish Mbanga

#3

**“GENDER ISSUES HAVE TO BE SOLVED BY PEOPLE OF BOTH GENDERS.”**

-Filip Noubel

#4

**“YOU HAVE TO DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT, A MENTOR TO WALK [WOMEN] THROUGH THEIR CAREERS.”**

-Ines Pohl

#5

**“A WOMAN MUST BE A WORKER, A FIGHTER; SHE MUST HAVE AMBITION. SHE MUST HAVE A MISSION IN LIFE. NOTHING COMES FREE.”**

-Rana Sabbagh



**“I NEEDED TO TELL THE TRUTH IN MY OWN STORIES.”**

-Juanita Leon

#6

**WOMEN JOURNALISTS “MUST BE CAREFUL TO  
KEEP FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS.”**

-Ines Pohl

#7

**GENDER “IS THE MOST EXCITING BEAT TO COVER  
TODAY IN INDIA, MAYBE IN THE WORLD.”**

-Namita Bhandare

#8

**“TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT IT IS TO ACT.”**

-Chouchou Namegabe

#9

**“DO BETTER.”**

-Britain’s House of Lords to BBC on the issue of gender discrimination

#10

# Author Bios



## MICHELLE J. FOSTER

Michelle Foster is an international media management and marketing consultant who helps news media companies to improve business performance. She has worked with organizations throughout the United States and in China, Myanmar, SE Asia, the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Africa. She has been a Knight International Journalism Fellow in SE Asia on two occasions. She serves on the board of the Independent Journalism Foundation.

From 1991 until 2003, Foster was the senior market development executive for Gannett Co., Inc.'s Newspaper Division. As such, she oversaw marketing efforts for 97 daily newspapers, a host of national brands, and niche/vertical product lines. She led efforts in branding, consumer and business marketing, database development, market intelligence, and the migration of brands from traditional to online media. In that role, she won recognition for excellence in innovation and marketing leadership.

Foster has won national and regional advertising awards and is a frequent public speaker. She has authored a number of reports on media development, including three recent titles published by the National Endowment for Democracy's Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA).

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## SHEILA GIBBONS

Sheila Gibbons is a communications executive with extensive experience in journalism and public relations. She is vice president of Communication Research Associates, Inc., a firm that publishes communication research and provides editorial services, strategic communication planning and support, and training to its clients.

Gibbons is the former director of public affairs and spokesperson for Gannett Co., Inc., one of America's largest diversified news and information companies and publisher of USA TODAY. She joined Gannett as a news editor in the company's New Media division. Her corporate communications work at Gannett won awards from the International Association of Business Communicators, the Public Relations Society of America, Women in Communications and Financial World magazine.

Gibbons is editor of *Media Report to Women* ([www.mediareporttowomen.com](http://www.mediareporttowomen.com)), a quarterly periodical devoted to news and research about the relationship between women and media. From 2003 to 2009 she wrote a regular column on gender and media for the online news service, Women's eNews ([www.womensenews.org](http://www.womensenews.org)).

Gibbons is the co-author, with Maurine Beasley, of *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism*, published by The American University Press/University Press of America. This book was named one of the outstanding academic books of 1994 by Choice, the journal of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association. Strata Publishing, Inc., published the second edition in 2002. She also is the co-author, with Ray Hiebert, of *Exploring Mass Media: Past, Present and Future*, published by Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates in 2000.

For three years Gibbons was a fulltime faculty member at the University of Maryland's College of Journalism. She has been a popular speaker at professional gatherings in the United States, Hungary, Poland, South Africa and Turkey.

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- Madelyn P. Jennings, Founder, Cabot Advisory Group (former SVP/Personnel, Gannett Co., Inc.)
- Ammu Joseph, Independent Journalist and Author
- David Kaplan, Executive Director, Global Investigative Journalism Network
- Beata Kasale, Owner and Publisher, *The Voice*
- Lisa Kassenaar, Editor-at-Large, Global Women's News Coverage, Bloomberg News
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- Trish Mbanga, Co-founder and Chief Sub-editor, *The Zimbabwean*
- Wilf Mbanga, Founder and Editor, *The Zimbabwean*
- Jane McElhone, Consultant (former Program Director for OSF)
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- Chouchou Namegabe, Founder and Director, South Kivu Women's Media Association (AFEM)
- Filip Noubel, Innovation Advisor, Prague Civil Society Centre (former Country Director/China for Internews)
- Deirdre O'Neill, Senior Lecturer in Journalism at the University of Huddersfield, UK
- Tessa Piper, Program Director for Asia, MDIF
- Ines Pohl, Foreign Correspondent, Deutsche Welle (former editor, *Die Tageszeitung*)
- Sukumar Ranganathan, Editor, *Mint*
- Rana Sabbagh, Executive Director, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ)
- Ross Settles, Senior Advisor for Digital Media, MDIF

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