

Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Checklist for capacity building partners

A critical part of BBC Media Action’s work is capacity building local media and civil society partners. Often we are supporting them to improve their technical or management skills. As we, at BBC Media Action, actively improve our own work to advance women’s rights and gender equality, we need to make sure that those we work with share our commitment in this regard. This checklist provides some things to consider when you are planning how to work with partners.

<p>Identifying partners</p>	<p>Partnership criteria – Consider making a key partner selection criteria organisations that have women in leadership roles or organisations challenging gender discrimination and voicing issues of interest to women.</p>
<p>Capacity assessment of partners</p>	<p>Include some elements of gender analysis in your organisational capacity assessments both in terms of content production and the office environment. For example:</p> <p>Content production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are women’s rights and gender equality issues are routinely included in media and communication content? How gender sensitive or transformative is the content? Use our gender and media microsite to guide your assessment of the gender sensitivity. • Consider how women and girls portrayed in the media and communication content (i.e. do they challenge negative and outdated stereotypes and sensationalism and reflect women’s contribution to society)? • How is gender inequality and discriminatory gender norms being addressed in the content? <p>Office environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the sex ratio of female to male staff at senior level? Are there women (or men) in senior decision-making roles that are championing women’s rights and gender equality?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What commitments does the organisation have to female leadership e.g. practices to promote women’s career development and leadership opportunities? • What are the barriers experienced by female staff and how these being addressed by the organisation? • What is the role of female media staff in content production? • How are the physical and digital security needs of female staff being addressed?
<p>Building partner capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of partners on women’s rights and gender equality should be done early on in the project. • Develop a reference guide for trainers/ consultants/ mentors when they develop the curriculum. Even if they just have a discussion (not a lecture) on women’s rights and gender equality, that would be good way to allow people to consider their own views and possible unconscious bias. Use existing tools to help you, for example, Who Makes the News’ Gender and Ethical Journalism. Another useful document is UNESCO’s Getting the Balance Right – Gender Equality in Journalism which helps journalists understand gender equality in their work. • Explore opportunities for linking media partners with local women’s rights organisations/ involving women’s rights organisations in projects – to strengthen understanding of gender equality issues and gain insights into strategies for overcoming barriers to women’s participation. Practitioners from these organisations could potentially provide gender equality training. • Offer guidance on how to approach sensitive topics – e.g. how to cover sensitive issues like domestic violence in a gender sensitive way, how to use images of women without them being stereotypical and enforcing traditional notions of women's roles etc. See for example, our online resource for Gender Based Violence in humanitarian contexts. • Regularly review editorial content to assess how well gender equality issues are being integrated and responded to by audiences. Key to this is understanding how audiences – and especially women – respond to editorial content so regular audience surveys are important.
<p>Selecting trainers or</p>	<p>Expertise in women’s rights and gender equality should be</p>

<p>consultants to work with partners</p>	<p>mandatory for the trainers and consultants that Media Action recruits to work with partners. If there are challenges around identifying trainers who have both media and experience of working on women’s rights and gender equality (e.g. female journalists with some knowledge of this) then selected trainers should work closely with women’s rights and gender equality practitioners (possibly from local NGOs etc.) to input to training materials.</p> <p>See also the section on Making a Programme on our gender and media microsite for ideas on how content can be shaped to appeal to women and girls and on Designing a Project to be clear on how gender sensitivity can be integrated into all of our projects.</p> <p>You could organise Training of Trainers to build a cadre of production staff with skills in this area, to help institutionalise learning. Trainings should allow for open discussions for staff to discuss the issues, concerns and barriers that women face as well as strategies they use to challenge these. Training should not be based on formal presentations, but in the form of discussion where a ‘safe space’ is provided for participants to talk about women’s rights and gender equality – what it means to them personally as well as what it means for their work. This should be facilitated by trainers with some expertise in this area. See some exercises from our gender and media microsite for more ideas.</p>
<p>Ensuring gender transformative change</p>	<p>Transformative nature of the media – having quality editorial content in formats that women and girls respond to and that are delivered at times that correspond to women’s availability is critical for reaching female audiences. The key to gender transformative change is the quality of the editorial content and the opportunities provided for audiences to engage in the topic, discuss and eventually act more positively. As is well documented, the media can have a catalytic impact – reaching a huge swathe of people, changing the traditional media discourse and ‘normalising’ what wasn’t normal before, such as seeing women in more diverse roles. This means getting beyond women’s participation in media training to supporting alternative voices – both female and male – in traditional media, which can be an effective way of challenging patriarchal</p>

norms.

Supporting more women into decision making roles – To try and address male dominance in the media, it is important to also ensure there are more women in decision making roles within the media, for example female editors. So whilst this is partly about building the capacity of women, it is also important to look at how women can get past the glass ceiling within male dominated media organisations. Some ways to address this could be:

- To work with partner organisations to develop specific initiatives to promote women’s leadership (which may or may not include positive discrimination through a quota system, which is important for building a critical mass of women in senior positions)
- By offering coaching or mentoring to women ready to step up into more senior roles
- To look specifically at how to encourage women to return to work after maternity leave and to work with partners around promoting a range of leadership styles.

Supporting women headed initiatives – transformative changes for women are more likely to come about if women themselves are pushing for these changes. As such, to advance women’s rights and gender equality within its work, you could prioritise funding women headed media outlets that are responsive to the needs and concerns of marginalised women and girls.