

5 Top Tips for developing Gender Sensitive and Gender Transformative projects

Why are we working on women's rights and gender equality?

Both men and women around the world continue to believe that women are not equal to men simply because they are women. This is because in most societies males as a group have power over females as a group. This disadvantage experienced by women and girls is made worse when sexism overlaps with multiple other factors such as poverty, race, ethnicity, caste, class, sexual and gender identity and disability. These disadvantages create complex, interwoven hierarchies, which have different consequences for different groups.

The discrimination that women and girls face denies them their basic rights, such as access to education, health and sexual rights, freedom from violence, decent work, financial independence, control of assets such as land and property ownership, and a say in the decisions that affect their lives. This belief and the resulting inequality has far reaching negative impacts particularly on the wellbeing of women and girls, as well as on their partners and families, communities and countries.

BBC Media Action's [Gender Equality Approach and Strategy](#) (2017–20) commits us to supporting women and girls to achieve their human rights and advance gender equality. It states that we support equality for everyone, not just those that identify as male or female. However, our priority is how to bring about transformative change for women and girls because they continue to experience systematic widespread social disadvantage and discrimination in most of the countries where we work.

What does this mean to you in your work?

We believe media and communication can be a powerful way to create positive change. It creates discussion around the topic of women's rights and gender equality at scale. Challenging deeply held beliefs and behaviour which limits women and girls (and men and boys) can be role modelled on radio and TV programmes, helping people see a different world is possible.

However, it means we have to think more deeply about *how* we work with women and girls across all our themes of governance, health and resilience. We have committed to making ALL our work [gender sensitive](#) across all our themes and some projects [gender transformative](#) where possible.

We know, however, that change is slow and difficult. Gender discrimination is deeply rooted and strongly defended by those who enjoy power and privilege. This includes us as staff members. So, we need to ensure that we, too, think about our own beliefs, bringing in women who have experience in this work to help challenge us improve our impact. We need to respond to local contexts and listen to the views of women and girls themselves. Our projects need multiple interventions – not only media programmes but outreach work where audiences can reflect and discuss issues and where we and our partners can help them do things differently.

What can I do?

This is where the 5 Top Tips come in! We can support this change through our projects. If you want to ensure that your projects make a positive impact for women and girls (and men and boys) follow these tips when you are designing your project:

1. **Identify your target group.** Make sure your project engages both women and men and in a way that is responsive to their differing needs, barriers and opportunities.
2. **Undertake a gender analysis.** Identify the problems and opportunities for women and girls, men and boys as well as the underlying causes.
3. **Include gender equality outcomes in project design.** Include medium (and long term if possible) changes for women and girls, men and boys.
4. **Deepen community engagement.** Ensure you or your partners are helping to embed change at community level
5. **Create media content that positively changes the discourse around women’s rights and gender equality.**

<p>1. Identify your target group(s)</p> <p>Make sure your project targets both women and men</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about the fact that audiences are not the same – that women and men have different perceptions, views, concerns, barriers and opportunities in relation both to the issues you are addressing and how they engage with the media. • Think about what sort of changes you want to make and for who (women, girls, men, boys) in relation to the issues that you are trying to address, whether it be governance, health, resilience, ending violence etc. • Who the project will benefit (directly and indirectly) and how? Language like ‘people,’ ‘audiences,’ and ‘youth’ does not provide clarity on who we’re <i>actually</i> talking about. Refer specifically to women, girls, men and boys when describing different groups: community members, listening group members, influencers, service providers, authorities etc. This helps ensure we are targeting carefully from the start. Disaggregating your audience means you can design outputs
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	<p>that really meet the needs of the specific groups of people you are trying to reach and engage. This is a minimum standard for organisations taking a <i>gender sensitive</i> approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about which activities you need to do to engage different groups of women and men, girls and boys. Different outputs might be needed to target different audiences depending on their access to media and the types of formats they prefer. • Think about who you need to influence to ensure your project outcomes and impact. This is about who has power and who doesn't? And what type of power? Is it women, girls, boys, men? All of them? Some of them? How will you target them?
<p>2. Undertake a gender analysis</p> <p>Identify the problems and opportunities for women and girls, men and boys as well as the underlying causes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem analysis – have you got a clear picture of the different problems facing women and girls and men and boys? • What are the underlying causes of discrimination facing women and girls? You can gather some of this from literature (SIGI index, CEDAW shadow reports, DHS data etc) and by consulting with female audience members to map the issues they face and get an understanding of how unequal power relations shape the issues for different groups. • Do you know female and male media preferences? How do they differently have access to and control of the media? • Use BBC Media Action's gender and media microsite guidance on conducting a gender analysis to help you and the Gender and Media Learning review checklist • Disaggregate data and analysis by sex and age as a minimum and other factors, e.g. such as poverty, ethnicity, caste, sexual identity, disability, geographical location etc. as appropriate to the context.
<p>3. Include gender equality outcomes and impact if possible in project design</p> <p>Include medium (and long term if possible) changes for women and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your project aiming to be <i>gender sensitive</i> (as a minimum), which helps to improve women's daily conditions or <i>gender transformative</i>, which aims to improve their position in society? • Use BBC Media Action's gender and media microsite guidance on the gender sensitivity criteria to help you. • Ensure your theory of change reflects the outcomes and impact you hope to achieve for women and men, girls and boys. Indicators need to be both quantitative and qualitative (e.g. <i>number of girls completing primary education</i> and <i>community members more likely to value girls' education</i>). Identify gender sensitive indicators for different levels of change – related to knowledge, attitude and behaviour/action. • If you need to explain how the media is able to influence gender equality and its potential to advance women's empowerment you

<p>girls, men and boys</p>	<p>can draw on the Gender Equality Approach and Strategy paper (see P.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your research (formative, base/mid/end-lines) analyse changes for women and girls and men and boys? How can you ensure that you are asking women and girls themselves about their <i>perceptions</i> of changes in attitudes, relationships and behaviours regarding gender equality? • How will you ensure learning helps shape the implementation of future projects (e.g. sharing learning in your office teams and via the <i>Gender Champions Network</i>)?
<p>4. Deepen community engagement</p> <p>Ensure you or your partners are helping to embed change at community level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will discriminatory gender norms be explored and challenged at the community level through listening and discussion groups? This involves working with those with power at community level (traditional rulers, religious leaders, government officials etc., particularly targeting men) to support an enabling environment for women and girls to realise their rights. It's important that community members have the opportunity to discuss how women are viewed and valued in relation to men and boys. This work is challenging, but <i>vital</i> to changing negative attitudes and positively influencing behaviours towards women and girls. • Are you and your partner organisations well equipped to have these discussions? Can you involve strong women's rights groups who have experience in this work, know how to facilitate discussion on sensitive issues and know how to handle backlash from communities? • Have you thought about how women and girls can have group discussions in a community and the risks women and girls may face when speaking out in their communities? How can these be mitigated?
<p>5. Create media content that positively changes the discussion around women's rights and gender equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you and your staff or partners need more support on understanding gender issues and undertaking gender analysis to do this work? Can you build support into project plans and budgets? • Can local individuals or organisations with experience of women's empowerment regularly review your content to provide advice and possibly support capacity building of staff? • Can you involve community women and girls in developing media content? • Are media partners challenging negative gender stereotypes? How can they illustrate positive stories of women and girls taking charge of their lives and stories of women and men

	<p>adopting non-traditional gender roles that build equality between different sexes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do your media programmes engage women audiences? Bear in mind their differential access and control of the media; disproportionate time burdens and subordinate position in society which means you may have to work with them to provide particular support. • Use BBC Media Action’s gender and media microsite guidance on making a programme and review this gender and media resource.
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There are many good practice examples which we can learn from. Here are a few examples, from our work and those of others working in the sector:

BBC Media Action – [Amrai Pari](#) (Together We Can Do It), *Bangladesh* – this resilience TV, radio, PSA and outreach programme helped encourage communities to work together to improve their economic well-being and prepare for extreme weather events. It set a quota for the number of stories showcasing women as leading action in their communities and engaging with government structures. This more intentional approach to promoting gender equality, resulted in episodes showing women taking control of their problems, mobilising other women and men in their communities, becoming economically empowered and participating in non-stereotypical actions such as digging a canal and registering land in their names.

BBC Media Action – [Sajha Sawal](#) (Common Questions), *Nepal* – the political debate programme has created a space for women, especially in rural areas, to put questions to elected representatives, helping shift views on what they think they are able to do in political spaces. The bold choice of selecting a woman presenter created a huge following amongst women and men, and she encouraged female panellists to participate, taking the programme out to communities, along with decision makers. Women spoke in local languages raising issues of importance to them, such as dowry-related violence, where police representatives were questioned about perceived impunity for perpetrators. It was the first time the issue was covered on Nepali TV in such depth and with authorities answering public questions.

BBC Media Action – [Improving reproductive, maternal and newborn health using health communication in Ethiopia](#) – women listeners who recently had a child, reported higher levels of healthier practices in ANC, birth preparedness and safer delivery compared with

women who did not listen; were more confident in their ability to make use of services, and more likely to discuss health issues with health workers and their families. Mothers had higher levels of confidence in their ability to access ANC in future and new fathers who listened to the programmes were more likely to know how to prepare for birth, care for a new baby, support their wives in pregnancy and share housework. While men's support for their wives' ANC is still far from universal, our research suggests the programmes helped normalise men taking an active interest in their wives' pregnancy care.

Equal Access - '**Change Starts at Home**' project to tackle violence amongst married couples in Nepal using radio and community outreach, which aimed to shift social norms and individual attitudes and beliefs that reinforce violence against women and girls. There were 3 phases: (1) a weekly 39 episode radio series 'Samajhdari' (Mutual Understanding) highlighting issues around violence and 72 facilitated listening and discussion groups; (2) life skills training for strengthening healthy and happy relationships between married couples and (3) community engagement with local leaders and the wider community. Women initially reported that they didn't have the skills to discuss sex with their partners, for example, and men expressed they did not think that they needed to consider their wives needs or desires. Following the project, couples reported talking more openly, being more supportive and helpful and that their relationships had become more peaceful. See video of the project here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcfHMAv01a8> (7m24 s)

BBC Media Action – *Sawty Ma'a, Mo 3alaya (My voice supporting her not attacking her), Syria* – training workshops with mainstream and citizen journalists through face to face and online approaches led to an improved ability of Syrian media practitioners to question negative sexual violence norms, attitudes and behaviours as well as produce accurate, reliable and independent coverage of sexual violence issues in Syria and host countries. Content analysis showed that stories produced by trainees covered a wide range of sexual violence topics (child sexual abuse, physical assault, harmful practices e.g. FGM and son preference, psychological/emotional abuse, rape, sexual abuse/assault, and sexual exploitation). Trainees took necessary steps to protect the survivor's identity, raising awareness about the issues and providing information on services, but also ensuring the facilities are available to support women who act on this.