

RESEARCH

Glass ceilings in the Southern African media

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This report outlines activities undertaken by GL in extending the *Glass Ceiling* study on women and men in South African newsrooms to media houses across the Southern African region. The 2006 South Africa study, undertaken in partnership with the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) revealed that men occupy most of the decision-making positions in media houses. The 2006 study focused on newsrooms and not entire media houses as is the case with this study.

Objectives

The study aims to probe the gendered dimensions of the institutional composition and practices of the media and the impact of these on the final output is being undertaken in 15 countries in the SADC region. Specific objectives include:

- To assess the overall proportion of women and men in media houses.
- To determine the occupational levels of women and men in media houses.
- To examine the conditions of employment (open ended contracts; fixed contracts; part time; freelance).
- Comparative information on what, on average, women and men earn in media houses.
- To explore the gender division of labour within the media houses (which areas women and men work in – editorial, design, technical, administrative etc).
- Through case studies and profiles to gather qualitative data on women and men in media houses who have made a difference and who do not believe gender is a priority.

Activities

- **Reference group meeting:** 15 researchers met for a reference group meeting in June 2008. They received training based on a briefing document. This meeting also identified the sample for the study. The briefing document and methodology were tested and finalized after the reference group meeting. Two questionnaires were designed: a quantitative and perception questionnaire.
- **Data gathering:** The study targeted 155 media houses and succeeded in getting responses from 125 of these representing more than half of the media houses in the region; or a total of over 20 000 employees. Each media house submitted one quantitative questionnaire and four perception questionnaires.
- **Case studies and profiles** were identified during the first phase of the data gathering process. The second phase of the study includes conducting interviews for the case studies and profiles as well doing the write ups.

Outputs

- Quantitative and qualitative data in the form of completed questionnaires from 13 countries.
- Case studies and profiles.
- Research report.

Outcomes

- More nuanced understanding of the positioning of women and men in Southern African media houses.
- Use the findings to advocate for the development of gender policies in media houses as a follow up to the Media Action Plan HIV and AIDS policies. GL aims to work with at least 100 media houses over the next two years in developing gender policies.
- One of the unplanned outcomes of this project is the extent to which it has influenced the global Glass Ceiling study being coordinated by the International Media Women's Federation. As a result of a partnership forged through the Gender and Media Diversity Centre, GL availed its methodology through the IWMF and will be credited in the global report that has aligned many of its questions to the Southern African methodology so that the regional research can be used in the global study. Similarly, Southern Africa will be able to benchmark itself against the global findings.

Next steps

- Complete writing up the case studies and profiles across the 14 countries.
- Data analysis.
- Report writing.
- Report launch at regional and country level from July to September 2009 and identification of media houses to work with in developing gender policies.



"We were amongst the first media houses in Mauritius to have developed a gender policy. Staff have participated in training by Gender Links and Media Watch Organisation-GEMSA. I was part of the delegation of MWO-GEMSA at the Gender and Media Summit in 2006. Gender equality means good governance, gender justice and inclusive democracy. It is of utmost importance for such a big enterprise as ours to give women their due. Women are well educated and have earned their place in society. Women bring a different angle and different perspective to news and programmes. As a public broadcaster we must be a role model." *Excerpts from an interview with Pamela Patten, Director of Radio at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, featured in the forthcoming Glass Ceiling report.*

