



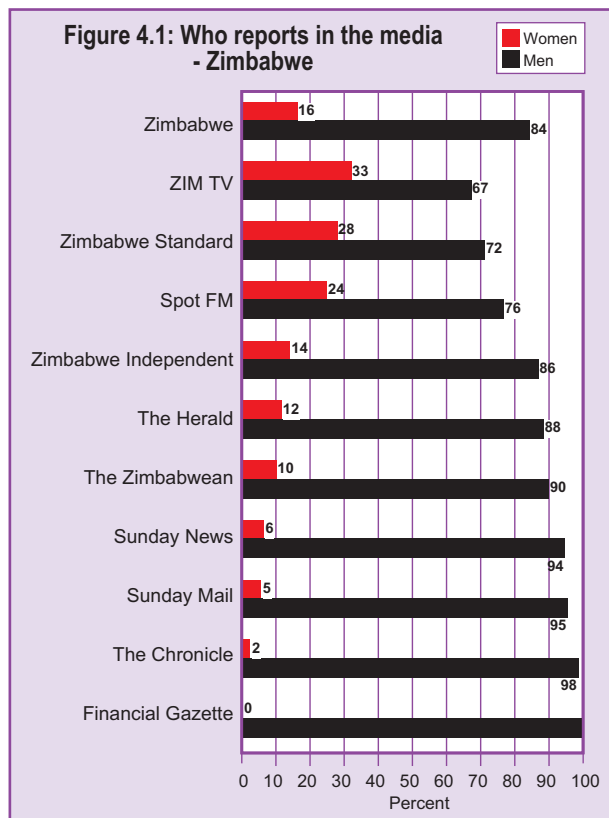
Tarisai Nyamweda, an intern with GL and one of the monitors of GMPS goes through newspapers in October 2009. The Gender in Media Education (2010) study has revealed that there are more female students in journalism and media studies training institutions, but fewer female journalists in the newsrooms. *Photo: Gender Links*

# GENDER IN NEWSROOMS

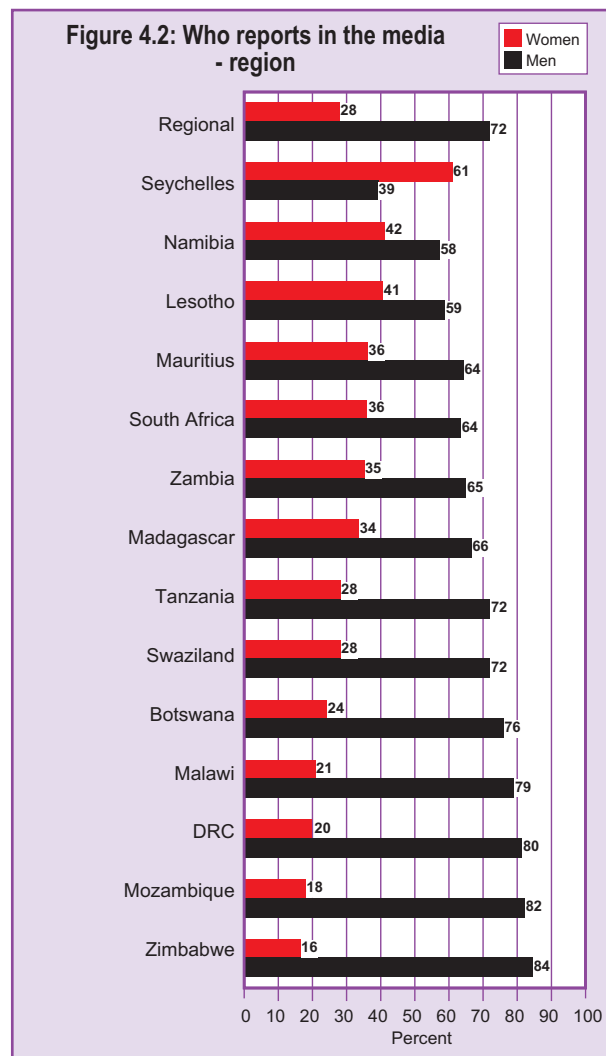
The *Glass Ceilings* Study (2009) which explored the institutional composition of media houses in Southern Africa showed that women in Zimbabwe make up only 13% of those in top management and 10% of those in senior management. The study also showed that women are more likely to be assigned to soft beats rather than men. A significant limitation of the *Glass Ceilings* study in Zimbabwe was that despite repeated efforts the state broadcaster, the largest media employer, did not participate in the study and this might have had a bearing on the overall proportions. The sample was skewed towards the print media in which the proportion of women to men is lower. However, the sample of 1 154 employees was still relatively large, and the study provided a good reflection of the print media in the country. Zimbabwe had the lowest proportion of women employees.

This chapter looks at the people behind the news. It seeks to explore the gendered nature of news coverage by looking at the proportion of women and men reporters and presenters across the media. It addresses key questions, including: Where do women and men stand as reporters in the different beats? Do women access more women sources or do men? Does having more women in management and on reporting staff make a difference?

## Reporters



The *Glass Ceilings* report, which included all media employees, found that women constituted 40% of the total in the region. Figure 4.2 shows that in Zimbabwe women make up 16% of reporters in the GMPS which only looks at journalists. In the region they constitute 28%. Zimbabwe (16%) has the lowest proportion of women reporters, as recorded in the *Glass Ceilings*, which found that Zimbabwe had the lowest proportion of women employees generally.



Sibusisiwe Dube and Buhlebenkosi Tshabangu Moyo engage with findings of the report during the consultative workshop. Photo: Saeanna Chingamuka

## Who reports on what?

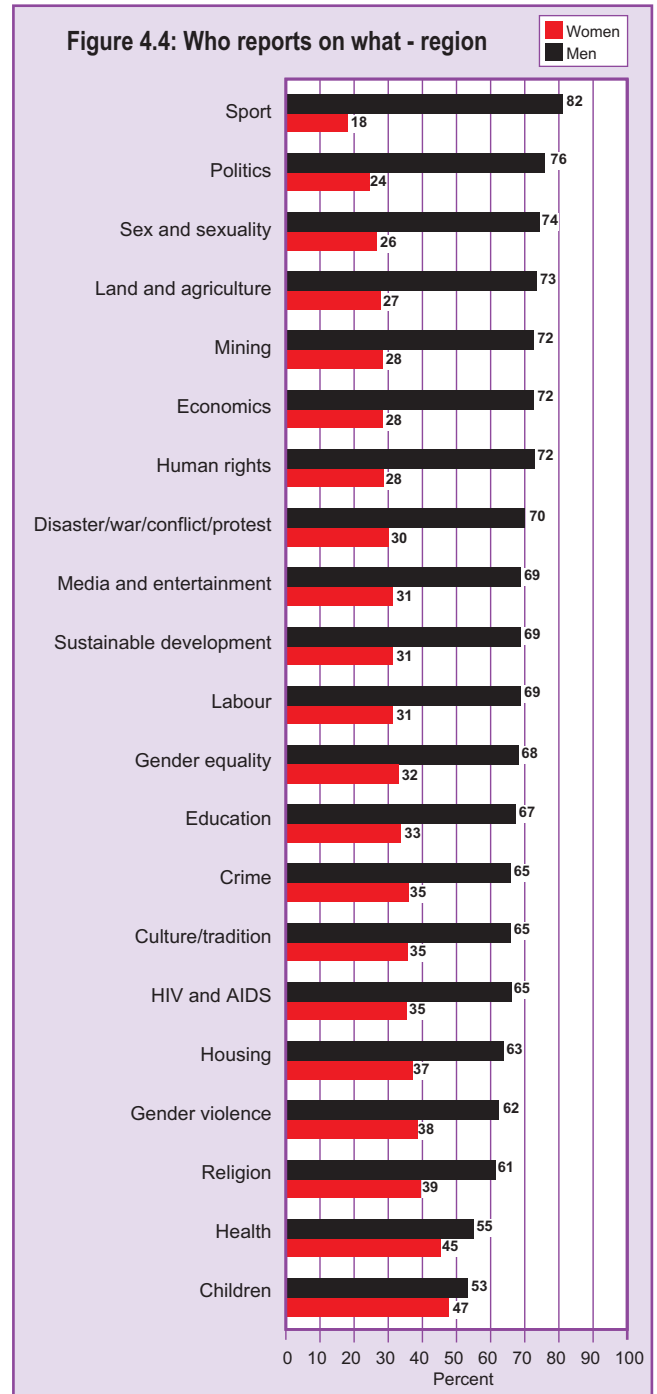
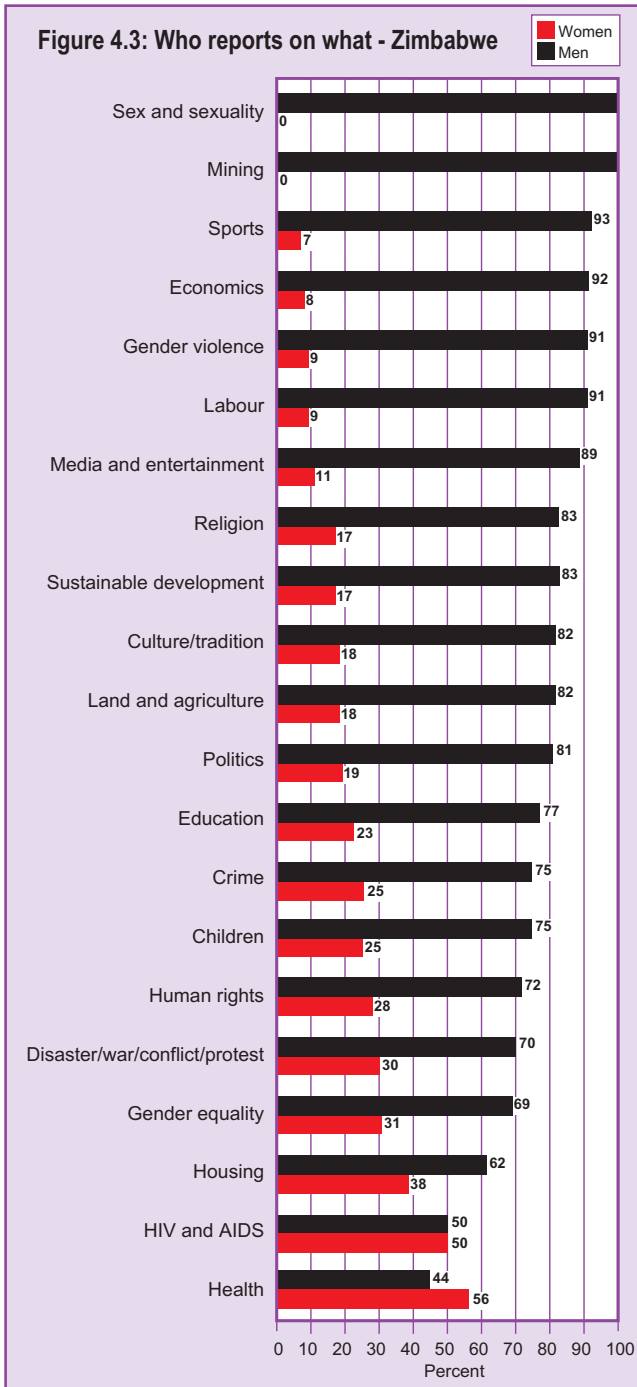


Figure 4.3 shows the stories covered by women and men in Zimbabwe, while figure 4.4 gives comparative data for the region. In Zimbabwe there has not been any shift in the types of stories covered by women with the exception of war/disaster/ conflict which has a high proportion (30%). This could be understood in the context of the political instability and economic meltdown that characterised the monitoring period in Zimbabwe.

There are interesting gender benders in the region where men now cover beats traditionally seen as women's or soft beats. Men reporters cover topics which include children, health, housing and gender violence. Men reporters cover sex and sexuality more frequently than women.

## Beats over time

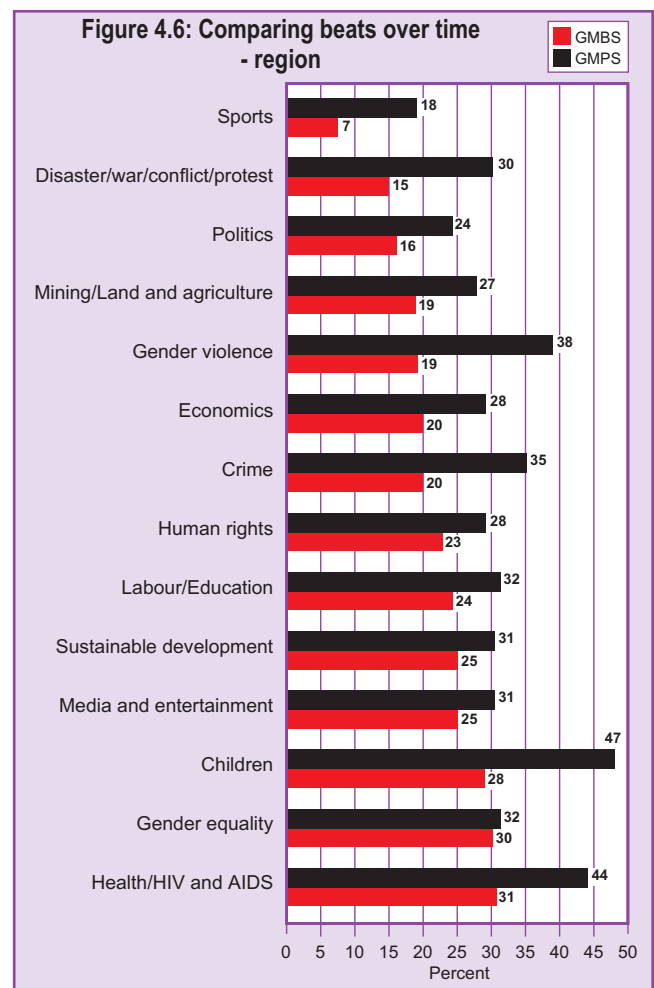
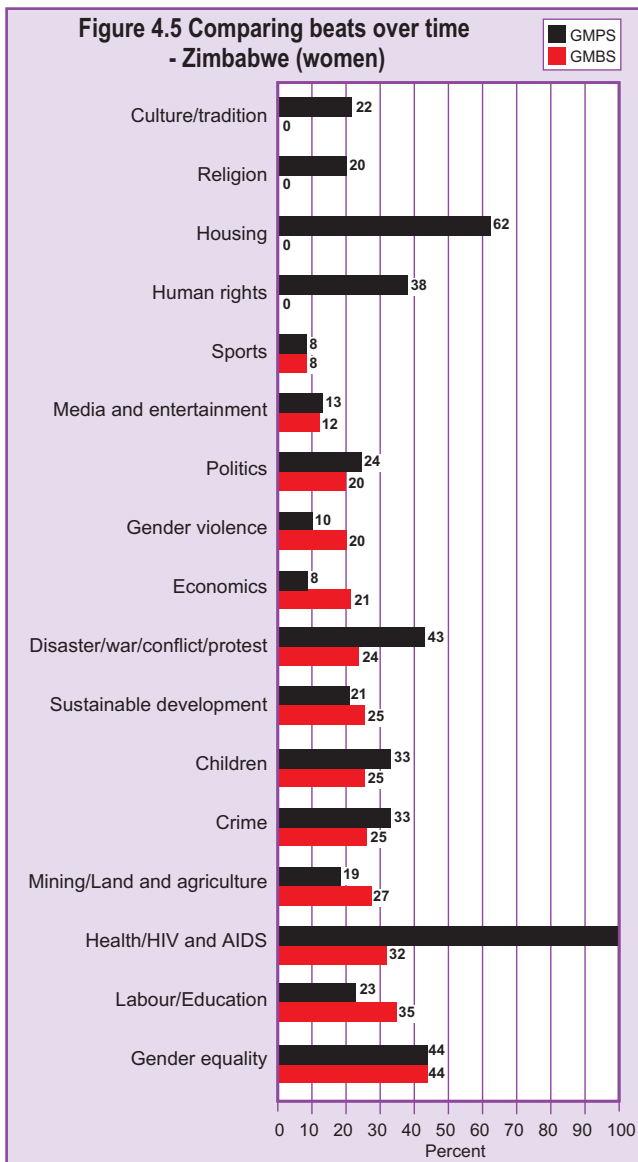
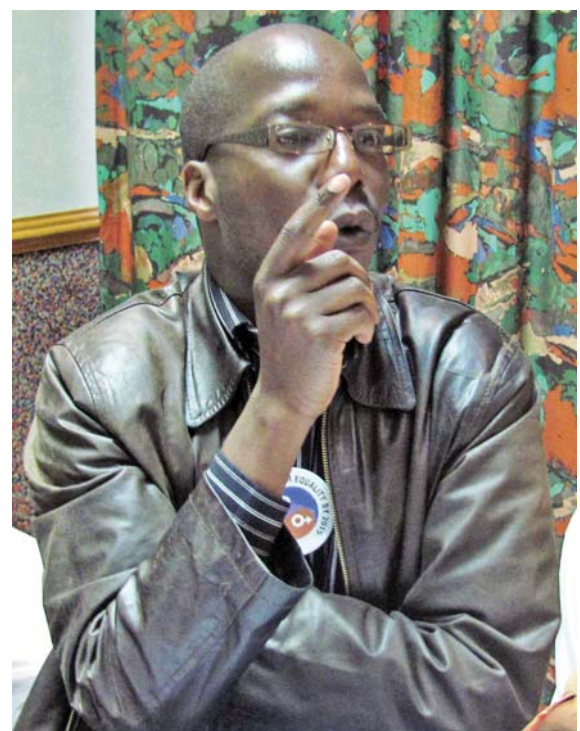


Figure 4.5 illustrates that over the past seven years there have been some positive changes on the beats that women cover in Zimbabwe. The proportion of women reporters on covering disaster/war/conflict/protest increased from 24% in GMBS to 43% in GMPS. Women now cover topics that were previously the preserve of men, which include crime and politics. However, there has been a decline in the proportion of women reporting on economics, labour/education and gender violence.

Figure 4.6 shows that in the region the proportion of women reporters has increased across all beats. In particular, the proportion of women covering sport has increased from 7% to 18%. The changes are breaking the gender division of labour in the newsrooms.



Njabulo Ncube of the Financial Gazette expresses a point at the GMPS consultative workshop in Harare. *Photo: Thabani Mpofu*

## Reporters and presenters

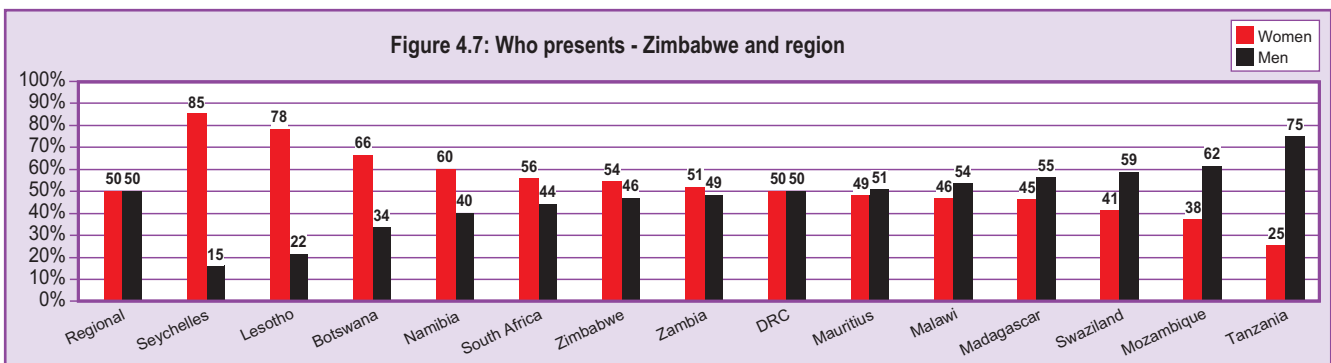
Table eight provides a breakdown of the number of women presenters in television and radio as well as the number of women reporters in television, radio and print media in Zimbabwe and the region. As in the past, there is still definite predominance of women as presenters in television and radio.

The highest proportion of women is in the radio presenter category. At 55%, Zimbabwe has a significantly higher proportion of women as radio presenters than the regional average of 41%. The finding for radio reporters is lower at 24% women compared to 30% in the region.

The low proportion of women reporters (11%) in the print media is of concern. This is mirrored in the region where women constitute 25% of those reported in the print media during the monitoring period.

Table eight: Breakdown of women reporters and presenters - Zimbabwe and region

Category	% Zimbabwe	% Region
TV presenters	53	58
Radio presenters	55	41
TV reporters	33	42
Radio reporters	24	30
Print reporters	11	25



As in the case of the GMMP, which found that women constitute 52% of presenters, the GMPS found there are equal proportions of women and men presenters in the region, as shown in figure 4.7. In Zimbabwe female presenters account for 54% of the total. Seychelles has the highest proportion of presenters at 85%, followed by Lesotho (78%) and Botswana (66%). Tanzania has the lowest proportion at 25%.

## Making a difference?

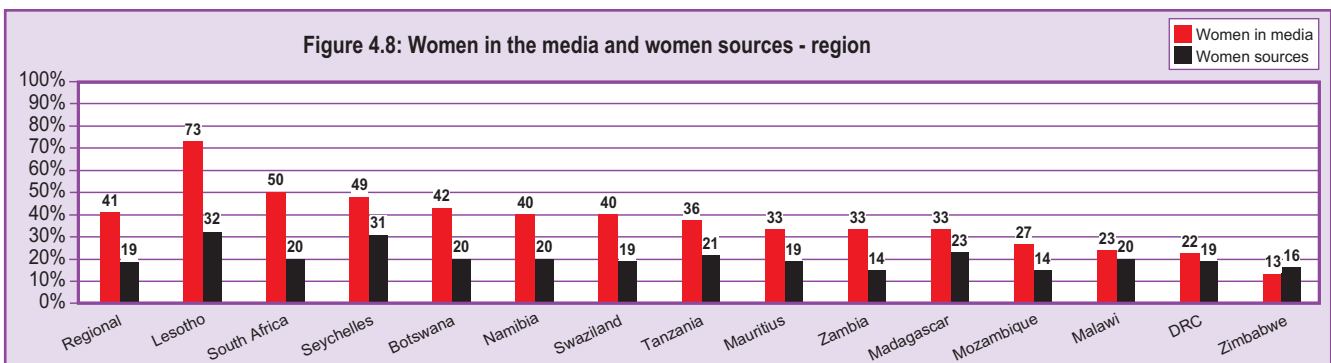


Figure 4.8 compares the data in the *Glass Ceilings* on the overall presence of women in media houses with the proportion of women sources for each country. This shows that having more women in the media does not necessarily result in a higher proportion of women sources. While the proportion of women in media in the region is 41%, women contribute 19% of sources. Zimbabwe has 13% women in media and 20% women as news sources. The presence of women in media is not an end in itself. There is need to raise gender awareness and change mindsets of the women and men who work in the media in the region. There is also a need for gender policies to ensure gender parity in the region.

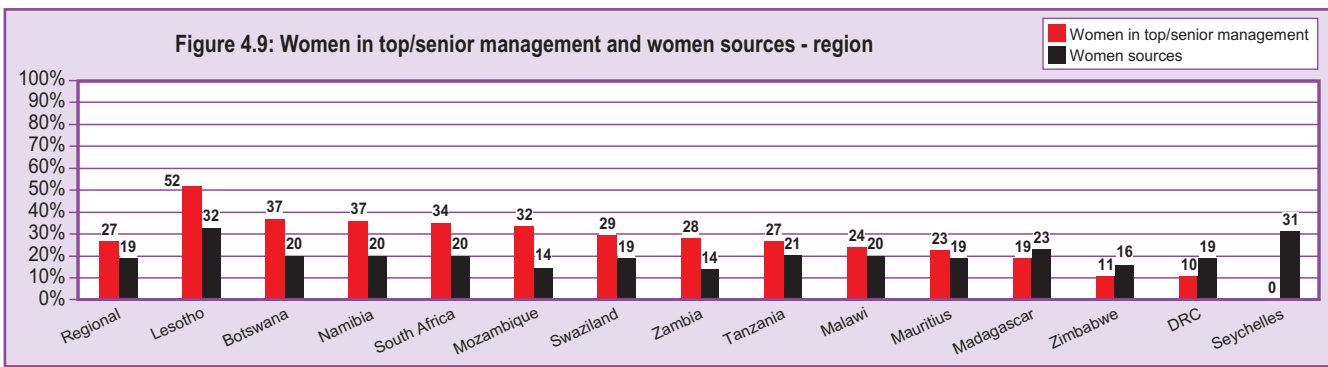
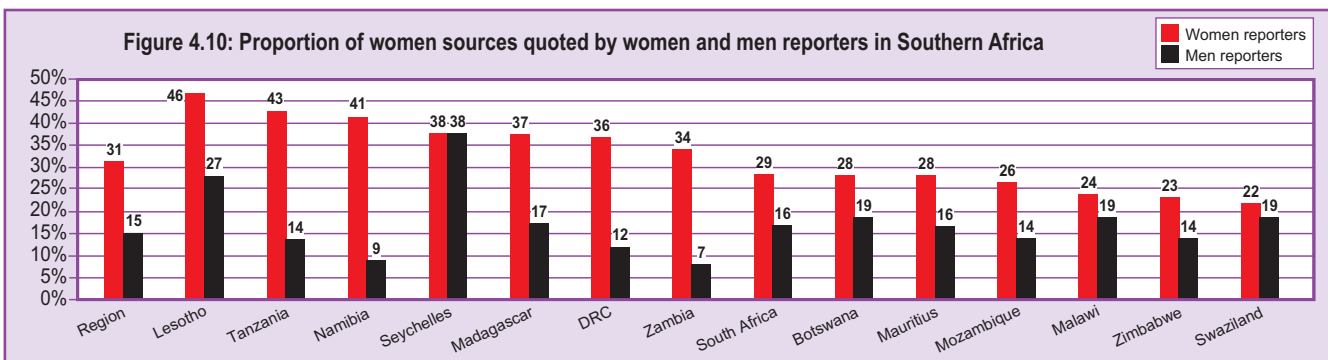


Figure 4.9 compares the proportion of women in top/senior management positions in the *Glass Ceilings* study to the proportion of women sources and also finds that there is no direct correlation. Across the region, women constitute 27% of decision-makers, but only 19% of women sources.

Seychelles has no women in top/senior management positions, but still has the second-highest proportion of women sources in the region. In Zimbabwe, women make up 11% of those in decision-making positions, but only 16% of women sources.



In one of the most important revelations of this study, however, figure 4.10 shows that women reporters are more likely to access women sources more than men. A measure designed by the global GMMP and used in the regional study for the first time, the research found that across the region women sources accounted for 31% of the total in stories reported by women, as opposed to 15% in the case of men. The comparative figures globally are 26% for women and 19% for men. In Zimbabwe, 23% of women journalists and 14% of men journalist sourced women. These findings suggest that while increasing the proportion of women in the media overall and the proportion of women managers specifically make little difference to gender responsiveness of news content, increasing the presence of women journalists in the media does make a difference.

## Conclusion

During the consultative workshop, participants in both Bulawayo and Harare pointed out the missing link between newsrooms and training institutions

as the main reason for there being so few women in media houses. It was noted that while there are many female students in journalism training institutions, they do not stay for long in newsrooms. Some participants point out that newsrooms were not women friendly, while others blame female journalists for giving up easily.

An assistant editor with *Financial Gazette*, Njabulo Ncube said the newsroom was no stroll in the park as “today's newspaper is tomorrow's fish-wrapping”. He challenged female journalists to remain in newsrooms for longer, even if the profession is not highly paid. The editor of the Sunday News cited the stress factor as one of the reasons for there being few women journalists in newsrooms. He said journalism was a “scavenging job”.

Miriam Madziwa-Sibanda, a member of the Zimbabwe Media Commission and gender activist, said that as a commission they had started issuing licences to media organisations, but they had not received a single application from women. She challenged women to become media owners.