

## Malawi Institute of Journalism

### A holistic approach to gender mainstreaming



*'Gender Links has helped MIJ realise that gender mainstreaming should not be left to chance. We are now deliberate and systematic in our efforts to put gender on the agenda.'* Dalitso Nkunika, Executive Director, MIJ.

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>Malawi</b>
MEDIA HOUSE	MIJ FM Radio
Baseline score	
Latest score	
Audience	All Malawians
Key characteristics	Radio stations is a key part of the Malawi Institute of Journalism
Contact person	Dalitso Nkunika
Designation	Executive Director
Contact details	00265 999 491129

The Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ) is a media training institution based in Malawi's second largest city, Blantyre. The institution offers journalism and media training courses for hundreds of aspiring journalists. Headed by Dalitso Nkunika, MIJ has signed an MOU with Gender Links indicating its commitment to mainstream gender in its curriculum.

Apart from being a journalism training institution, MIJ also runs a radio station, The Malawi Institute of Journalism (M I J) established MIJ FM Radio in the year 2000 to be part of its Journalism training infrastructure. The radio Studios (3 - Production, Voice and On-Air Studio) were realized by way of a funded project financed by the Danish Embassy in Malawi. The project, complete with one Transmitter in Blantyre, was commissioned on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2001 as MIJ 90.3 FM. MIJ FM is run by experienced journalists and other graduates. Its Motto is ***"Za ife amakamba ndi anthu"***

Over the last three years, MIJ FM has worked systematically to make gender a key issue in institutional practice and media content. Working with GL, the Radio station developed and adopted a gender policy in 2012. This policy is a sign of MIJ's commitment to create an enabling environment for women and men to achieve their potential. Unlike in the past where gender mainstreaming was left to chance, there are now clear mechanisms to make gender mainstreaming part of institutional practice.

Apart from adopting a gender policy, MIJ signed an MOU with Gender Links (GL) in 2012, signalling commitment to gender equality. The Executive Director, Dalitso Nkunika has been at the forefront. Nkunika says, 'A lot has changed in the last two years. In terms of institutional

composition, women now occupy key positions within the institution and the radio station in particular.'

The board is constituted of 3 men and 2 women. In addition to this, these two women chair critical committees, Finance and Admin and Recruitment. On the recruitment front, MIJ has worked to address gender imbalances from the past. Women constitute 75% of those in management. These include the Executive Director, The Station Manager and the Course Coordinator. Finance and Admin is the only department led by a man.

There are also women who lead key sections at the Radio Station. For example, Roselyn Makamera is the Station Manager. However, there have been challenges, as some women have left, creating more gaps. These gaps are particularly evident in the Finance and Admin units where women are in the minority. When asked why women are leaving the media sector, Nkunika believes that most of them leave for greener pastures. Nkunika is also quick to highlight that change takes time and she is confident that the station will achieve set gender targets by 2015.

In terms of the working environment, MIJ offers maternity leave, which is higher than national minimum requirements. MIJ offers three months compared with national minimum of one month. However, MIJ does not offer any structured paternity leave.

The most obvious gains in the radio station are editorial, where MIJ has introduced gender aware programmes in line with its gender policy. Programmes include Gender Ku Malawi (Gender in Malawi) and Democracy Forum. Gender Ku Malawi focuses on topical gender issues in Malawi. This is through bringing in experts from different fields. Democracy Forum includes phone in sessions. This is part of opening up space for different members of the community to become part of debate and discussion on topical issues affecting the ordinary men and woman.

With regards to news content, MIJ has special news interviews on current gender issues such as gender based violence, education and economic empowerment. According to Makamera, there is a gender desk which follows current developments that affect gender equality. This desk has two female reporters. This does not mean to say that male reporters are barred from covering gender specific issues. For example male reporters also get assignments to do special reports on gender equality.

Another strength is that MIJ has periodic training programmes for its journalists. According to Evelyne Pasanje, the Course Manager at the training section of the institution, all training programmes include gender. MIJ has just reviewed its curriculum and is in the process of getting it finalised. Nkunika also highlights that the GL media COE training programmes have greatly benefited journalists.

On the monitoring and evaluation front, the Executive Director does periodic monitoring of trends in the institution and in content. This has been made possible with support from GL through the media COE project. This process has encouraged her to look internally and see what change MIJ can make. In line with this, MIJ participated in the self-media monitoring exercise in 2012. Lloyd Phiri successfully conducted the monitoring exercise after receiving training from MIJ ED.

What is unique about MIJ is the fact that they have mainstreamed gender in their advertising department as spelt out in the gender policy. Nkunika says the radio station does not accept sexist advertising. She also adds that it is very rare for radio to get such adverts as radio is not a visual medium.

The radio station encourages women to apply whenever there are vacancies, stressing that the institution is an equal opportunity employer. According to Anthony Phanga, Finance and Admin Manager, MIJ is a place where women and men can achieve their full potential. He believes that women have as much potential as men to soar to greater heights.

Moving forward, Makhambura says MIJ needs more support to sustain the current efforts. She says radio personnel still need training because of the staff turnover, which reverses gains made in the past. Pasanje says the greatest impact of the collaboration with GL has been on the training front, where future journalists learn of key gender concepts before they go out to the professional world of journalism.

Nkunika says she is confident that MIJ will achieve the target of gender equality in and through the media by 2015.