



‘Mission Possible’: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit

**Module 11: Definitions and Pointers in
Gender and Media Advocacy**

Definitions and Pointers in Gender and Media Advocacy

1. Glossary of Terms (from Module 1- 4)

Accuracy – Information that the media communicates to the public should not be false, incorrect or misleading. The media must correct mistakes, misrepresentations of facts and apologize to the persons/organizations.

Advocacy - The process of influencing people to generate a policy change.

Communications for advocacy – A means of sharing information ‘packaged’ in different ways and conveyed using media and messages customized for different audiences.

Culturally diverse output – The creation of an organization’s output that reflects the multi-cultural society in which it operates and which is reflective of its diverse stakeholders. But **diversity** for the media is about more than just the numbers alone. Diversifying newsrooms and issues of content, coverage and the media’s role in a pluralistic society are key issues.

Freedom of expression – The unrestricted and uncensored inclusion of views and opinions in organizations’ output enabling debate and dialogue.

Gender – Is the way in which society assigns characteristics and social roles to women and men. In all societies worldwide the roles, functions and characteristics attributed to men have been accorded greater value than those of women.

Gender and media advocacy - includes lobbying, campaigning, research, training, media monitoring, communication and alliance-building activities which seek to advance women’s rights and gender equality in and through the media.

Gender stereotypes – Socially constructed beliefs about women and men. They are constructed through sayings, songs, proverbs, the media, religion, custom, culture, education, drama, etc.

Impartial and balanced output – The production of fair, diverse, and unbiased media output which reflects and informs public opinion and dialogue supported by editorial policies, which are independent from ownership.

Informing public opinion – The delivery of high quality information, which provides the full range of views about an issue, and is reflective of the society in which it is disseminated, to inform rather than influence public debate.

Integrity of information – The provision of quality data, images and information, which is objective and accurate.

Listserv – A mailing list, similar in some ways to a conference, but where messages are sent to the list's address. A copy of the message is then sent to each member or subscriber to the list.

Media literacy – Consumers' understanding of the types of information and its availability, to enable an informed decision about the programming/article/music/image they listen to, view or read.

Sex – The biological differences between women and men.

Sources: The Media CSR Forum, KMPG, 2005; Whose News? Whose Views?, Gender Links, 2001; Gender in Media Training, A Southern African Toolkit, Gender Links and the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, 2002; Making A Difference Strategic Communications to End Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, UNIFEM, 2003; Getting Smart- strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, Gender Links and Women's Media Watch, 2002.

2. Key Points to Remember!

- News is a choice, an extraction process, saying that one event is more meaningful than another event.
- Understanding the media's various roles, its power and sphere of influence and the role it can play in bringing about change are essential for any type of advocacy that aims to change the media.
- The media do not just provide information, education and entertainment. By selecting the types of news stories, choice of words and language used, choice of people interviewed to give their views and perspectives, selection of images, etc., the media sends messages.
- Gender biases and prejudices in the media emerge through the 'choices' media managers, advertisers, and media professionals make each day. Decisions about who will be promoted; who will not; what will make news; what will not; who will be interviewed; who will not; etc are affected by media professionals' beliefs about where women and men 'should be' in a society.
- Good advocacy depends on taking the time to think through how you will work with and influence each of the audiences.
- Central to any approach taken for gender and media advocacy is the need for gender and media activists to engage the media, as oppose to taking an antagonist stance

3. Definitions, Pointers, Checklists and Tools

Glossary of terms (from the 'how to' modules 5-10)

Accountability – Media are accountable to their viewers, readers and listeners, and to the media industry, not to produce misleading stories.

Corporate governance – Systems and processes for ensuring proper accountability, probity and openness in the conduct of an organization's business.

Evaluation – A time-bound exercise that aims to assess systematically and objectively the relevance, performance and success of ongoing and completed programs and projects. Evaluations can also address outcomes or other developments.

Gender-aware policies – Recognize that women, as well as men, have an important role to play in society; that the nature of women's involvement is determined by gender relations that make their involvement different and often unequal; and that consequently women have different needs, interests and priorities, which may sometimes conflict with those of men.

Gender-blind policies – Do not recognize gender inequalities. They mistakenly assume that men and male norms represent the norm for all human beings. As a result, they incorporate biases in favor of existing gender relations and therefore exclude women.

Indicator - A direct or indirect measure of change. Indicators must be realistic and easy to measure and often the indicators used by large organizations are different from those used by medium and small organizations.

Inputs – Resources required for achieving the stated results.

Internet – A network of computers and servers connected by telephone lines, undersea cables, microwave towers and satellite links. It is the infrastructure that allows data – in sound, picture, video or text form – to travel from one computer to another (or from one computer to many)

Listserv – A mailing list, similar in some ways to a conference, but where messages are sent to the list's address. A copy of the message is then sent to each member or subscriber to the list.

Mainstreaming – Bringing issues such as gender equality, for example, into the mainstream of society. Policy processes are reorganized in order to move the attention of gender equality to everyday policies.

Monitoring – An ongoing process to verify systematically that planned activities or processes take place as expected or that progress is being made in achieving planned outputs.

Non-Sexist Language – language that does not exclude one sex or give inequitable treatment on the basis of gender.

Policy – A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual.

Press release – Information about a newsworthy event or activity your organization wants to share with the mass media. Gets the press interested in your issues and allows your organization some degree of control in the way the material is presented.

Press kit – Packaged written material (including speeches, press clippings, press releases, etc) with facts about your issue and information about your organization.

Press conference – Arranged meeting with press members to give a speech and answer questions. Use most often for a major announcement or breaking news.

Process documentation – The capturing of information about the progress and process of achieving objectives in print, on film or through other means so that it can become a historical record and a resource for others to use.

Results – Changes that can be described and measured.

Transparent ownership and practice – Disclosure of an organization's ownership structure and the development of processes/systems which demonstrate editorial independence and integrity.

Transparent and responsible editorial policy – The conformity to clear editorial policies, standards or codes covering issues of accuracy, impartiality and politics.

Sources: The Media CSR Forum, KMPG, 2005; Whose News? Whose Views?, Gender Links, 2001; Gender in Media Training, A Southern African Toolkit, Gender Links and the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, 2002; Making A Difference Strategic Communications to End Violence Against Women, Jenny Drezin and Megan Lloyd-Laney, UNIFEM, 2003; Getting Smart- strategic communications for gender activists in Southern Africa, Colleen Lowe Morna and Lene Overland, Gender Links and Women's Media Watch, 2002.

4. Key points to remember!

- Become conversant with the language and priorities of the media.
- Target media policy makers, media professionals and external policymakers for the development of gender policies, codes and guidelines and regulatory frameworks.
- Cultivate allies, both women and men, within the media.
- Approach the media with more than opinions. Do your homework and research to present the media with facts and figures to illustrate the issues of concern.
- Develop strong media literacy programs to build the capacity of consumers of media – the general public – to put pressure on the media. When audiences speak, the media listen, fearing loss of potential markets and revenue.
- Media monitoring is an effective tool for regularly analyzing media content in order to present the media with data and specific examples of areas of concern. Content analysis, audience research and gender and media audits also are important research techniques.
- Learn how to use the media itself to put gender and media issues onto the news agenda. The writing of opinion and commentary pieces is one media genre that is open to writers outside of the media to get their views across to a wider audience. Gender and media activists should look for and create opportunities to claim this space within the media.