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Strategy

IMS strategy on gender equality (2021-2023)

IMS ◠◡

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Contents

1. Introduction

IMS has decided to put gender at the forefront of its media development work. The prioritisation of gender is outlined in the IMS institutional strategy 2019-2023, which states:

> Societies are not peaceful and democratic without gender equality, and public interest media cannot contribute to a vibrant and inclusive civic space if they perpetuate or reinforce gender inequalities. Therefore, IMS' gender approach advocates for public interest content and media that address the needs and interests of all genders. In line with Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, IMS works to ensure that women and men will have the same rights to freedom of expression and access to information. IMS also recognises the intersectionality of genders and identities.

Since 2012, IMS has increasingly dealt with the question of gender equality and, thus, gained substantial knowledge and experience on working with gender equality in the area of media development.

The gender approach formulated in 2012 defined gender as "about men and women and the relationship between men and women. Gender is socially constructed; differs between and within cultures; and includes differences in roles, responsibilities, opportunities, needs and constraints." Strengthening IMS' gender strategy requires the organisation to adopt a definition of gender that both recognises intersecting identities and the existence of more genders than the heteronormative binary man-woman as well as acknowledging how gender inequalities affect men and boys as well as women and girls.

The gender approach of 2012 concentrated on mainstreaming gender considerations into programmes and projects, policies and methodologies as well as increasing the number of activities specifically addressing gender equality. Individual departments have advanced at their own pace, and IMS has, as an institution, advanced successfully towards this goal, making the gender approach a strategic platform internalised by both staff and partners. Nearly 10 years after the first gender approach was adopted, IMS stands ready to enhance and deepen its strategic thinking on gender equality.

Media plays a crucial role in achieving gender equality as it can be a tool for cultural transformation, set the political agenda, create awareness of social injustices, break taboos and demand accountability from decision makers. There is no doubt our understanding of gender and gender equality must be a broad an inclusive one; stereotypes must be broken, non-binary individuals are to be made visible and efforts to include all voices – with special attention to the intersectionality of identities, as subjects as much as producers of media content – must be made.

At the time of writing this strategy, IMS considers itself ready to adopt a broader and more transformative understanding of gender and to make it an even more central aspect of its media development work. To do this, for the period 2021-2023, IMS will draw on inspiration from intersectional feminism to enhance its work promoting gender equality as part of the human rights-based approach to media development.

The strategy presented in this document is the result of a year-long process of literature review and consultation with staff, partners, journalists and experts. A number of webinars for seminars and debates were organised, and several drafts were distributed and discussed. Consequently, this strategy constitutes a common construction of the larger IMS community.

Much of it describes what IMS is already doing, and staff and partners alike will recognise elements of the current gender approach. The new perspective added – that of intersectional feminism – is not a miraculous and single solution to the challenges of media development. We believe, however, that it will allow us – the people who are the soul of IMS – to further express our commitment to gender equality. This strategy seeks to awaken processes – personal as much as institutional. We are convinced the results will follow.

2. The operational context

2.1 Global trends

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action remains aspirational. Despite progress, women's rights are still infringed upon, as are the rights of the LGBTQI+ minorities. In response, some governments as well as civil society organisations have reacted by deepening their commitment to feminist values.

2.1.1 A bleak global outlook

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap 2021 Report[1] established that, on its current trajectory, it will take 135.6 years to close the gender gap worldwide. According to the United Nations, The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics,[2] less than 50 percent of adult women have joined the labour market, while the burden of unpaid care work continues to fall on them, the glass ceiling remains as low as it was in 1995, with women in only 28 percent of managerial positions, and gender-based violence remains a global issue. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform, no country has reached gender equality, and most certainly, gender equality has not been achieved either in media coverage or in labour conditions in the sector.

2.1.2 A backlash against the women's movement and women's rights

The growth of authoritarianism has caused a backlash against women's and LGBTQI+ rights, which has become more and more strident and organised in recent years. Three phenomena combine to endanger rights: a) nationalistic trends, supported by religious and other conservative actors, that have given rise to right-wing populist groups in the United States, Europe and Latin America; b) religious extremists that embrace theologies seeking to prevent or undo advances in the enjoyment of rights for women and LGBTQI+ individuals and endorsing violence as a sanctionable tool to do it, as may be seen in Africa, Asia and the Middle East; and c) anti-Western rhetoric by autocrats that presents human rights as an imposition that aims to destroy cultures, as evidenced in Russia and the former USSR.

The strategies against gender equality may include all or some of the following elements: a discourse that delegitimises gender equality decisions ("affirmative action discriminates against men"), a dismantling and reframing of gender policies (the return of the private space and "family values"), a lack of implementation of existing strategies, plans, guidelines and procedures (the halt of contraceptive programmes in public health programmes, for instance), and the erosion of mechanisms of participation for women (the elimination of participatory gender-sensitive budgets or of gender focal point institutions or of gender institutions themselves). The manipulation of anti-gender ideologies – promoted through campaigns of disinformation,

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[1] World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap 2021 Report, 30 March 2021.
[2] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics, 20 October 2020.

oftentimes replicated in media coverage, reinforced by governmental voices – puts women, LGBTQI+ individuals and men not conforming to gender norms at considerable physical and psychological risk.

2.1.3 Women's burden during the Covid-19 pandemic

The pandemic and associated public health crisis have laid bare endemic gender inequality and worsened the living conditions of women. Before the pandemic, the United Nations Development Program had estimated that, by 2021, for every 100 men from 25 to 34 years of age living in extreme poverty there would be 118 women.[3] This gap will now worsen. According to the United Nations Trade and Development Conference, more women than men left the labour market during the pandemic, a trend that could reverse decades of progress.[4] Add to this the increase of gender-based violence provoked by prolonged lockdowns, and the pandemic has also become a gender crisis. The report, The Missing Faces of the COVID-19 Pandemic, commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, covering India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the U.K. and the U.S.,[5] showed results in line with general studies on the presence of women in the media: it revealed a significant bias towards men's views in news coverage of the public health crisis.

2.1.4 The mixed results of UNSCR 1325

The adoption of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000 constituted a major advancement for women's rights in the agenda of peace and security. Yet, twenty years later, despite some successes, particularly in prioritising the end of impunity for gender-based violence, the breach between objectives and achievements remains evident. The presence of women in the negotiation of peace agreements makes them 64 percent less likely to fail and 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years, but women negotiators are still rarely seen. According to a UN Women study,[6] mediators and facilitators still declined to include women, arguing that the success of negotiations depended on effectiveness rather than inclusiveness. In that sense, the international community tends to underestimate the peace building processes that take place at community level, where women play a fundamental part, in favour of formal conversations among political and military elites. This disequilibrium is reflected in media coverage.

2.1.5 The rise of feminist foreign policies

In October 2014, Sweden became the first country in the world to adopt a feminist foreign policy. Sweden's foreign policy includes the following pillars: respect for human rights, the right to live free from sexual and gender-based violence, inclusion of women in peace processes, political participation and economic empowerment, and sexual and reproductive rights. Mexico and Canada followed suit, and the United Kingdom launched a feminist foreign aid policy. Denmark, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain and Switzerland have expressed interest in moving towards a feminist foreign policy. A feminist foreign policy links gender equality with development, and it embraces the Women, Peace and Security agenda, rejects the traditional canons of militarisation and emphasises the participation of women in the political processes of peace and reconstruction. The heart of this strategy is found in Security Council Resolution 1325, a cornerstone of IMS's current work on gender equality in conflict and post-conflict countries.

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[3] UNWomen, From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of Covid-19 Response, 2020.

[4] Zarrilli, Simonetta and Henri Luomaranta. Gender and Unemployment: Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic, UNCTAD, 8 April 2021

[5] Kassova, Luva. The Missing Perspectives of Women in Covid-19 News: A Special Report on Women's Under-Representation in News Media, September 2020.

[6] Coomaraswamy, Radhika (lead author). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, and Securing the Peace, A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, UNWomen, 2015.

2.1.6 The growth of the feminist non-profit sector

Until recently, only women's rights organisations called themselves feminist. In the past five years, a number of humanitarian and development organisations, such as ActionAid, Oxfam and Plan International, have made the decision to adopt feminist principles. For these organisations, feminism is not a state of being but of becoming, learning to reach gender equality as they go. International civil society is losing the fear of stigmatisation that comes with the word "feminism", is aware of the challenges of working within a feminist framework in countries where women's and LGBTQI+ rights are violated systemically and is finding ways to work with national partners, accompanying them and joining forces to reconcile the search for gender equality with respect for cultural norms.

2.1.7 The #MeToo Movement

The hashtag #MeToo was used millions of times.[7] by women around the world to share their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse. The global campaign #MeToo, which became viral in 2017, has altered the workplace for the better and, in the process, contributed to end the normalisation of sexual harassment. The massive social media movement began with thousands of survivors telling their stories and demanding accountability from perpetrators, and soon became a space for women organising against violence and oppression. The #MeToo campaign expanded around the world with specific hashtags, such as #UnVioladorEnTuCamino starting in Chile and quickly spreading through the Hispanic world, the Palestinian #Tali3at protest movement that erupted following the brutal killing of Instagrammer Esraa Gharib in late 2019, the #MosqueMetoo movement about women abused during the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the #Collectif490 movement in Morocco that was ignited by the arrest and conviction of a Moroccan journalist and her partner and campaigns for the abolition of a law that criminalises sexual relations out of wedlock.

2.2 Gender and media

IMS established in its Gender Approach from 2012 that gender is essential to free speech and citizen participation, in terms of men and women's equal participation in media production, fair and accurate representation in media content, as well as access to media and information that is relevant to them. For men and women to participate in media production, workspace in the media must be safe, inclusive and free from harassment and discrimination. The portrayal of men and women in the media content needs to be free from hate speech and harmful stereotypes and have a gender balance among sources. Women's and men's access to information means both access to media and media content that cater to their information needs.

2.2.1 Women's participation in media

IMS-commissioned studies of women's work conditions in the media industries in several countries confirm both the underrepresentation of women in the journalism profession and the existence of the glass ceiling. The identified obstacles for women in the media industry include the absence of laws and bylaws protecting women against discrimination and lack of both complaint mechanisms and adequate work conditions and facilities to cater to women's needs. Furthermore, IMS research shows pervasive sexual harassment of women in the media industry as well as immense pressure from families and communities on women to refrain from working in the media.[8]

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[7] The hashtag #MeToo was used 500,000 times on Twitter and in 12 million Facebook posts by 4.7 million people during the first 24 hours only.
[8] The Reporting Heros, Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC), 2016.

Jordan

Men account for 77 percent of all media workers and dominate almost all leadership positions.

Somalia

Women occupy only 5 out of 51 top positions, 14 out of 40 in middle management and 17 out of 59 in operational management in the media industry.

See below for references on statistics from Jordan[9] and Somalia[10].

2.2.2 Safety of women journalists

IMS' research on the safety of female journalist reached three major findings: women journalists are more exposed to sexual violence than their male counterparts, are more often subject to online harassment, ranging from insults to demeaning images to threats of sexual assault, and women journalists also face sexual harassment at the workplace, oftentimes in environments without proper protocols to handle the harassment.

Global

Out of the 92 women journalists killed since 1992, 70 occurred in the last decade.

From the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.[11]

While women journalists are subject to the same set of threats and violence as men journalists, they are also targeted with gender-based safety threats. Sexualised violence against women journalists is a form of gender-based violence that occurs frequently but is grossly under-reported. Threats of rape, descriptions of rape and discrediting reporting of rape are connected forms of sexual violence used to silence women in the media. Online and digital threats of violence are often misogynistic, gendered and sexualised and they are a pervasive problem for women journalists, politicians and women human rights defenders alike. Minority women, including sexual and gender minorities, are particularly targeted by sexist hate speech[12] and other forms of hate speech. Women journalists and politicians are particular targets of gendered and sexualised disinformation, aiming to intimidate and harass them to prevent them from doing their work, ultimately pushing women out from the public space and thereby undermining democracy. Finally, sexual harassment can occur both online and offline and has an intention and/or aim to intimidate the victim into silence and self-censorship.

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[9] The status of women journalists in Jordan's media institutions, December 2018.

[10] Somalia baseline study.

[11] Combatting violence against women. Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its roots and its consequences, May 2020. A/HRC/44/52.

[12] In 2019, the Council of Europe obtained the first internationally agreed definition of sexism as acts and speech "based on the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex or gender".

UNESCO online survey of women journalists

73 percent had experienced online harassment.
25 percent received threats.
18 percent were threatened with sexual violence.
20 percent reported that online threats had materialised offline.

International Women's Media Foundation and Trollbusters survey

37 percent who had faced online violence refrained from reporting on certain issues.
29 percent considered leaving the profession.

UNESCO online survey[13] and International Women's Media Foundation and Trollbusters survey[14] data available below.

2.2.3 Women's representation in the news

The Global Media Monitoring Project, which spanned 25 years and 114 countries, showed that, as of the end of 2015, women represented only 24 percent of the persons covered in the media – and the representation of women has only seen modest improvement over time. The regional difference spans from 18 percent of women in the news in the Middle East to 20 percent in Asia, 22 percent in Africa and 29 percent in Latin America.[15] Another study by UNWomen found that, in conflict and post-conflict countries, only 13 percent of the stories on themes related to peace and conflict resolution had women as subjects, and women were central to the story in only six percent of the cases. Women were also more than twice as likely to be identified as a victim.[16] On a global level, only four percent of all the stories challenge gender stereotypes.[17]

Latin America

Indigenous people make up only one percent of subjects and sources (persons seen, heard or spoken about) in television news stories despite constituting eight percent of the population in the region. Out of this meagre proportion, only three out of 10 are women.

Statistics from Who makes the news?[18]

2.2.4 Obstacles to freedom of expression of LGBTQI+ people

LGBTQI+ communities around the world, especially in societies where sexual and gender diversity is considered taboo, face numerous overlapping obstacles to freedom of expression and accurate media representation.

Legal restrictions include explicit and non-explicit legal barriers, extrajudicial persecution, inadequate protections, impunity and widespread misunderstanding/misinterpretation of laws that pertain to sexual and gender diversity. Social hostilities include stigma, violence, hate crimes, hate speech and discrimination based on actual or perceived LGBTQI+ identity that diminish access to equal treatment in all sectors of civic life, including in the media. Finally, legal restrictions and social hostilities combine to pressure LGBTQI+ communities (media sources and subjects) and journalists (media producers) to self-censor. This self-

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[13] Posetti, Julie, Nermine Aboulez, Kalina Bontcheva, Jackie Harrison, Silvio Waisbord. Global Survey on Online Violence against Women Journalists, 2021.

[14] Ferrier, Michelle. Attacks and Harassment. Their Impact on Female Journalists and Their Reporting. International Women's Media Foundation and Trollbusters, 2018.

[15] Makaria, Sarah. Global Media Monitoring Project, World Association for Christian Communication, 2015.

[16] Coomaraswamy, Radhika (lead author). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, and Securing the Peace, A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, UNWomen, 2015.

[17] Makaria, Sarah. Global Media Monitoring Project, World Association for Christian Communication, 2015.

[18] Who makes the news? 2020, preliminary findings.

censorship results in an absence of ethical, accurate and sensitive media coverage about LGBTQI+ communities. The coverage that does emerge in hostile environments is often misinformed or malicious, putting vulnerable LGBTQI+ communities at risk.

2.2.5 Legal and policy framework on gender equality and the media

Global framework

- The Convention for Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW (1979): Provides the basis for realising gender equality through ensuring women's equal access to and participation in political and public life.

- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995): Identifies media as a critical area of concern and supports the increase in participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication, as well as the need to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

- The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000): Reaffirms the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building.

- Resolution of the International Federation of Journalists' 24th World Congress (2001): Mainstreams equality in journalism and confirms that gender equality in journalism and trade unionism is a central concern.

- United Nations Resolutions on the Safety of Journalists (UN GA Res 71/175 and HRC Res 33/2, 38/5, and 38/7), Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women (A/HRC/44/52) and the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity call for a gender-based approach to the question of the safety of journalists.

- Sustainable Development Goals: Include specific targets for gender and media under gender equality and peace, justice, and strong institutions.

- Yogakarta principles plus 10: Defines human rights standards as related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

Regional norms and practices

- The Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe: Lays down tasks for the media, in particularly the need to self-regulate and establish policies to prevent gender stereotypes.

- Several recommendations of the Council of Europe, such as Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, Recommendation CM/Rec(2013) on gender equality and Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism.

- The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy: Includes a section on the media, with emphasis on combating sexist hate speech.

- The Belem do Pará Convention: Encourages the media to formulate guidelines that enhance respect for the dignity of women.

- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa: Specifically mentions the need to combat stereotypes.

- Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Association of Southeast Nations: Contains a section on the responsibility of the media.

3. Intersectional feminism

3.1 Intersectional feminism to deepen the Human-Rights Based Approach

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) is a conceptual framework IMS has adopted in its media development work, which is based on international human rights standards. At the heart of the HRBA is the recognition that inequality and marginalisation deny people their human rights and keep them in poverty.

In the implementation of its mandate, IMS has found that the HRBA is insufficient on its own to address gender inequality. Adding perspectives from intersectional feminism to the HRBA decreases the risk of gender blindness and allows for a more comprehensive approach to rights and empowerment.

Feminism can be defined simply as believing in and striving for equal rights and opportunities for people of all genders. Feminism embodies a framework to interpret a social reality of inequality that is manifested in norms, practices and customs; it is a lens through which to understand power relations in society.

Intersectional feminism argues that the categories "women" and "men" do not encompass all power relations and that all forms of societal oppression are interlinked. Examples of identities that may overlap to deepen discrimination are ethnicity, race, language, religion, class, ability, age and sexual orientation and gender identity.

The search for gender equality alone does, in fact, leave several factors of discrimination out and IMS will thus incorporate the concept of intersectionality into its work. IMS understands intersectionality as the cumulative manner in which different forms of discrimination combine, overlap or intersect to make some groups of women more vulnerable. Further, IMS acknowledges the need of everyone to self-represent and works towards increasing the voices and visibility of excluded groups in media coverage.

4. Intersectional feminism and media development

4.1 Analytical frameworks for media development

Drawing on a variety of analytical frameworks including intersectional feminism, the key principles that orient IMS' media development work are:

Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

HRBA offers a set of tools and methods that aims at systematically integrating human rights standards and principles in programming to enhance the realisation of human rights. In the core of HRBA lies the inclusion of marginalised groups and safeguarding of rights for everyone.

Nothing about me without me

In media development work, "nothing about me without me" means to ensure that people from different communities, especially marginalised ones, are included from the outset of a project design process to define which issues are relevant to them and which solutions are the most suitable.

Leave no one behind

Leave no one behind is the transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In international development, this is a call to ensure that the most underserved benefit from development work.
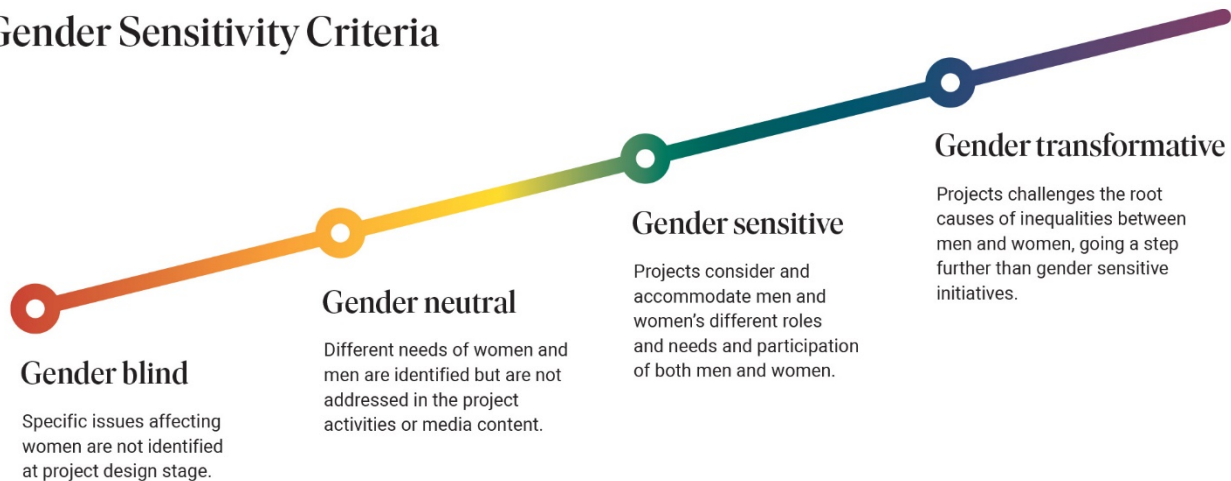
Do no harm

The "do no harm" premise for international development and humanitarian interventions requires an understanding of the potentially harmful impact of aid within a particular context, with the goal to limit or prevent unintended negative effects. For intersectional feminist work, "do no harm" means striving to not reinforce harmful gender roles and stereotypes or other forms of oppression either through the selection of partners or beneficiaries or through the design of a programme or project.

Search for social justice

Social justice journalism assumes that a more inclusive and equal society can be achieved by covering the most vulnerable and the most disenfranchised, that dissent deserves space and respect in the news and that the power of facts and emotion in storytelling can help to galvanize collective action.

IMS aims to conduct programmes and projects that are gender transformative, i.e., work with the media to address the root causes and symptoms of gender inequality in patriarchal societies and use the following chart as a guide.

Gender Sensitivity Criteria

Gender blind

Specific issues affecting women are not identified at project design stage.

Gender neutral

Different needs of women and men are identified but are not addressed in the project activities or media content.

Gender sensitive

Projects consider and accommodate men and women's different roles and needs and participation of both men and women.

Gender transformative

Projects challenges the root causes of inequalities between men and women, going a step further than gender sensitive initiatives.

4.2 Theory of Change

IMS institutional Theory of Change envisions peaceful, democratic and stable societies with accountable structures and institutions that are sustained and promoted through strong and effective public interest media in an enabling environment with freedom of expression and access to information.

In order to comply with its Theory of Change, IMS understands that, for societies to be peaceful, democratic and stable, they also need to be gender equal and inclusive and ensure that all societal groups enjoy freedom of expression and access to information relevant to them.

IMS intends to add an intersectional feminist perspective to the institutional Theory of Change in order to contribute to the transformation of the practices and, ultimately, the sexist, racist and exclusive culture prevailing in the media and media development sectors. Furthermore, IMS is fully aware that societal changes begin in-house, and leadership comes by example.

IMS' goal is to contribute to a vibrant and inclusive civic space where media-induced actions further human rights, gender and social equality, accountability and positive social, political and cultural change. To bring about this change, having gender and social equality at the core of what we do, IMS will work to ensure that the needs and voices of women and non-binary media workers from different ethnic, religious and other groups inform the approach to public interest content and that an enabling environment also addresses their needs.

IMS' Theory of Change identifies three strategic priorities to bring about its overall impact goal: a) enhance the quality and inclusivity of public interest content and the viability of media producing and distributing this content; b) create conditions that encourage the viable production, distribution and consumption of inclusive public interest content (an "enabling environment"); c) undertake the organizational development necessary for IMS to implement this strategy.

4.2.1 Enhance the quality and inclusivity of public interest content

IMS' goal is to have public interest media that is relevant to and reaches audiences of all groups of society, so that they can discuss, share and act on this content, and to have media and civic groups and organisations – especially women's and minority organisations – collaborate to bring about this change. To support and facilitate this change process, IMS will focus on accurately portraying people of all genders and marginalised groups, as well as self-representation in the media of people from excluded groups.

This change processes will be facilitated through supporting various forms of journalism that advances the rights and equality agenda:

- Gender transformative ethical journalism strives for gender balance in both content and among sources, seeks different perspectives, allows for different groups to be self-represented and actively combats hate speech and stereotypical and other diminishing content based on gender, sexuality and other identities.

- Gender and conflict sensitive journalism actively seeks the perspectives and voices of people of all genders on conflict and peace building and applies a conflict-deescalating and rights-based perspective to conflict reporting.

- Feminist journalism generates critical thought that can rectify gender inequalities and help us question a reality shaped by patriarchy, seeks those that are forgotten, provides space to the most underserved communities and requires willingness to engage with sources and enthusiasm to seek new perspectives on old themes.

Activity areas:

- Development of gender transformative media ethics.

- Media monitoring from a gender perspective or with focus on other historically oppressed groups.

- Inclusion of gender-sensitive journalism, feminist journalism and participatory journalism in training curriculums and capacity building of content-producers in gender-sensitive journalism.

- Support for media outlets focusing on feminism, gender equality and social justice, etc.

4.2.2 Enabling diverse and inclusive environments

Media content does not reflect society if the newsroom does not reflect society. On the contrary, newsrooms that have a preponderance of a specific group tend to sideline the voices, perspectives and interests of other groups. IMS will therefore continue to support the development of inclusive workspaces, free from discrimination and harassment, through inclusive and transformative policies and mechanisms.

Theory of Change focuses on the steps in the change process by initially creating the space for women to organise both internally in organisations, as well supporting women's media organisations to engage in dialogues in an enabling environment, thus adding feminist perspective on safety, laws and policies.

IMS' work on safety, protection and ending impunity will be guided by an in-depth understanding of media-related gender-based violence and the specific security threats of women and non-binary media content producers. Local safety mechanisms will protect media workers of all genders, mitigate the risks they face and address impunity both online and offline. Additional attention will be given to the safety of people from marginalised or vulnerable groups when participating in the media as content producers and sources.

IMS will address policies and laws that explicitly or implicitly restrict freedom of expression for people based on their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, disability or other discriminatory factors. IMS will also focus on policies and laws to prevent sexist hate speech, gendered and sexualised disinformation and online and offline violence.

The creation of protective environments for women, discriminated and oppressed groups is not only the right thing to do, it may also become a good business decision. IMS will encourage research to measure the impact of gender equality in the workplace on the growth of audiences.

Activity areas:

- Support legislation against gender-based violence, whether physical or online, and sexist hate speech.

- Research on safety of female journalists, taking into consideration an intersectional perspective.

- Safety mechanisms addressing the needs of female media content producers.

- Psychosocial support/mental health support for female and minority journalists, especially in conflict situations.

- Development of anti-discrimination and anti-harassment workplace policies and bylaws.

- Support for women, especially from minority communities, to enter journalism and advance their careers in the media.

- Creation of or capacity building of existing self-regulatory mechanisms to address gender inequalities in the media.

- Track competitiveness of media outlets and audiences in relation to the composition of the workforce.

5. Organisational development for equality

IMS acknowledges the need to lead by example. IMS is also aware that implementing the principles of HRBA and intersectional feminism requires time and careful considerations. It requires an understanding that the self is political and that societal change begins with the recognition of the existence of patriarchy and a will to change one's own practices that help perpetuate it. It means reflecting on visible and hidden power structures and practices and actively work for a more inclusive and participatory decision-making and actively combat all forms of inequalities and discrimination. Staff and allies will be mobilised for change, creating the necessary mechanisms for discussion, mentoring and support. Working with the most excluded groups will finally require balancing donor requirements and IMS's own expectations with capacity of partners to ensure IMS can work with entities in a lean manner, adding as few burdens to partners as possible and understanding their contexts and limitations.

IMS' management and staff are sensitive to the challenges posed by different contexts. Still, IMS expects of its partners full commitment with the principle of gender equity, diversity and inclusion. To that effect, IMS' partners' assessments will take into consideration gender analysis and will serve to define the paths to provide assistance to guarantee a gender-inclusive, diverse and respectful working environment.

5.1 Leadership for gender equality

Feminist scholar on organisation theory and leadership Srilatha Batliwala defines feminist leaders as "women [and men] with a feminist perspective and vision of social justice, individually and collectively transforming themselves to use their power, resources and skills in non-oppressive, inclusive structures and processes to

mobilise others – especially other women – around a shared agenda of social, cultural, economic and political transformation for equality and the realisation of rights for all."[19]

Feminist leadership is an approach and strategy for social justice which challenges and transforms power relations and structures into an enabling environment for the potential of individuals. Transformative feminist leadership is about sharing power and making decisions based on participation and consultation. It is leading in a way that people are heard, respected and included. It is celebrating diversity and letting people thrive in their own capacity and in their societies. Feminist leadership is also about establishing cooperation instead of competition and building on the ideas and skills of the whole group rather than the leadership of one or a few powerful individuals.

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[19] Batliwala, Srilatha. 2010. Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud. pg 14.

5.2 Values and principles of IMS' work

The key values that characterise IMS' media development work are:

Empathy: IMS makes empathy a trait of its mandate. IMS believes that empathy makes better workplaces with happier and more productive colleagues. Most importantly, empathy also produces better journalists, more willing to listen to the most marginalised, more willing to see the hidden causes, more committed to diversifying coverage, more dedicated to ending gender inequalities.

Solidarity: IMS believes that solidarity connects us to others and embodies our commitments as individuals and members of a community to fight for equality, inclusion and social justice.

Participation: IMS values its allies on the ground as equal partners who are brought in at the outset of the formulation of projects to construct them together in order to guarantee joint ownership.

Inclusion: As a community dispersed around the world, IMS strives for diversity in its workplace as much as within its partners and fully understands that societies have built cultural norms that require differential consideration. Inclusion is closely linked to the respect needed to build meaningful personal and organisational relationships.

Collaboration: IMS is willing to collaborate with governments, civil society and media to build coalitions and alliances to further the quality of journalism and the enjoyment of rights.

Reflexivity: IMS engages in questioning of its own practices and beliefs and puts an interest in monitoring and learning in order to foster an atmosphere of constant improvement and innovation.

Responsiveness: IMS seeks to respond in an timely manner to changes in the environment and needs of partners and allies. Reflexivity and responsiveness go hand in hand to ensure that IMS listens, converses and makes effective changes.

IMS considers that the key to the success and sustainability of media development requires the empowerment of the communities of media workers we cooperate with. Thus, the values that drive processes that lead to change are as important as the results.

5.3 Programme cycle management

Programme cycle management (PCM), including an integrated HRBA with a feminist perspective can contribute to ensuring gender transformative processes and impact. Hence, HRBA can be beneficially further integrated into IMS' programmatic PCM by applying HRBA working principles in each phase of the PCM.

As a way of organising what to consider when applying a HRBA, one can use the PLANET+ principles[20] that provide questions to ask and aspects to consider when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes and/or projects.

As part of the design phase, it is essential to analyse and assess what possible negative effects on gender equality may unintentionally be caused by the programme/project in order to do no harm and leave no one behind.

HRBA recognises that pursuing human rights objectives is not enough but requires development of e.g. indicators that are gender transformative to the extent possible and at the very minimum gender-sensitive;

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[20]The PLANET+ principles is a merger of Mandana Zarrehparvar's PANEL+ approach and Sida's P.L.A.N.E.T. HRBA approach.

systematic monitoring of these indicators; harvesting of learning and evaluation of both processes and outcomes.

By integrating HRBA and intersectional feminism in IMS' programmatic PCM, it will enable the organisation and partners to strengthen their way of working with international human rights standards more systematically and underpin the goal of moving toward a feminist intersectional approach for programming. The latter will be an effect of how a HRBA will enhance analysis that portrays the impact of social, economic and political relations between men and women and their different backgrounds as well as show the multiple forms of discrimination.

6. The path forward

Following the adoption of the Gender Equality Strategy, an action plan will be developed based on the following priority areas:

Priority area 1: Gender sensitive or transformative programming

Suggested activities:

- Review of PCM including integration of PLANET+ and other principles for gender transformative programme management and roll it out internally and among partners.

- Create step by step guidelines/tools made available to all staff to ensure more consistent understanding and ownership of gender concepts and tools relevant to IMS' core work and added value.

- Build capacity of staff.

- Develop criteria and mechanism for quality assurance and compliance.

- Make sure IMS' approaches to content creation, business viability, safety and protection and policy and law reform are inclusive and transformative.

- Conduct gender audits of IMS country programmes.

Priority area 2: Activities specifically addressing gender inequalities and feminism

Suggested activities:

- Build capacity of staff and partners on issues related to gender equality and media development.

- Fundraise.

- Inclusive and transformative budgeting.

Priority area 3: Research and knowledge development on the intersection of media development and gender equality and what works to achieve transformative change

Suggested activities:

- Research and studies on selected topics related to gender equality and media development.

- Publish knowledge briefs.

- Organise and/or participate in learning events, debates, etc., on gender transformative media development.

- Evaluate IMS gender work 2012-2022.

Priority areas 4: Partnership and alliances for gender equality and media development.

Suggested activities:

- Initiate partnership and cooperation with women's, LGBTQI+ and other minority NGOs.

- Select local partners with a view of contributing to transformational change in their environments.

- Conduct gender audits.

- Provide gender transformative budgets for national operation.

- Transfer know how on gender budgeting to partners.

- Seek alliances with men and male-led organisations committed to gender equality.

- Provide training on intersectional feminism to interested partners.

Priority Area 5: Leadership and organisational development that draws on feminist values and theories.

Suggested activities:

- Develop its understanding of and concept for leadership and organisational development.

- Use inclusive language.

- Identify and remove obstacles for gender equality within the organisation.

- Pay attention to informal practices and norms.

- Further advance the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

- Curate, organise and commission news, media and communication that reflect, inform and celebrate gender equality matters in media development contexts from various regions that IMS operates in. Information can be shared through IMS' website and outreach strategies with donors and partners and the field.

- Engage in dialogue with donors to guarantee that funds are available to implement the gender strategy.

Annex: key terms explained

Affirmative action (positive discrimination): Active effort to improve employment or educational opportunities for members of minority groups and for women.

Discrimination (gender-based): Treatment of a person based on his/her gender less favourable than persons of other genders. Discrimination can be direct (e.g. different rights for men and women) or indirect (e.g. same regulations but they have different effects on men and women).

Feminism: The belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state.

Gender, Third gender, Non-binary: Attributes and opportunities related to being woman or man, boy or girl, and the relationship between men and women, boys and girls. Gender is a social construct, differs between and within cultures and times. It includes differences in roles, responsibilities, opportunities, needs and constraints.

Some states or cultures also recognise a third gender or non-binary persons, being persons that do not identify as belonging to either group of men or women.

Gender analysis: A critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situations or contexts.

Gender and sexual diversity (GSD): Refers to all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities or characteristics.

Gender balance: Human resource and programme cycle management issue calling for equal participation of women and men in activities or positions.

Gender-based violence: An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed gender differences between men and women, boys and girls.

There are different forms of GBV; physical violence; verbal violence; psychological violence; sexualised violence; socio-economic violence.

Gender blindness: The failure to recognise that the roles and responsibilities of men/boys and women/girls are given to them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts and backgrounds.

Projects, policies and attitudes which are gender blind do not take into account these different roles and diverse needs, maintain status quo and will not help transform the unequal structure of gender relations.

Gender equality: The concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realising their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development.

Gender equity: To reach equality, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on equal terms. Equity leads to equality.

Gender gap and Gender pay gap: Disproportionate difference between men and women, particularly as reflected in attainment of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation. A gender gap indicates gender inequality.

Gender pay gap is the average difference between renumeration for men and women. It's expressed in women's average salaries as percentage of men's average salaries.

Gender mainstreaming: A strategy for making girls' and women's, as well as boy's and men's, concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes so that girls and boys and women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

Gender neutral: Anything – a concept, an entity, a style of language – that is unassociated with either the male or female gender. The nature of systemic and embedded or internalised bias is such that, unfortunately often, what is perceived to be gender neutral is in fact gender blind.

Gender norms: Gender norms are ideas about how men and women should be and act. Internalised early in life, gender norms can establish a life cycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping.

Gender roles: Social and behavioural norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex.

Gender sensitive: Programmes and policies that are aware of and address gender differences.

Gender stereotypes: Ascribing certain attributes, characteristics and roles to people based on their gender. Gender stereotypes can be negative or benign (i.e. a seemingly positive characteristic that nevertheless imposes limitations, e.g. women are better caregivers). Gender stereotyping becomes harmful when it limits a person's life choices, such as training and professional path, and life plans. Compounded gender stereotypes occur when layered with stereotypes about other characteristics of the person, such as disability, ethnicity or social status.

Gender transformative: Programming and policies that seek to address the root causes of gender inequalities and aim to achieve gender equity.

Gendered and sexualised disinformation: A subset of online gendered abuse that uses false or misleading gender and sex-based narratives against women, often with some degree of coordination, aimed at deterring women from participating in the public sphere. It combines three defining characteristics of online disinformation: falsity, malign intent and coordination.

Glass ceiling: Glass ceiling is a metaphor used to describe invisible barriers for women or members of excluded communities to advance their careers. Glass ceilings can occur at different levels of hierarchy and are identified by a sudden and sharp drop in number of women compared to men.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality refers to overlapping social identities and complexity of discrimination against a person based on his/her gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, etc. Also known as multiple discrimination, accumulative discrimination.

LGBTQI+: Umbrella term for all persons who have a non-normative gender identity or sexual orientation. LGBTQI stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer (or questioning) and intersex. Sometimes a + is added at the end to be more inclusive.

Patriarchy: Social system which places men as superior to women and where men hold the greatest power, leadership roles, privilege, moral authority and access to resources and land, including in the family. Most modern societies are patriarchies.

Sticky floor: Expression used as a metaphor to point to a discriminatory employment pattern that keeps workers, mainly women, in the lower ranks of the job scale, with low mobility and invisible barriers to career advancement.

Structural discrimination: A form of discrimination resulting from policies, despite appearing to be neutral, that have disproportionately negative effects on certain societal groups.

Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI): Sexual orientation is an identity based on a person's sexual attraction to others and how that person's own gender corresponds to the gender of the people to whom that person is attracted.

Gender identity refers to an individual's internal, deeply felt sense of being a man, a woman, both, neither or in-between. This may or may not match the individual's biological or legal sex.

Sexist hate speech: Expressions which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on a person's sex or gender.

Sexual harassment: Unwanted non-verbal, verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature.

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