



# Media and Gender Equality in Uganda: A Policy Guide for Stakeholders

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## Executive Summary

Media not only provides an opportunity for women's access to information, but also allows them to challenge the culturally disempowering gender norms and come out of a condition of silence. Media is a participatory platform where women assert their right to active citizenship.

This guide is a culmination of a national stakeholders roundtable on radio and its empowerment potential for women in Uganda and the research on the Status of Gender sensitiveness of Ugandan Radios Based on the UNESCO Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM), conducted in November 2019, whose findings demonstrate lower women's participation in media compared to men, particularly in terms of news writers and news actors.

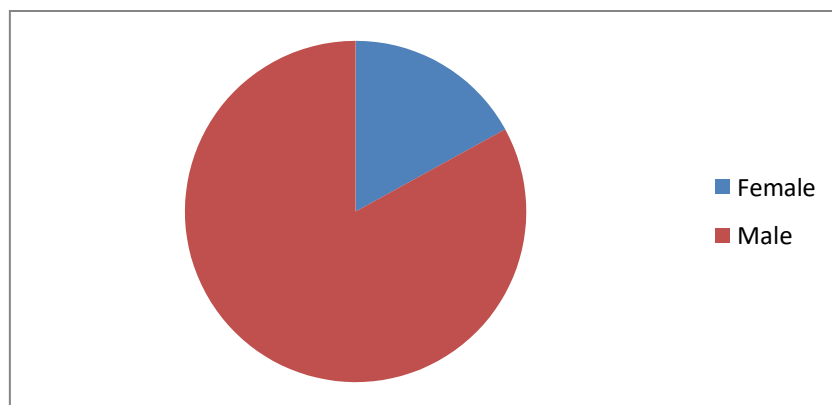
The findings provide evidence that change is needed and all stakeholders are urged to embark on a range of policy reforms in their respective institutions to promote change – to achieve a more balanced representation of women and men in media.

## Context

Media in Uganda constantly portrays women negatively and in stereotypical ways, depicting them as socially and economically dependent like children with no other status other than that of wife and mother, daughter or sister, which personal relationships often have no relevance to the story.

The study indicated that despite the growing number of women practitioners in media, very few have attained positions at the decision-making level.

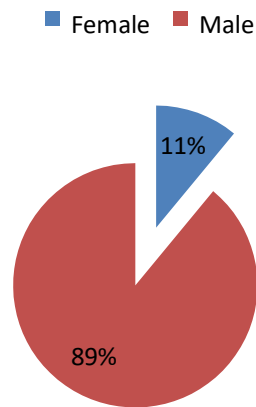
Figure 1: Gender Illustration of Persons in Decision-making Positions in Ugandan Media



Majority media houses in Uganda lack facilities taking into account the different needs of women and men and redress systems with regards to sexual harassment. Study findings also point to absence of editorial policies on gender equality in content.

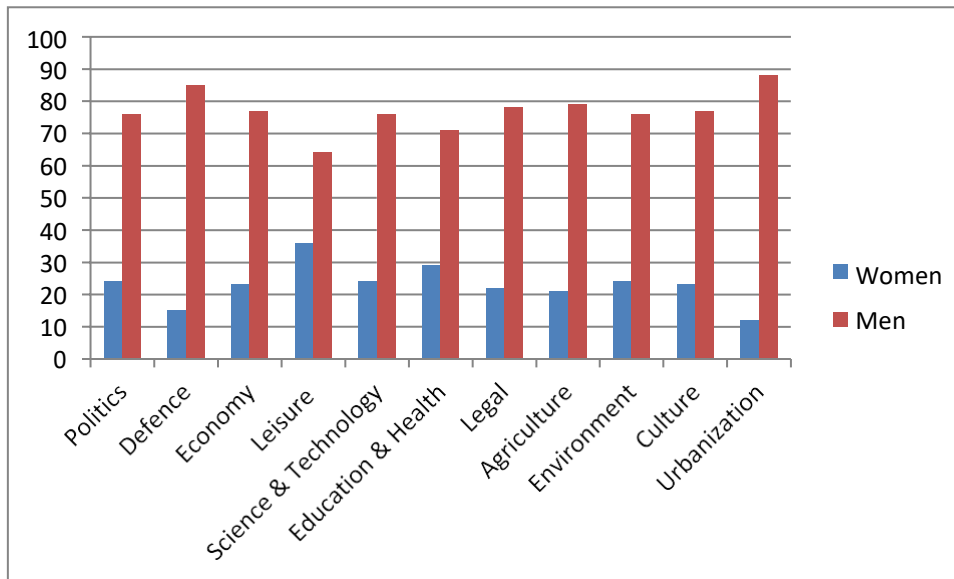
Participation of Women in News: Although the number of women working in the media has been on the increase, this has not translated into a corresponding increase in the number of women who actually write news.

**Figure 2: Proportion of Female and Male News Article Writers in Uganda**



Women’s contribution to all news subjects in Ugandan media remains low compared to men.

**Figure 3: Proportion (%) of Women and Men Making News by Subject**



It is important to note that the government of Uganda, media houses, civil society organizations, media associations and the international community can ratify laws, policies, programs and protocols to redress the situation.

### **Policy Recommendations for Gender Inclusive Media in Uganda**

#### **For Government of Uganda (GOU)**

**Policy Recommendation 1:** Create gender balance in the appointment of women and men to all Advisory, Management, Regulatory or Monitoring bodies, and empower and encourage them to ensure that women’s needs and concerns are properly addressed in, and by the media.

**Policy Recommendation 2:** Strengthen legislation to compel media to institute gender mainstreaming.

**Policy Recommendation 3:** Develop professional guidelines and codes of conduct or other appropriate self-regulatory mechanisms, with the participation of women, to promote balanced and non-stereotyped portrayals of women by the media.

### **For Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**

**Policy Recommendation 1:** Produce and disseminate media materials on women roles, as leaders with many different life experiences including how they have reached where they are; balancing work and family responsibilities; as professionals; as managers and as entrepreneurs; to provide role models, particularly to young women.

**Policy Recommendation 2:** Promote the dissemination of information about, and increase awareness of the human rights of women through the media.

**Policy Recommendation 3:** Encourage the formation of Media Watch Groups that can monitor the media and consult with the media to ensure that women's needs and concerns are properly reflected.

**Policy Recommendation 4:**

### **For Media Houses**

**Policy Recommendation 1:** Incorporate well defined gender policies and programs in all media houses by incorporating a Gender Agenda in overall mission and vision.

**Policy Recommendation 2:** Allocate resources that focus on advancing gender parity in media not only in effectively fulfilling the Gender Agenda as a whole, but also to specifically address issues of conditions at the workplace.

**Policy Recommendation 3:** Periodically conduct a Gender Audit to monitor and evaluate the Gender Program so as to identify gaps and achievements, and raise strategies for improvements.

**Policy Recommendation 4:** Increase women's participation in decision making at all levels of the media.

**Policy Recommendation 5:** Do more to confront gender distortions in news rooms.

**Policy Recommendation 6:** Balance voices of news makers.

**Policy Recommendation 7:** Ensure that fair gender portrayal is a professional and ethical aspiration / obligation similar to respect for accuracy, fairness and honesty.

**Policy Recommendation 8:** Designate more airtime and space for gender needs, roles and gender based violence (GBV).

**Policy Recommendation 9:** Increase news about and for women.

**Policy Recommendation 10:** Ensure equal and/or equitable pay for women and men.

**Policy Recommendation 11:** Increase skills and leadership abilities of female staff through mentoring and development programmes.

**Policy Recommendation 12:** Integrate gender in all the production stages of a radio broadcasts.

**Policy Recommendation 13:** Adopt and make awareness of, the UNESCO Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM).

## For Journalists Associations/Networks

**Policy Recommendation 1:** Encourage and support continued, wider and all-encompassing research into all aspects of women and media.

**Policy Recommendation 2:** Development of women journalists' networking groups to serve as group monitoring forums and as a means for information dissemination, and for exchange of views.

**Policy Recommendation 3:** Compile a directory of women media experts who can form part of media training, research and audit teams.

**Policy Recommendation 4:** Ensure gender equity in leadership structures of professional unions.

**Policy Recommendation 5:** Review program priorities to ensure meaningful gender sensitivity.

**Policy Recommendation 6:** Adopt and make awareness of, the UNESCO Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM).

## For Media/Journalism Training Institutions

**Policy Recommendation 1:** Identify training needs of students and tailor courses that develop their analytical capacity in gender reporting, and media house management

**Policy Recommendation 2:** Strengthen quota systems to ensure gender equity in admissions to journalism and communication programmes.

## For the International/Donor Community

**Policy Recommendation 1:** Commit more resources to developing capacities of media in gender mainstreaming policy and gender sensitive reporting.

**Policy Recommendation 2:** Review current funding priorities to make them more tailored to women journalists' empowerment.

## **Acknowledgements**

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