Good for business or the right thing to do?

Motivations and strategies of media managers to promote gender equality in the workplace

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Table of **Contents**

Table of **Figures**

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Executive summary

Even though the number of female students in journalism studies has increased over the years and women have been entering the profession in large numbers, women remain under-represented in the news media sector world-wide, and especially in decision-making positions. To change this, media outlets and media development organisations around the world are promoting gender equality in the workplace of media outlets.

This research explores what motivates managers of news outlets around the world to promote gender equality in the workplace. It also explores the strategies that managers use to implement their commitment to gender equality and the results of these efforts. The report provides recommendations on how to promote gender equality in media outlets. In this way, it informs media development organisations like Free Press Unlimited in adapting their strategies.

Based on interviews with 18 managers (8 female, 10 male) of media outlets in 12 countries, the research findings show that there is a wide range of motivations for media managers to promote gender equality in the workplace. The main argument used is the fact that the managers believe in gender equality and want to set an example to promote gender equality in society. Furthermore, business motives play a role, as well as personal reasons.

The argument of the 'business case for gender equality', arguing that promoting gender equality in the workplace is good for business is regularly used to convince media outlets of the importance of gender equality in their organisation. This research shows that in encouraging managers of media outlets to promote gender equality, the business argument might work, but other angles should be used as well.

A majority of the managers primarily look at gender equality from a content point of view. They want to cover a wider range of stories, including topics relevant for women. Other strategies used by managers heavily focused on recruitment practices and, to a lesser extent, on creating a favourable working environment. The risk of some of the strategies used by the managers in the sample is that gender equality is reduced to a 'women's issue', and that women are solely hired to report on 'women's topics' or gender equality issues.

As a result of these strategies, managers mostly observed a change in the content that was produced by their media outlets, including an increase of women's voices and diversity of topics covered by the outlet. Furthermore, the working environment of some of the media outlets improved. Only two of the managers interviewed said that promoting gender equality in their organisation had made them more competitive. In their view, promoting gender equality in their organisation improved their reputation which made them more interesting for their audience as well as for funders. They also became known as a good employer for female journalists.

Success factors to promote gender equality identified in this research include:

- Commitment and clear communication by management

- Employing a flexible approach, adapting to the local context and culture

- Institutionalizing the efforts through for example a gender policy

- Using guidelines and measures to guarantee safety of female journalists

- Implementing accountability mechanisms to constantly monitor progress

Finally, it is important to note that this research was conducted with organisations that had already made efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace and that might be intrinsically motivated to do so. Only one of the organisations in the sample was motivated by 'outside forces', namely demands by stakeholders, NGOs and audiences. Further research is needed to find out if these success factors are sufficient to promote gender equality in the workplace of media outlets where the managers are not already motivated to do so.

1. Introduction

"The media are a male business", Nordicom concluded in 2018[1]. Indeed, even though the number of women in journalism studies has increased over the years and women have been entering the profession in large numbers, women remain under-represented in the media sector world-wide, and especially in decision-making positions[2]. Because of this, some media outlets and media development organisations work to promote gender equality in the workplace of media outlets. In many sectors and industries, it is often argued that increasing gender equality has concrete benefits. But does this 'business case' also hold true for the media sector?

1.1 The business case for gender equality

A lot of literature is available on the 'business case for gender equality'. The idea that promoting gender equality in the workplace is good for business is very attractive and is presented with the following evidence:

- **Financial performance:** Companies with more women in executive management and boards of directors financially outperform companies that have no women in senior roles[3].

- **Reputation:** More women in boards is linked to an improved reputation of organisations, increased corporate social responsibility, better corporate governance and less unethical behaviour[4].

- **Reflecting the community:** Having store employees mirror the race and ethnic makeup of their communities positively affects productivity, customer satisfaction and ultimately earnings[5]. In the media sector, it is often argued that having a diverse newsroom should help to tap into a diverse network of sources, improve the ability of media to interpret and contextualize issues and break relevant stories to their audiences[6].

- **Staff motivation and performance:** Diversity programmes have a positive impact on staff motivation and greater diversity in organisations reduces staff turnover. The 'collective intelligence' of a group is strongly correlated with the proportion of women in the group, making for smarter and more effective teams[7].

- **Leveraging talent:** With women constituting a growing proportion of the workforce, companies that provide a working environment conducive to gender equality have access to a larger pool of talent, therefore increasing their chances of having well-performing employees[8].

The majority of the studies mentioned here are not specifically focused on news media businesses, so it is important to understand how this business case applies to the media sector in different contexts around the world. While it is clear that leaders have an important role to play in promoting gender equality in the workplace[9], little research is done on what motivates them to do so. This research explores whether managers of media outlets are motivated by any of these 'business case' arguments for gender equality, or whether they have other (intrinsic or extrinsic) motivations. It also explores the strategies that managers use to implement their commitment to gender equality and the results of these efforts. The report provides recommendations on how to promote gender equality in media outlets.

1.2 Gender inequality in news media

Women have been entering the journalism profession in large numbers, but this has not resulted in a balance on all levels of media organisations. In 2011, women comprised 35% of the workforce worldwide, and held 27% of top management positions[10]. In 2016, women comprised 43% of journalists in a sample of 27.500 journalists in sixty-seven countries. In this, there are large regional differences. For example, women constitute more than two-thirds of the workforce in Latvia, Bulgaria and Russia, and less than one quarter in Bangladesh, Japan and Indonesia[11]. Of the top 100 global media corporations worldwide, there are only

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six female CEOs leading corporations and women only comprise 17% of top management and 20% of board of directors[12]. Similarly, 23% of top editors of 200 major online and offline news outlets in ten different markets are women, while on average, 40% of journalists in these markets are women[13].

Gender inequality can be observed in the media sector beyond the number of women and men active. For example, women often report on what are regarded 'soft topics', like health and social issues, while men report more often on 'hard topics' that are deemed more important and prestigious, such as politics and economy[14]. Sexism and sexual harassment is an acknowledged dimension of the newsroom culture and, especially in television, there is a great emphasis on the looks of female journalists[15]. Research shows that newsroom culture is dominated by masculine norms and that there are often assumptions that 'men's "innate' traits and capabilities make them better equipped for journalism than women"[16]. Women also face extra safety risks, including sexual harassment in the workplace and online harassment[17].

The demands of the job, including the long and irregular working hours, create tensions with regards to the work-life balance of female journalists, especially since women often take care of the majority of household and caring duties[18]. Interestingly, young male journalists in Belgium were also found to be increasingly concerned about work-life balance[19]. In the past years, the workload and variety of tasks of journalists have increased, but irregular hours and long working days are still seen as part of the job[20]. Women are more likely to leave the journalism profession early due to an early burn-out syndrome and often do not get sufficient support from their organisations[21]. Gender imbalance in the newsroom is often seen as a problem for women, while the predominance of men remains unchallenged[22].

Despite these concerning trends, there are positive examples of media outlets who actively promote gender equality in the workplace. This research focused on those organisations. By interviewing the managers of the outlets, the goal is to understand what their motivations are to promote gender equality in the workplace, the strategies that are used and the result of these efforts. The findings help to better understand what works to promote gender equality in the workplace of media outlets, in order to come up with recommendations to promote this in other media outlets as well.

2. Methodology and sample

The main question guiding this research is:

What motivates media managers to promote gender equality in the workplace and which strategies do they use to do this?

The following sub-questions were used:

- What are the motivations of decision makers to work towards more gender equality in the workplace?

- What strategies do they use to increase gender equality in their organisations?

- What are the critical factors for successful implementation? What are the main challenges for implementation?

- What has been the impact of the interventions, in terms of:
  - Working environment (both for female and male employees)
  - Audience (composition and engagement)
  - Content produced (quality and relevance of reporting)
  - Revenue and competitiveness

In this research, gender equality in the workplace means that people of all gender identities are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities in an organisation. This includes equal opportunities for progression and promotion and equal pay for comparable roles. (Potential) employees should not face any sort of discrimination because of their gender.

As the literature presented above and the findings of this research show, 'gender equality' is still often equated to 'women'[23]. A focus on improving the position of women in society and the workplace is important to achieve gender equality, but efforts to achieve gender equality should go beyond this as well, ultimately transforming power relations between men and women to create a more just society for all.

2.1 Methodology

To answer these research questions, a literature review was carried out to map existing evidence with regards to the business case for gender equality in the workplace, especially for media outlets. Next, 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted with male and female managers of media outlets in different countries in Asia, Middle East and Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Since the aim was to find out what motivates managers and what strategies they use, the choice was made to focus on those media outlets that had already implemented strategies to promote gender equality in the workplace. The sampling was done through the network of Free Press Unlimited and its partners. In this, attention was paid to a balance in terms of geography, size and type of media.

The interviews were conducted by a team of interviewers at Free Press Unlimited. In total, 4 interviews were conducted face to face, while the other interviews took place through phone, Skype or email. Of 5 media outlets, in addition to the manager, a female employees was interviewed to validate the findings. Where needed and possible, the information provided was cross-checked with other sources, such as project documents and the websites of the media outlets.

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A topic list was used to guide the interviews, which included the following topics:

- Basic information of the media outlet

- Motivations to promote gender equality in the workplaces

- Strategies to do this

- Implementation and challenges

- Results and next steps

2.2 Sample

In total, 18 media organisations were interviewed. In all cases, the manager, editor in chief or CEO of the organisation was interviewed, of these, there were 8 women and 10 men managers.
In some cases other people working at the organisation were interviewed as well, such as the gender officers or female journalists working for the organisation. In total (including the managers), 13 women and 12 men were interviewed. A full overview of the organisations in the sample can be found in the annex.

The sample consists of a variety of news media organisations, with 7 from Sub-Saharan Africa, 4 from the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), 4 from Asia and 2 from Latin America. The media in this research include radio, newspaper and online news, including community media outlets as well as national media groups.

This explains the wide variety in size: the smallest organisation in the sample has 11 employees, while the largest one has around 150 full-time staff. The average number of employees is 48.

The methodology has a number of limitations, namely that the findings are largely based on the opinions and perceptions of the managers of the organisations. This might not reflect the experience of the (female) employees working in the organisation. Furthermore, the sample only includes organisations that are convinced that gender equality is important and make efforts to increase gender equality within their organisations.

**Figure 1: Types of media in the sample**
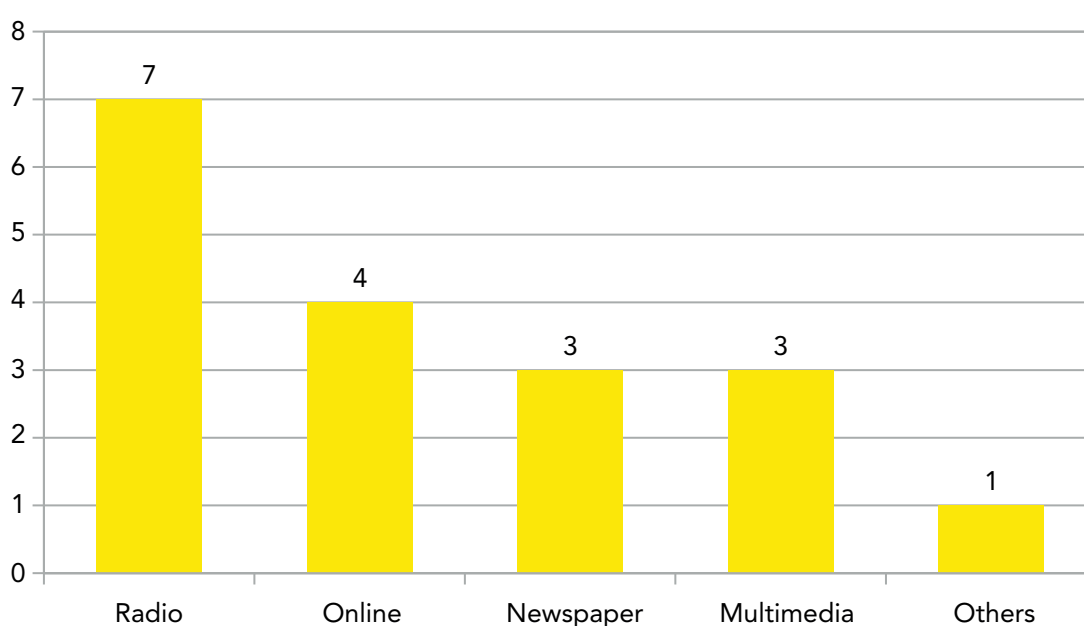
3. Findings

Of the 18 managers interviewed, 15 stated they had made efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace. The analysis of this research will focus on those 15 companies. Interestingly, the two managers of media organisations from Latin America said they were not making efforts to promote gender equality, because the majority of people in their newsroom are women. They stated that women are the driving force of the organisation and are often more hard-working and committed than men. This is an interesting indication that 'gender equality' is still often equated to 'women', and shows that the situation differs greatly per region.

Indeed, while the average percentage of women working in the organisations in the sample is 44%, and the average percentage of women in management positions is 39%, this varies greatly per region.

In Asia the average percentage of women working in the organisations is 29%, while this is 70% in Latin America. It is important to note that these numbers are based on a small sample[24], and only include organisations that have been employing strategies to promote gender equality in the workplace. These numbers are probably not representative of the whole region, but give an insight into the sample of this research.

This chapter presents the results of the interviews with regards to what motivates managers to promote gender equality in their organisations, the strategies they use for this and the results of their efforts.

Figure 2: Average percentage of women employed in 18 organisations interviewed
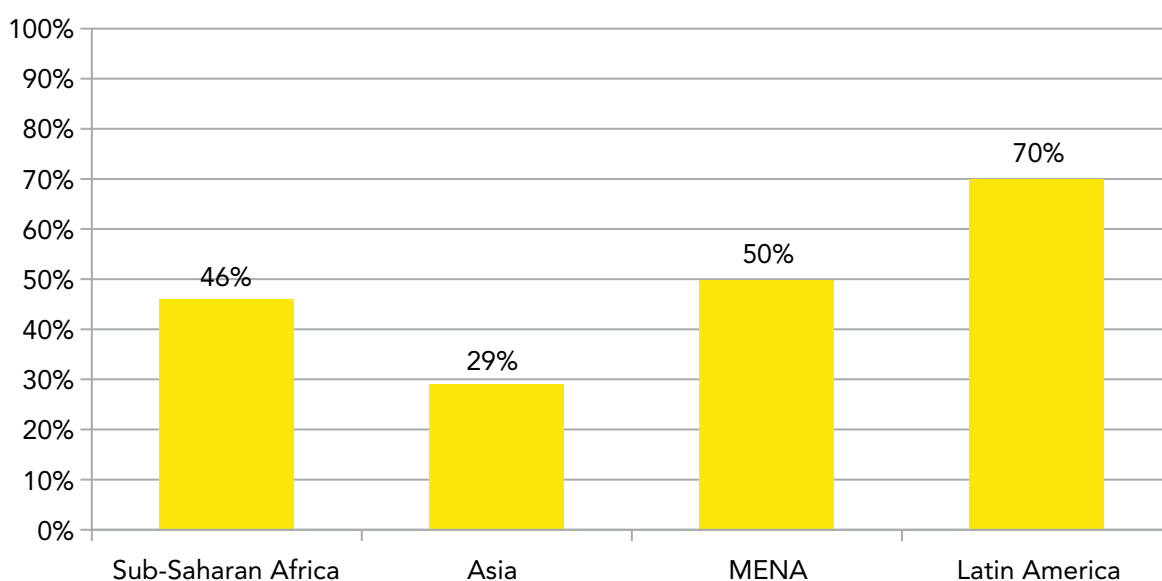
3.1 Motivations of managers to promote gender equality

The first part of this research looks at what motivates media managers to promote gender equality in the workplace. During the interviews, the managers were asked why they started promoting gender equality in the workplace, and why gender equality was important for their organisation. A number of common arguments about the importance of gender equality were found, namely: setting an example, business arguments and personal reasons.

Setting an example and initiating change
The majority of managers interviewed argued that they enhance gender equality in the workplace because they want to promote gender equality in society. Five of the managers interviewed literally said that they promote gender equality because they believe in it.

A number of managers regarded gender equality as one of the core principles underlying their work. For example, one manager stated:

"Women are seen as sexualised objects, also in media. We want to change that. We want to show that it's normal that women are visible and that they are bold, We would like to see ourselves as a feminist organisation. We believe women have been put in a disadvantaged situation for years and this has to change".

Some managers argued that if you want to promote gender equality through media, you have to set the right example as an organisation. A manager explained:

"One of our main mission is to be an independent progressive media organisation. So that's starts with us and our employees. [...] You have to live it and be it. So for us, gender, geographic, racial, religious diversity is quite important".

Figure 3: Number of times arguments were used by the 18 managers
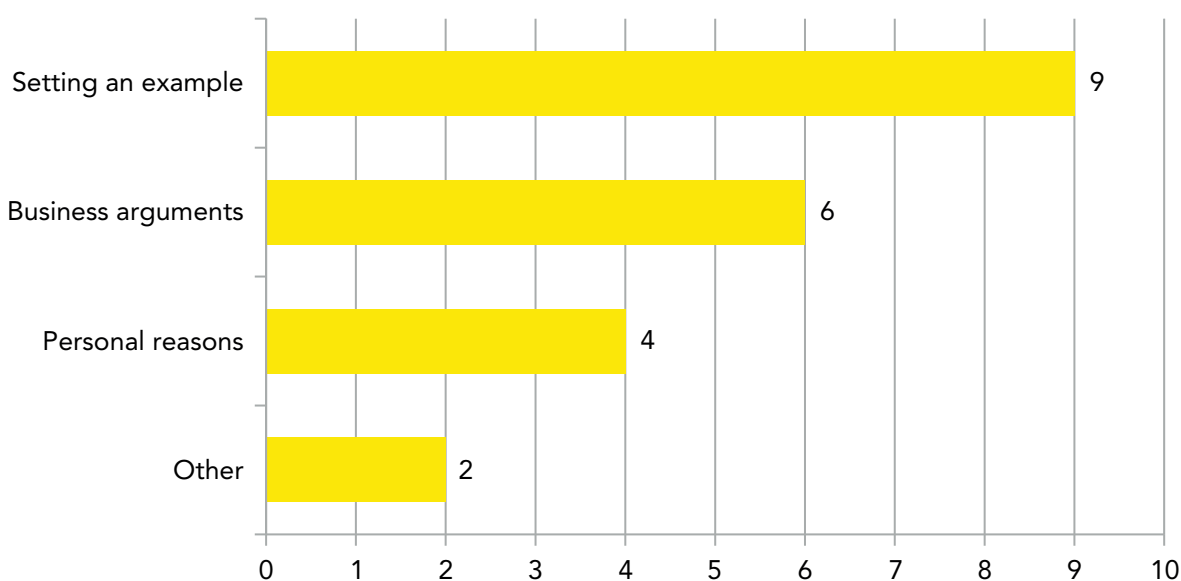
Another person said:

> "It was important as a media organisation and the kind of change we wanted to see in society [to promote gender equality], that we implement those changes within ourselves first. That we lead in that change So first and most important, I believe in the idea of gender diversity in the organization".

This indicates that the main reason why the organisations in the sample promote gender equality in the workplace is because they believe it is important, want to set a good example and be advocates for change. It is 'the right thing to do'.

Business arguments
At the same time, six managers in the sample had business-related arguments and motivations. Often, this was related to the content produced by the media. Managers argued that if there is more diversity in the newsroom, it is possible to tell more diverse stories and improve the content produced. One managers explained:

> "The decision was obviously very conscious in saying; if we want to change the stories we want to tell, we also have to change who tells these stories. For this we need a diverse newsroom. it is important to figure out how you can tell the stories of everybody. (…) If you have a certain kind of person who cannot be empathetic to the community he or she is reporting about, there are going to be big holes and critical problems in the story. It is as simple as having a diverse newsroom to tell the stories of a diverse country".

Similarly, a number of interviewees mentioned that women are able to cover certain stories that men cannot and that gender equality is needed in order to capture women's stories.

> "It came out of a need that we identified for us, for the success of the organisation. For it to become more attractive and meet the needs of our audiences better, that we needed to include more women and have more women's voices (…) we also realized that with more women leadership, especially with leadership positions, we could introduce something new to the organisation that would make the organisation more competitive, and help its cause".

One manager mentioned that having more women in the newsrooms leads to different perspectives and angles during for example editorial meetings. Another manager mentioned that listeners of their radio shows explicitly asked for gender balance in terms of presenters, which was the trigger for her to pay explicit attention to this.

These motivations show that media managers promote gender equality because it improves the quality and diversity of reporting. Only a few managers directly linked this to the competitiveness of their media outlets, even though many of the media outlets mentioned challenges they are facing with regards to the financial survival of their media company.

Personal reasons
Finally, four of the managers interviewed mentioned personal reasons for promoting gender equality in the workplace. For female managers, this was often based on the struggles they faced in their career and wanting to change this in their own organisation. One woman explained:

> "I faced lots of difficulties in the conventional media when covering women's issues. So we know that through [name of her media outlet], we refuse to have these restrictions".

For male managers, it was often motivated by the women in their close environment, like sisters, wives or daughters.

> "I'm also in a relationship, I'm married to my partner and we have two daughters. So trying to create a place for them to grow and be comfortable and feel the full meaning of their worth is also quite important for me. It's professional and personal", explained a manager.

Other reasons
In the case of one organisation in the sample, outside forces contributed to the decision to promote gender equality in the workplace. In this case, the shareholders of the media group pushed for gender balance in senior management of the organisation, and the management of the organisation attended a number of training sessions of media development organisations promoting gender equality in the workplace of media outlets.

3.2 Strategies to promote gender equality

Media organisations in the sample used a variety of strategies to promote gender equality in the workplace. Many organisations focused on increasing the number of women in the workplace through recruitment strategies. It was also common for organisations to focus on gender-sensitive content production.

Recruitment
Most of the strategies implemented by the managers in the sample related to the recruitment of women in the organisation. Because men are the majority in many organisations, some of the managers applied positive discrimination; if they have two candidates for a position with the same qualifications, they would select the woman.

Figure 4: Number of times strategies were mentioned by 18 managers
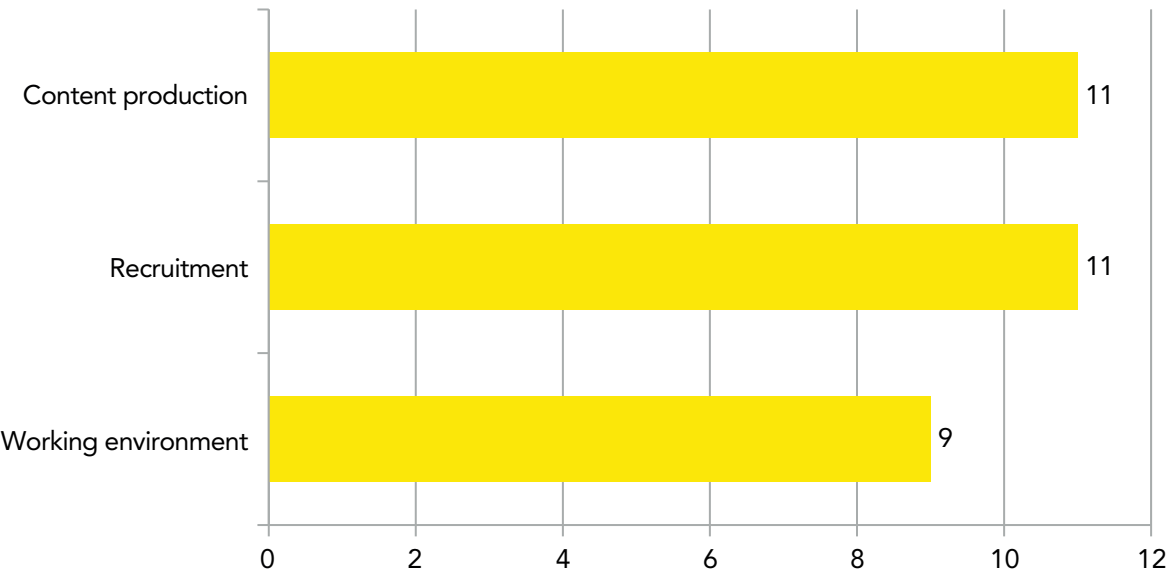
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However, especially in contexts where there are little women with the right qualifications in specific areas, for example technical staff such as sound engineers, it was often hard to find female candidates. Retaining female journalists in the organisation, as well as the working hours posed challenges at times as well. One manager explained this challenge:

"It is difficult to find talented women. Because of the environment, traditions and values, women are hindered in applying or working in such positions. These things cannot be influenced by us. It is very hard to change the environment and the way women tend to be viewed in the region. Some girls go to university but then they are told that they should not get a job, but instead should marry and settle as a housewife. Similarly, sometimes women face many issues then they go outside, for example staring. These cultural traditions are hard to change. Therefore, it is also very hard to find talented women. It takes more resources to accommodate to women, as you cannot always ask them to work in the evenings, you have to accompany them from the train/bus station to the office, you have to be more flexible etcetera."

Organisations would not just look for journalists, but also for writers or people with a different education or background. The following quote exemplifies how a manager tried to get more female employees:

"It takes a lot of work; I look at Twitter and see who is writing; I try to find who has the potential to write. I talk to people, a lot of journalists in the newsroom teach classes in the universities. I talk to them and ask if there are any promising women who can intern here. It is making that conscious effort and reaching out. Are there women in other workplaces, are there women who have writing jobs? Are there women whose English is good and do they share stories on Twitter? Would they be good candidates for stories? So it is just reaching out to people like that, asking."

One organisation aimed to ensure that there would always be a woman in the interview panel when people applied for a job, so that women who were applying would feel comfortable. Another organisation decided to extend the deadlines of open positions if they didn't get any applications from women. This shows that there is a diversity of strategies that can be employed to increase the recruitment of women

in media organisations. Recognized strategies also include mentorship and development programmes, setting clear goals, and unconscious bias training for evaluators[25].

In fact, a lot of literature about increasing women's participation in the workplace focuses on recruitment, retention and promotion of women. The annual 'Status of women in the workplace' reports by McKinsey & Company elaborately explore the 'pipeline' of how women move within organisations from entry level to lower management to ultimately reach gender parity in senior management[26]. It is recognized that there is often a gap of support in middle management, which hinders women to further move up[27].

Only a few interviewees focused on increasing the number of women in leadership positions in the organisation. Sometimes this was seen as a next step; first there needed to be enough women in the organisation and then they could think of increasing the number of women in leadership positions. One of the interviewees emphasized the need to attribute clear roles and responsibilities to functions and communicating and enforcing this within the organisation:

"The first thing is that you need to have it in the structures. Within the structures, introduce the power and responsibilities of the role without really looking at the gender side of it. So for us, it was important to make sure that in the structure it was defined what the role and responsibilities of that position carried, and then we communicate to staff that it doesn't really matter if it was male or female who was occupying that position. That position was important to be respected, the directives coming from that position was important, whether it was a woman or a man".

Evidence found in literature shows that it is also important to establish clear evaluation criteria to prevent bias in hiring, performance reviews and promotion[28]. However, none of the media organisations in the sample mentioned this as a strategy.

A few organisations mentioned that it was challenging to retain women in the organisation, for example because they leave for jobs that pay better. In fact, although the gender pay gap is widely recognized and equal pay for equal work is a crucial element in achieving gender equality[29], only a few managers mentioned it during the interview. Two organisations guaranteed equal pay for women and men.

Literature review shows that, even though recruitment and promotion of women are important to contribute to gender equality in the workplace, it is also recognized that these strategies are often very much focused on individuals: the focus is on hiring more women or equipping women with the right qualifications to be able to compete for jobs. It is argued that gender equality in the workplace should go beyond the number of men and women, since these individual measures do not challenge existing power relations or promote structural change[30].

Improving the working environment
Apart from equal opportunity and fairness in hiring and promotion, McKinsey & Company distinguishes two other foundational elements for gender equality in the workplace, namely: work-life flexibility and a safe, respectful workplace[31]. Managers in the sample similarly recognised the need to create a favourable working environment for gender equality.

Work-life flexibility
McKinsey & Company argues that "when workplace policies support balancing work and life, employees are happier at work"[32]. Indeed, a number of organisations mentioned strategies they used to ensure work-life flexibility for their employees. This would include maternity leave, which is not standard practice in all countries where the interviewees are based, as well as flexibility in working hours. One organisation ensured that women had time to breastfeed, and that women could leave earlier during Ramadan. Another organisation mentioned flexibility in the working hours of its female employees, and provided them with transport so that they could travel safely.

One tool commonly used by the managers in the sample to institutionalize and formalize gender equality is establishing a gender policy. Six organisations in the

sample had a gender policy in place and two more were developing one.

Often these policies outline guidelines with regards to for example flexible working hours, pregnancy leave, in other cases it encompassed the commitments made by the organisation to promote gender equality. Apart from institutionalizing it in a policy, commitment to gender equality should be constantly and clearly communicated, especially by leaders recognized in the organisation[33]. This importance of communication was also mentioned by the interviewees, as explained by this manager:

"I think having a clear view, a clear goal for all of this, was important. Also, communication throughout is key. It was important that we had internal and external communication; between women and to other employees. That was important".

Safe and respectful workplace
Some interviewees mentioned strategies they used to promote a safe and respectful workplace. Managers emphasized they wanted to create an environment where both women and men are comfortable to express their opinion and have a place to voice complaints. One male manager mentioned that he would be aware that he might be taking too much space at times, so he tried to be more quiet and ensure that other people could contribute to meetings. One organisation established a Women's Union within the media outlet, which provided a space for women to voice their concerns and needs, as well as provide access to training opportunities for women in the organisation.

Interestingly, it was often small practical things that would contribute to an equal working environment. Two interviewees from different organisations

mentioned for example that they realised that only women employees were doing the dishes in the office. As a manager, they had to make a point out of this and make sure all employees contribute to the dishes and cleanliness of the office, for example by making a schedule for this. In this example, it becomes clear that cultural habits and norms from society are brought into the workplace, but can also be changed by leaders through introducing and normalising new divisions of roles in the workplace.

Only two media managers mentioned safety as a challenge for promoting gender equality. This is striking, since research has shown that the majority of threats, intimidation and abuse directed toward female journalists occurred in the workplace and was perpetrated most often by male bosses, supervisors and co-workers[34]. The interviewees explained that stories on specific issues related to gender equality or written by female journalists might receive pushback from audiences. For this reason, one media outlet enabled women to write stories anonymously. With regards to safety in the workplace, a number of media managers mentioned the issue of sexual harassment during the interviews. Some of the organisations had a specific policy or guidelines on sexual harassment.

An important aspect of implementing these strategies is the need for accountability. Systems need to be in place in an organisation to hold managers and employees accountable for good behaviour and to address bad behaviour[35]. These kinds of mechanisms could be included in a gender policy, but only three of the managers interviewed mentioned accountability mechanisms. One organisation had elaborate complaint mechanisms, another appointed specific people at HR who could serve as a trust person for complaints, and in another organisation a gender officer was hired to ensure the implementation of the gender policy and mainstream gender throughout the organisation. This shows the importance of committing time and resources to implement the gender policy and other strategies taken.

Cultural change
The measures mentioned above are aimed at contributing to structural change with regards to gender equality in the workplace. However, as

Benschop & Verloo argue "Removing structural barriers without addressing underlying cultural norms (…) lowers the odds of this strategy for creating positive gender change"[36]. Indeed, one of the main challenges in implementing the strategies according to the interviewees is the wider context and culture that they work in. Women might not be allowed to work as journalists by their families or have to leave at specific times to take care of their family or due to other obligations. Women might not want to be interviewed as sources for stories, or male sources might not take female journalists seriously. One manager explained:

"To be honest, it wasn't easy. Because when we were looking at hiring more women, some of the first questions for male staff were; when you hire more women, you will have to provide them with transportation, so hiring more women will increase your costs. And women often cannot stay longer hours, because of family curfews, or invisible curfews".

These social norms and attitudes are also brought into the organisations, as exemplified by the issue of washing the dishes. In some cases, it was mentioned that especially male employees found it hard to accept a woman in a management position and would not always take her seriously.

An example of a radio station reflects this:

"So now the managing director of this radio station is a woman. She is also the main presenter of the morning show. She is a very strong educated woman, she knows her job and she has become a very good manager. But she pissed off a lot of men who don't want to get orders from a woman. So they were trying to undermine her authority and she almost had a breakdown. So you have to stand by her and threaten to fire them if they continue doing this. Until they learn that she is there because she is a good manager, not because she is a woman or a man".

In fact, six managers mentioned that the mentality and commitment of staff was a challenge; they really had to convince their employees of the importance of gender equality. Male employees would not accept a female manager or complain that extra resources would go to women. Managers might complain that this would mean extra work for them, and women don't always have the confidence that they are able to have different/higher positions. Indeed, promoting gender equality in the organisation ultimately means changing power relations, and this can cause resistance. Although small, incremental steps towards change might mean less resistance, more radical approaches (like quota) that bring a lot of resistance might also be an opportunity to bring underlying gender bias and inequality to the surface and promote change[37].

It is important to consider how to deal with resistance when implementing these strategies. For example, one interviewee mentioned that it helped that they had training sessions from outside organisations; it can help to convince staff to bring in an outside perspective. One organisation in the MENA region mentioned that gender equality at times is seen as a European or Western concept that is brought to their context by donors. This shows the importance of the commitment of management to support these kinds of initiatives, convince their employees and support their female staff.

Content production
When talking about promoting gender equality in their organisation, the majority of the interviewees employed strategies to promote a more balanced gender portrayal in the content produced by their media outlet. This often starts with looking at sourcing; how many men and women are used as sources in news content. The need for this is clear, since only 24% of those heard, seen or read about in the news are women[38]. Eight of the organisations in the sample said they were actively looking into this and trying to make sure that women are heard on a broad variety of topics, including as experts on often male-dominated domains such as economy or politics.

Some organisations struggle with this, because it might be hard to find women to interview. One media organisation therefore worked with local NGOs, another had a directory of women experts to interview.

It was also mentioned that it depends on the local context. If there are more women in powerful positions, it is also easier to find women to be interviewed.

For example, one interviewee mentioned:

> **"There are more and more strong women in key decision making positions. So it's easier for us to get women in decision making positions in the shows to talk about their department."**

Some organisations also look at the content itself, if it challenges or perpetuates gender stereotypes. A number of organisations make specific efforts to provide a space for women to produce content about issues that matter to women. This might include reporting about topics that are considered taboo in society, such as domestic violence or menstruation. Two organisations had editorial policies about how to write in a gender-sensitive way and it would be a central topic of their editorial meetings.

Although research indicates that women more often quote women and report in a more gender-sensitive way[39], it is important to not only focus on content production, but on the structures and power relations that influence the content that is produced, as well as the position of women in the journalism sector[40]. A number of organisations solely focus on content production when it comes to gender equality, while not looking at the gender dynamics within their own organisation. In the next section, the results of these strategies will be discussed.

3.3 Impact

The interviewees were also asked what were the main results of their efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace. When asked about the impact of their strategies, most managers referred to improved content produced by the media and an improved working environment and organisational culture. Only two managers thought that the competitiveness of their organisation improved.

Culture and working environment
At least four of the organisations in the sample observed an increase of women working in their organisation. Six organisations observed an improved working environment and organisational culture, as explained by one manager:
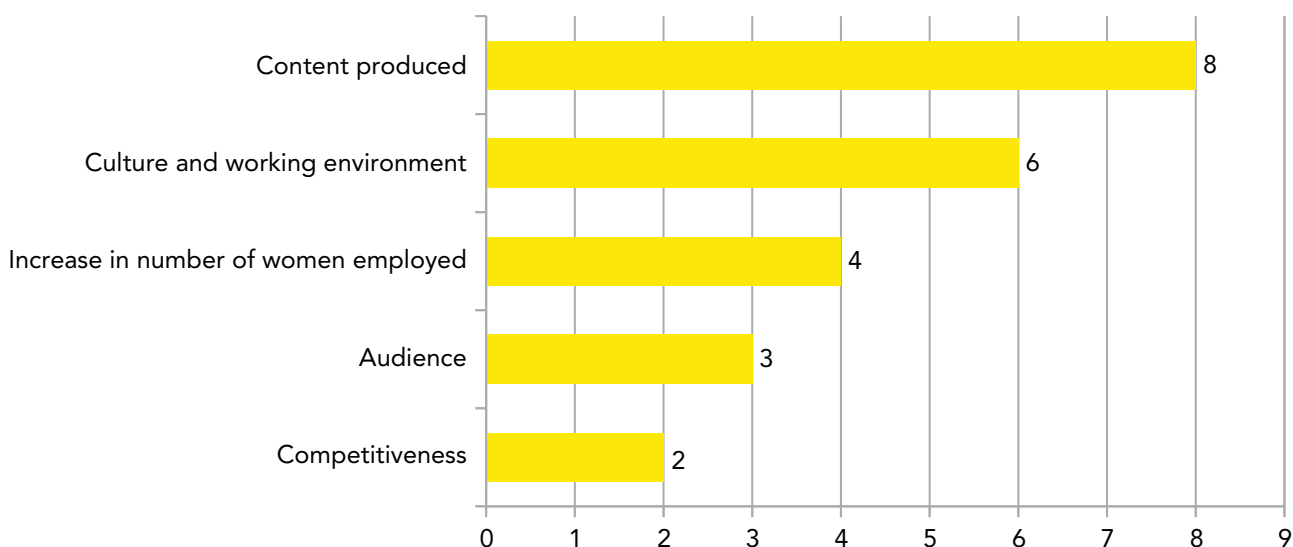
> **"The institutional culture is becoming better. There is still a long way to go, but at least everyone now knows that we have a gender programme, that there is a gender policy, there are editorial guidelines and there are consequences if you don't follow them".**

An important change for an organisation in Sub-Saharan Africa was that now male journalists in the organisation consult women when they need advice. This shows that they are trusting the judgements and abilities of their female colleagues, which was not the case before. A female journalist working in this organisation shared that this was the biggest change for her. Men now ask her to train them and she feels more respected for her work.

Content produced
The impact most often mentioned by interviewees was a change in the content produced by the media. This includes an increase in women as sources in the content. Women were increasingly quoted as experts on a variety of topics, including on topics that are often dominated by men, such as politics or economics. Most organisations mentioned that their content changed.

Figure 5: Number of times types of impact were mentioned by 18 managers

Type of impact	Number of times mentioned
Content produced	8
Culture and working environment	6
Increase in number of women employed	4
Audience	3
Competitiveness	2

An example is this quote of a newspaper managers:

> "I think the kind of stories we tell, the way we write about women. The kind of photos and illustrations that we use. I remember a time that every time a woman got raped you would put very devastating images of them crying and screaming (...). These days we think about what we are really trying to show. (...) So just trying to be conscious about a lot of these things has given the paper a very different look. Both in terms of material as well as perception".

Additionally, some managers argued that they are able to cover different stories due to their efforts to promote gender equality:

> "We can see the change in the content, we are now covering more topics about women and their problems, to increase the public understanding of the role of women in our country".

Another manager explained how women are able to go to places where men can't go and cover different stories.

> "We did a series of cases on workplace sexual harassment where the female victims were able to speak with our reporter, who is a woman. (...) So topics like that; very important for the society which otherwise would not have been possible. It really opened a new value for the organisation".

This outcome might be strongly linked to the fact that one of the main motivations of managers to do this, is to promote gender equality and set an example. There is a risk, however, that women are only hired to report on 'women's issues'.[41]

Audience
Three of the managers interviewed mentioned that they received positive feedback from their audience with regards to the increased gender-sensitive content. For example, one media outlet received comments on social media by women that they are happy to

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recognize themselves in the videos published. However, most media outlets had little information about the composition of their audience and were therefore unable to measure if an increase of gender equality in their workforce and/or increased gender-sensitive content led to a more diverse or larger audience.

Competitiveness
Out of the people interviewed, only two managers thought that the competitiveness of their organisation had increased due to the efforts to promote gender equality. Three other manager expressed hope that it would have this effect in the long term. The two managers who did see this change shared:

The kind of impact it has had on the image as a media organisation, has really helped us. Within the society, but within the donor community as well. There is this belief that we as a media organisation are doing quite well to ensure that gender equality or gender diversity is looked at. With those things in mind, I think definitely we have become more competitive through a more diversified gender workforce".

"I think funders, but also other clients want to work with us because we represent a different reality. Those have been generally net positives for us. And I think we produce different content because we are different people. It makes us better than others."

Additionally, another organisation observed that by creating a better working environment, more female journalists wanted to work for them, and their reputation as an employer improved.

"By promoting women, creating the environment, women started to notice how great the organisation was to work for. Because people say they feel comfortable, they feel confident, supported. Wherever we went, people who knew about us, they had heard about the great workplace environment for women. That is a very positive thing, the image of the organisation".

The increased gender diversity in their organisation made these media outlets more competitive due to the content that they are making and the topics that they are covering, but also because they have a better reputation. Many of the organisations in the sample are dependent on donor funding for their income, so this reputation helps them to get funding and to attract talented journalists.

When considering the business case for gender equality in media organisations, it can therefore be concluded that it mostly focuses on the idea of 'reflecting the community' (in this case the audience), an improved reputation and leveraging talent. However, as mentioned before, only a few of the organisations in the sample actually observed this change. It is also important to note that it is very difficult to measure whether increased gender equality in the workplace has an effect on the revenue and or audience of the media outlets. The perceived positive change by some media outlets could be a starting point for more formal and structural measurement of the relation of gender and a better business case for media.

4. Conclusion

This research shows that there is a wide range of motivations for media managers to promote gender equality in the workplace. The main argument used is the fact that the managers believe in gender equality and want to set an example to promote gender equality in society. Secondly, business motives play a role, as well as personal reasons. This shows that in encouraging other media outlets to promote gender equality, the business argument might work, but other angles should be used as well.

The business arguments are mostly focused on improving the diversity and quality of the content produced by the media outlets. The idea is that to tell diverse stories, a diverse workforce is needed. Women might be able to access different sources and provide different angles to a story than male reporters. In this way, a more diverse audience can find itself in the stories covered and this improves the reputation as well as the competitiveness of the outlet in the long run. The business arguments are therefore focused on the idea of reflecting the community (in this case the audience), an improved reputation and leveraging talent. At the same time, media outlets in the sample see a role for themselves as agent of change promoting gender equality in their communities.

However, only two of the managers interviewed said that promoting gender equality in their organisation had made them more competitive. In their view, promoting gender equality in their organisation improved their reputation which made them more interesting for their audience as well as for funders. They also became known as a good employer for female journalists.

Finally, it is important to note that this research was conducted with organisations that had already made efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace and that might be intrinsically motivated to do so. Only one of the organisations in the sample was motivated by 'outside forces', namely demands by stakeholders, NGOs and audiences. It is needed to further research what kind of strategies and incentives are effective to promote gender equality in the workplace of media outlets where the managers are not already motivated to do so.

The research shows that gender inequality is still often seen as a 'women's issue' instead of a problem for society as a whole, and that a majority of the managers primarily look at gender equality from a content point of view. They want to cover more stories about taboo topics, and topics relevant to women. The risk of some of the strategies used by the media outlets in the sample is that gender equality is reduced to a 'women's issue', and that women are solely hired to report on 'women's topics' or gender equality issues.

Other strategies used by managers heavily focused on recruitment practices and, to a lesser extent, on creating a favourable working environment for all employees. Even though the strategies for recruiting more women, such as training programmes and widening the pool of candidates, are important, they are focused on individuals. It is also needed to implement strategies that promote structural change and change the power relations in the organisations. Although these strategies can lead to resistance in the organisation in order to achieve sustainable gender equality, a combination of individual and structural strategies should be employed[42].

Success factors to promote gender equality in the workplace identified in this research include:

- Commitment and clear communication by management

- Employing a flexible approach, adapting to the local context and culture

- Institutionalizing the efforts through for example a gender policy

- Using guidelines and measures to guarantee safety of female journalists

- Implementing accountability mechanisms to constantly monitor progress

As a result of these strategies, managers mostly saw a change in the content that was produced by their media outlets, including an increase of women's voices and diversity of topics covered by the media.

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Furthermore, the working environment of some of the media outlets improved. It is important to emphasize that these findings are based on the perceptions of the managers and might differ from the experience of employees in the organisation.

Recommendations
Based on the research, a number of recommendations can be formulated to further promote gender equality in the workplace of media outlets around the world.

For Media outlets:

- Look beyond gender inequality as a 'women's issue'. Work towards creating a safe and equal working environment for people of all genders. Encourage all employees to report on a wide range of topics.

- Develop comprehensive gender equality policies that address a number of issues for all employees, whether temporary, part-time or full-time, through a range of complementary strategies, rather than focusing on isolated fixes.

- Include accountability and measuring systems when implementing gender equality strategies.

For media development organisations promoting gender equality in the media sector:

- Find ways to more systematically track competitiveness of media outlets (and audience) in relation to the composition of the workforce, for example by measuring the increase or change in audience (segment) for gender-sensitive content through (social media) metrics. In this way, the business case for gender equality can further be investigated.

- Apply the 'business arguments' to the media sector, but also use other arguments to convince media managers of the importance of gender equality in the workplace.

- Further research the incentives and strategies to promote gender equality in the workplace of managers that are not already convinced of the importance of gender equality.

Annex: list of organisations in sample

AB Communications, Zimbabwe
ARTA, Syria
Daraj, Lebanon
El País Tarija, Bolivia
Ena Baladi, Syria
Kathmandu Post, Nepal
Kunafoni, Mali
Mama Radio, Democratic Republic of Congo
Pamir Times, Pakistan
Radio Star, Democratic Republic of Congo
Radio Tamazuj, South Sudan
Radio Tin Tua, Burkina Faso
Salam Watander, Afghanistan
SOWT, Jordan
Tribal News Network, Pakistan

Additionally, three organisations contributed to the
research anonymously.

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