



Journalistic and leadership skills for women in Nigeria

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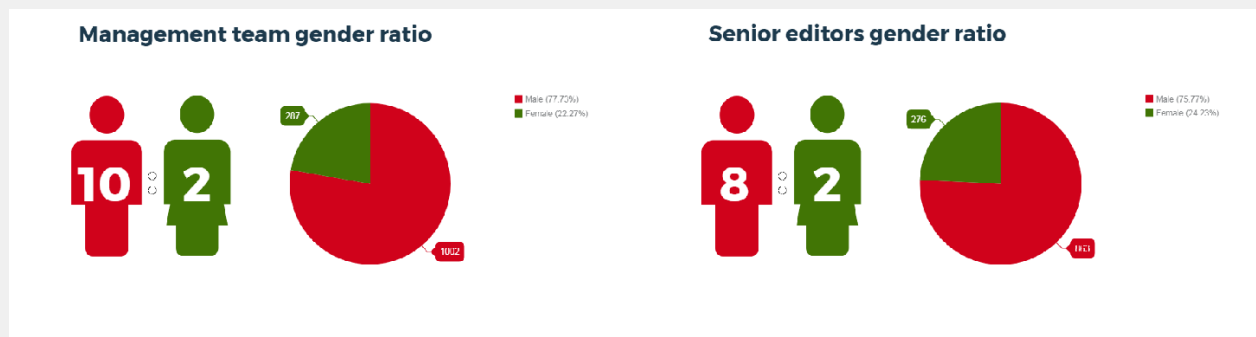
Bethel Tsegaye, Program Coordinator at Free Press Unlimited was recently in Nigeria to co-facilitate a three-day training in Lagos for fifteen, female journalists. In this blog she shares her experience.

Lagos, Nigeria

According to the [World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report for 2016](#), Nigeria is ranked 118 out of 144 countries when it comes to gender disparities. Taking a close look at the figures, Nigeria does fairly well across education, health and parts of the economy. However, the major gaps are seen in management positions and high government positions including parliament.

Media sector in Nigeria

The media sector is equally suffering from the lack of female journalists at the top. A study conducted by the Wole Soyinka Center for Investigative Journalists (WSCIJ) and Free Press Unlimited found that the ration of female to male in management positions in the media is 2:10. The same study found that there were 2:8 female to male senior editors in newsrooms. While the number of female journalists are relatively equal to that of men working in the media, the issue seems to be the step in between senior reporters and heads of desks to higher positions such as editor and other management positions.



In effort to combat this challenge, WSCIJ together with Free Press Unlimited launched a pilot project, entitled Leadership Fellowship Programme for Female Journalists. The project aims to contribute to a more diverse Nigerian media landscape that encourages female leadership, breaks down gender stereotypes and improves the quality of female journalism. 15 Nigerian, female

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journalists from across the country came together in Lagos, Nigeria to participate in the first training that was held from August 23rd till the 25th.

The objective of the training was to help the journalists become better leaders in the media, improve their journalistic skills and equip them with the knowledge to mainstream gender sensitivity and awareness in their newsrooms. Bethel says: "The media landscape in Nigeria is full of capable, hard-working, female journalists, however it struggles to keep women in senior positions. The training equipped the participants with the skills and knowledge to be great leaders in their newsrooms."

Report on women with respect

Experts in Gender, Leadership, Investigative Journalism and Storytelling led engaging and informative sessions over the three days. Coretv news journalist Abosede Omoruyi says: "This training has taught me better ethics in the newsroom and taught me how to incorporate more women in stories. It has taught me to be deliberate in whatever I do." One of the participants of the workshop was Premium Times Judicial Reporter Evelyn Okakwu. "I have learned change doesn't just come, you have to plan to achieve something and be deliberate about it. I plan to help build female journalists that are confident, that are competitive in every way", she says. Okakwu plans to teach other journalists in her newsroom how to report on women with respect.

The journalists have been assigned mentors and will each be working on a story and a leadership project that will be presented at a final share-fair later this year. Prizes will be given to the top three journalists who submit the best story. Stories will be judged by mentors based on specific gender reporting, ethical and investigative journalism criteria.

Inclusive and gender balanced

WSCIJ Coordinator Motunrayo Alaka has been working to train female journalists in Nigeria for several years after working as a journalist herself. "We hope to see stories that are inclusive and gender balanced and that the participants go back to their newsroom and begin to challenge the norms and ask questions and help others see things in a better light", she says.

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