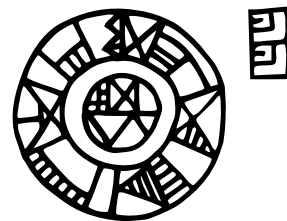
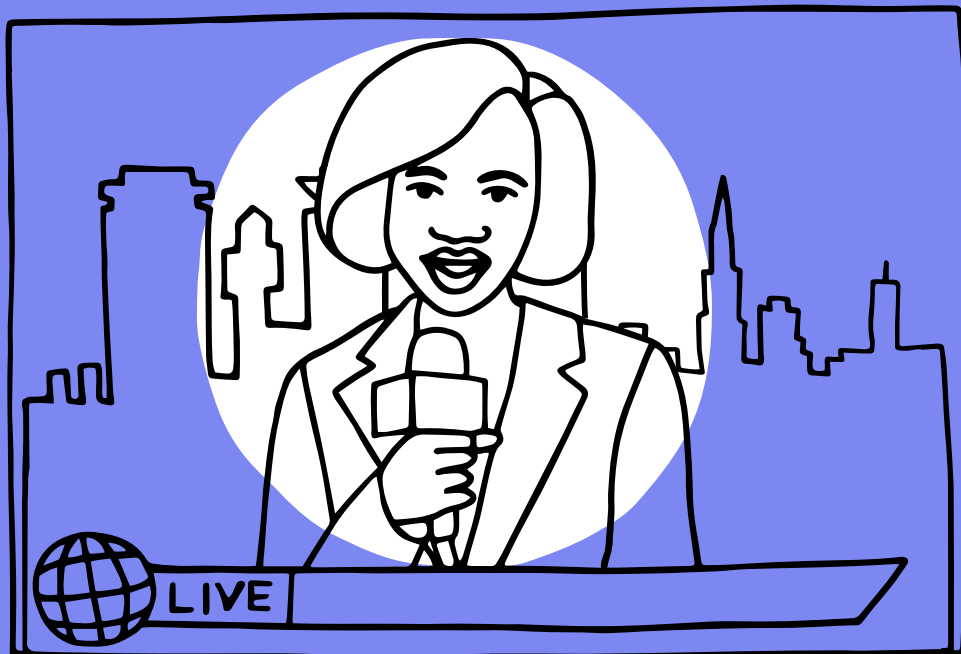
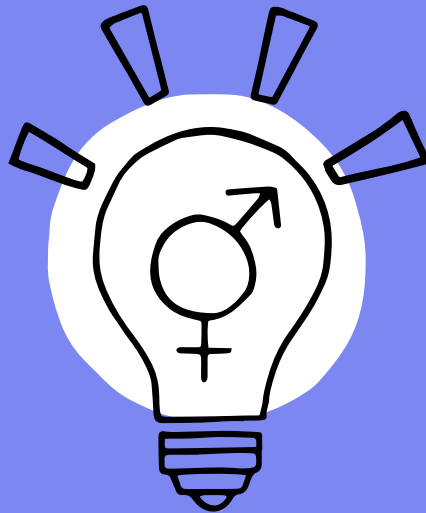


# In Search of the Missing Voice



# Developing Gender Policies for the Media in Kenya

Compared to men, women often have many responsibilities and little pay or say, be it at work or at home. This is also true for people working in the media. To do justice to both men and women and report their views responsively, media houses have started to develop gender policies. **This is a guideline of how to do it.**



# Why Gender Policies?

Gender inequality between men and women – be it the pay gap, unequal opportunity for education and jobs or duties of childcare – are still common in most societies. They are reinforced by economic and cultural factors. Media, being an educator, informer, an entertainer or agenda setter, plays a powerful role of influencing the behaviour, thinking and actions of individuals and institutions. It also has a vital role in exposing and overcoming inequalities in societies since it can influence public opinion and decision making. However, while the media is expected to put a spotlight on the society and help to address ills therein, it is also marginalising some groups of people in society. The representation of men and women in the media is not balanced. Studies have shown that men dominate the media in content as well as in structures.

# Identifying imbalances

In news and programmes content, men continue to dominate as sources of information compared to women. They also get positive portrayal compared to their female counterparts. Media monitoring reports show sobering statistics: Only 24 percent of those heard, seen or read in Kenyan media are women, compared to 76 percent men, according to a survey done by the African Women and Child Feature Service (AWCFS) in 2017 (see <https://kw.awcfs.org/article/baseline-survey-on-gender-coverage-in-kenyan-media-launched/>).

**Only 3.6 percent of stories in the print media had women or women's issues central to the story.**

Women are often portrayed as victims. Most editorial teams do not even have a list of female experts and contacts to help source their views and increase the number of women being heard, seen or listened to in the media.

Imbalances are also found in the structures of media houses. The AWCFS study further established that only 14 percent of the journalists who reported on political issues in the print media were females compared to 86 percent males. Many editors do not send female reporters to cover political events or demonstrations, which they consider as hard news. Female journalists are assigned to so-called soft beats such as health, education or culture. In 2016, a survey by DW Akademie, Article 19 Eastern Africa and Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) found the following: In several media houses, men are employed on permanent contracts while women tend to work as freelancers. Very few women hold decision making positions. In addition, female journalists often struggle with late working hours, if there is no safe transport to take them home (see <http://amwik.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Women-Journalists-Digital-Security.pdf>).

# Intervening by policies

Gender policies are meant to help in correcting such imbalances in editorial content and structure as well as addressing work place issues – not only for the sake of gender justice but for a richer and more truthful reflection of society in the media.

The question is why should gender policies be developed? One important objective is to ensure that journalists see issues through a gender lens, reflecting a male as well as a female view. Every issue has a gender dimension. Hence, gender policies make sure that the staff members of the specific media organisation implement their work from a gender perspective. The policy ensures that each decision – be it about content, sources, reporting angles, remuneration, employment or training – is gender responsive.

**It helps to ask critical questions: What does it mean to men and to women? How is it viewed from a male or female perspective?**

The gender policy will set rules to ensure gender justice in all areas of work. Therefore, it needs to be developed by colleagues from all departments: editorial, programming and advertisement, human resources and administration units. Only if they all understand the benefits of gender mainstreaming and are convinced, workshops on gender sensitive reporting or training may lead to the expected results.

Besides this, issues of gender balancing or gender equity are anchored in the Kenyan constitution. Therefore, it is important that every organisation adheres to the requirements.

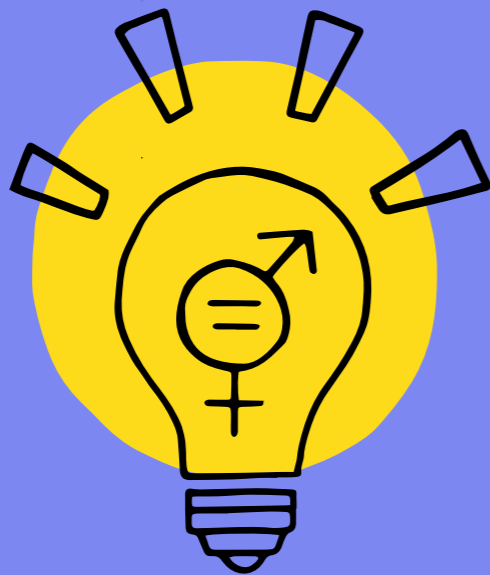
**However, there is no one-fits-all-solution: dependent on the specific set-up, each media or radio station needs to develop its own gender policy.**

Guided by an expert, the first radio stations developed such policies in a pilot project that commenced in 2018. Since then, a total number of three stations have completed, adopted and launched their gender policies. Two more radio stations are planning to finalize their policies by the end of 2020.

# Seven steps to develop a gender policy

Step 1:

# Buy-in



The first step aims to convince the senior staff of a media house about the benefits of a gender policy. Management needs to be convinced first – otherwise gender justice in the employment policy or gender sensitive reporting cannot be implemented. Therefore, the first assignment for the expert who is driving the development of a gender policy will be holding a meeting with the directors, owners and executive officers of a certain media house. The team of gender experts will examine the situation and needs of each media house and project how the organisation may benefit from a gender policy. Gender equity will influence the performance and creativity of the staff and the professional quality of the programme. It will assist the media house to inform citizens in a better way by making the programme richer and reflecting living realities of its consumers. It will also help to win women over as audience and as a target group for adverts. Besides this, the team will agree on a time frame for the policy drafting process.

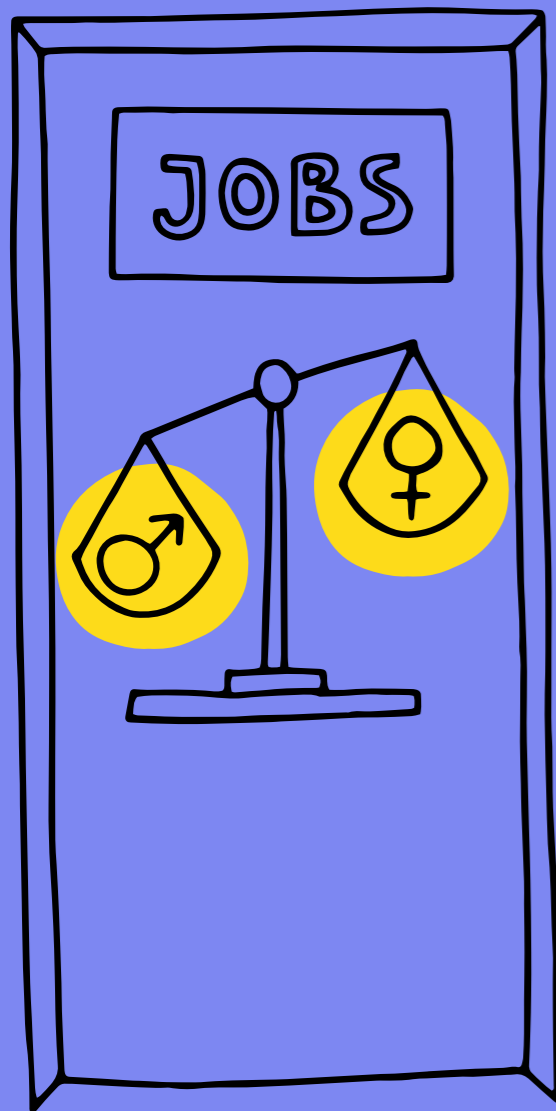
What are the **needs** of the media house?

How can the **gender policy** assist the media house?

What **time frame** is realistic?

Step 2:

# Situational Analysis



The goal of step two, the situation analysis, is to understand the level of equality or inequality and the employment situation of the media house. It also supports the appreciation of gender in content production.

The analysis helps to generate data about the number of male and female employees and their positions, about permanent staff and those on short-term contracts, remuneration, personnel in decision-making positions, training opportunities, safety issues, and child care facilities. In addition, the analysis should establish whether gender sensitivity is used as criterion in generating themes and assigning reporters. Some of this data need to be provided by the media house. It can be collected during the first appointment with management and during the first workshop with the selected team.

**Who earns  
how much money?**

**Who makes  
decisions?**

Step 3:

# Training on Drafting Gender Policies



Step three entails selection and introduction of staff from various departments of the media house to gender concepts. It can be offered as an in-house training at the media house or at a venue outside the media house. However, the latter is preferable as it ensures less distraction and more presence of the participants in all sessions. Participants in these workshops are nominated by management. They must be representatives of the different departments of the media house: programming, human resources, advertising and finances. This team will also be responsible for guiding the media house and its staff and management through the different stages of policy development until it is ready for adoption by the board or any other final decision-making organ.

**How can a team which is responsible for the gender policy be formed?**



# Understanding gender

The drafting workshop should take at least two or three days, depending on how many media houses are involved in the process and the extent of work to be done. The delivery of workshop content starts with **participants sharing their own** understanding of „gender sensitivity” and their personal stories and experiences with gender issues at their own work place.

This session is followed by an overview of gender in the country and **how media is reporting on gender in the news content**. Participants are taken through the quantitative and qualitative approach of measuring gender reporting in the media. The quantitative aspect deals with the number of men and women in the news, while the qualitative aspect tries to interrogate the quantitative results as well as giving a deeper analysis of the positive or negative portrayal of women. This approach helps to appreciate the representation of women and men in news content. An additional session deals with understanding stereotypes and how they manifest; in other words, how they inform the reporting of men and women in the media and how they contribute to the continuous disempowerment of women in the society.

In addition to this, the participants are introduced to international instruments such as the Beijing Platform of Action of 1995, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the national legal framework such as the Constitution of Kenya, with specific reference to provisions on gender balance.

These sessions assist the participants to appreciate gender mainstreaming and to see various topics through a gender lens.

## What is gender sensitivity?

## What makes a stereotype?

# Drafting a policy

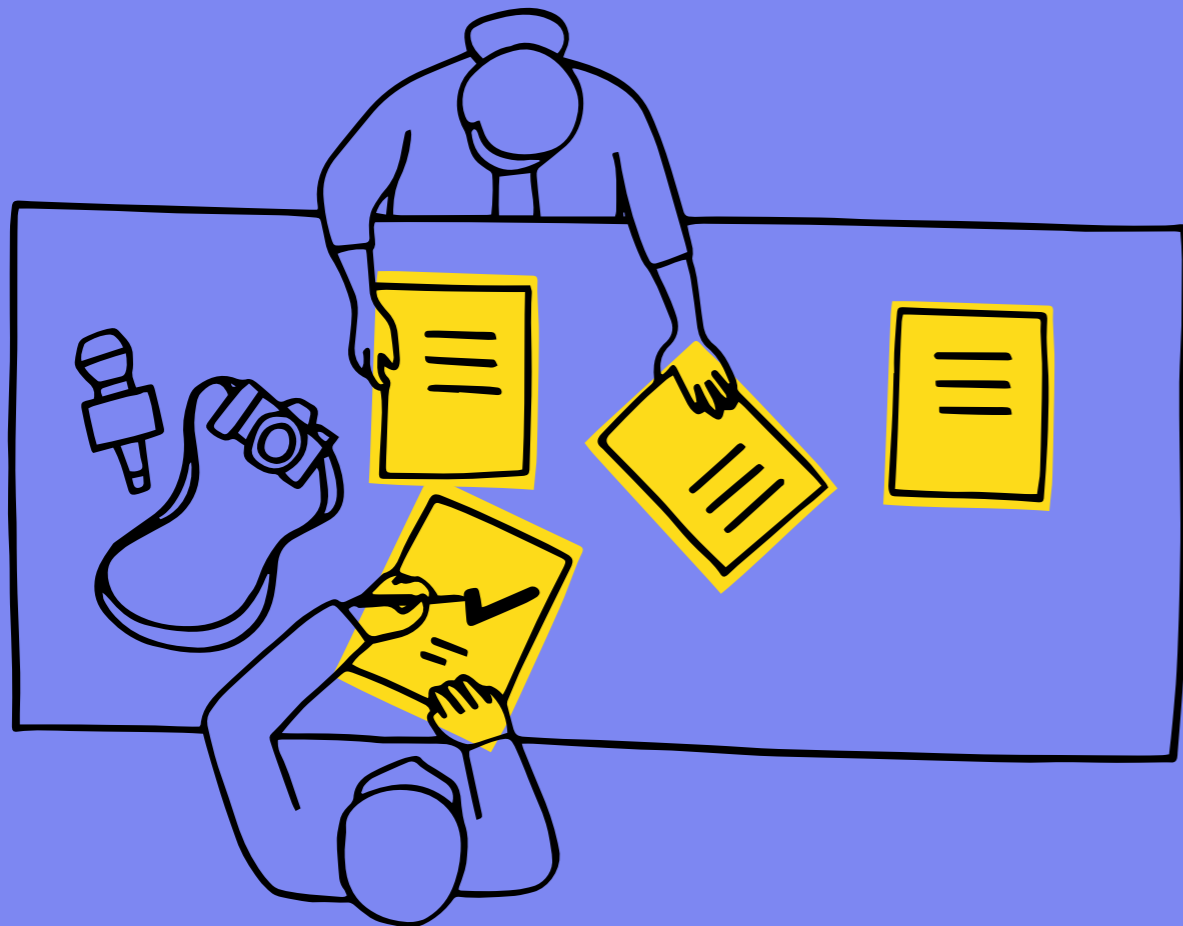
After the introduction described above, participants are now ready to focus deeper on the framework guiding the development of the gender policy. This session begins with **participants expressing commitment to develop the policy** through the various stages. They also indicate why they think their media house needs a gender policy. Thereafter, the participants are taken through the key areas that the policy will address: formulation of the aim and background of the gender policy, critical workplace issues, gender sensitivity in editorial content, programmes, sales and marketing, management and finally monitoring and evaluation of the gender policy.

Furthermore, the participants are **introduced to a template for developing the gender policy** which they discuss chapter by chapter, responding to different questions that are then transformed into policy statements. **Each team chooses the policy options appropriate for their own media house** (see extract of the template on page 26). The main output of this stage is the first draft of the gender policy. A timeframe for this process is agreed upon at the end of the drafting workshop.

## What is the reason for a gender policy?

Step 4:

# Technical Support for Media Houses and Approval by Management



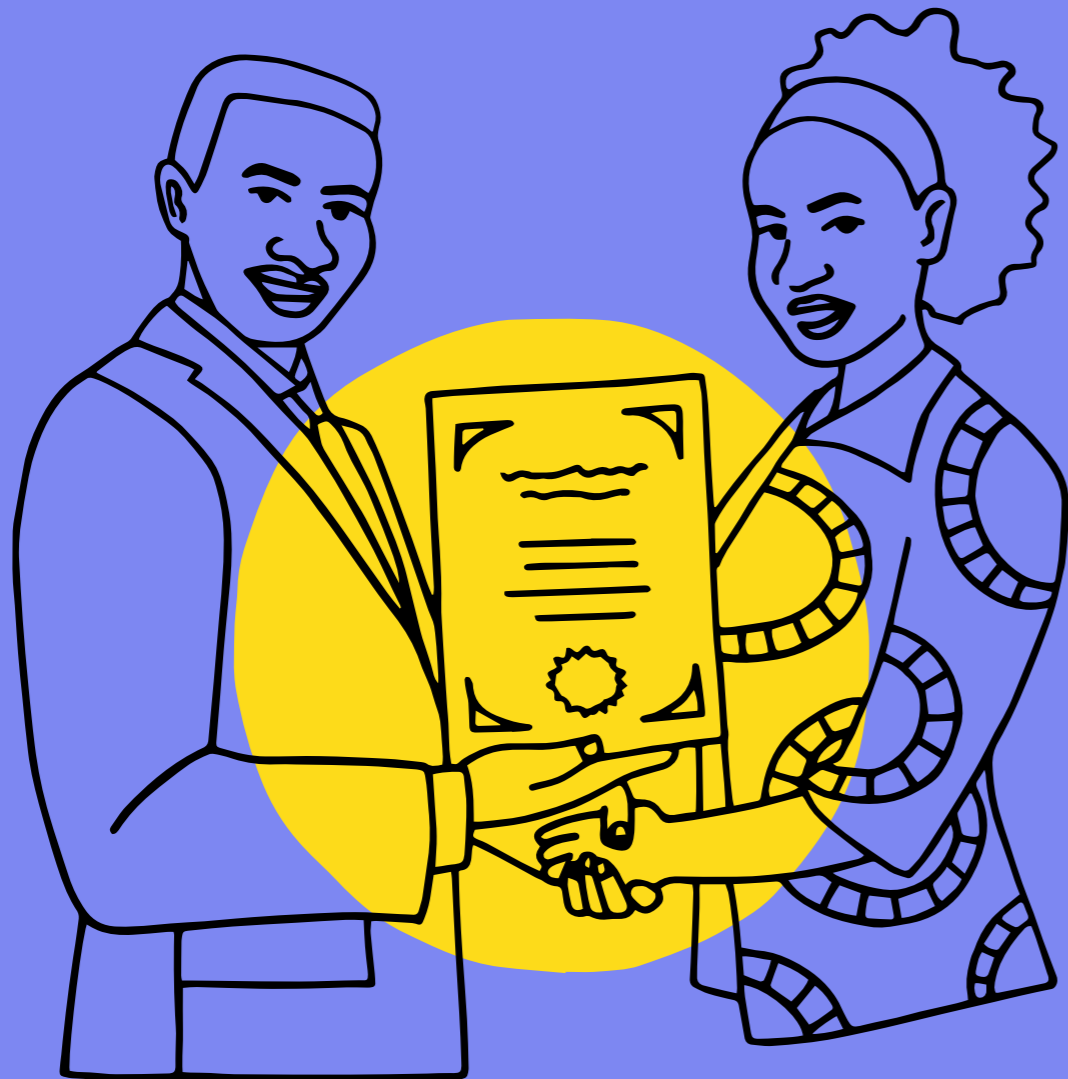
Step four includes taking the first draft of the gender policy developed earlier to the media house for discussion with the management and the general staff. This may enable them to make comments and agree on which policy statements they want to guide their media house. The drafting team that participated in the workshop has the responsibility to ensure that this process is successful. The first draft goes through four stages at least, with each stage improving on the content. In all stages of the process, a gender mainstreaming expert gives technical support and advice to the teams to make sure the drafting process meets the set standards. This process will take about two months.

The final step is the approval of the policy by the management.

How can the policy be formulated best?

## Step 5:

# Adoption and Launch of Gender Policy



In step five, the final version of the gender policy must be adopted by the board respectively which is the highest decision-making body of the media house.

An **official launch of the gender policy in a public event** will ensure that the media house announces to the stakeholders that it is gender sensitive and its content and programming will reflect this. The launch is usually a celebration of a few hours with guests from the community and other media houses, journalism schools and other stakeholders. It is important to invite county government officers to give their views and support the process. This is because the county government has the task by the Constitution of Kenya to ensure gender mainstreaming is functioning in its structures and delivery of development programmes.

At the launch, key people can deliver brief statements. Representatives of the media houses are given a chance to explain why their media house decided to adopt a gender policy. One of the advisory persons highlights the key issues of the gender policy. This ceremony will end with the issuing of certificates to those members of the team from each department who started the process of drafting the policies. The media house itself also receives a certificate.

## Who speaks at the launch?

## Who gets a certificate?

Step 6:

# Implementation and Gender Champions



Step six includes the start of implementing the different aspects of the policy step by step. However, challenges might emerge that must be addressed. For successful implementation of the gender policy, the media house needs to put in place a task team to oversee this process. One of the key aspects each media house needs to do is **nominating a gender champion**, who will work with the task team to guide the implementation of the gender policy.

**This team together with the gender champion will monitor the policy implementation process and advise the management and the board about capacity building needs.**

This might apply to programming, interviewing or gender sensitive reporting.

Among other important tools which need to be in place to guarantee the success of this policy is the development of a **list with contacts of women experts and women organisations** who will be used as news sources. The critical matters include looking for a gender aspect in each story published and reviewing the employment, remuneration and training mechanisms all from a gender point of view. If needed, a checklist for **gender sensitive language** could be developed as well.

**Who will run the process?**

**Who are the sources for reporting?**

Step 7:

# Monitoring and Evaluation



Step seven is the monitoring process which should start **with an internal evaluation**. It should be concluded after every six months to establish the progress being made in policy implementation. Based on the figures collected in the situational analysis and on the experiences of colleagues, progress and obstacles will be evaluated by the media house itself. To start this process, the gender mainstreaming expert will visit the media house for one day and take the gender champions and the task team through the appropriate tools for the internal monitoring and evaluation process.

An **external evaluation** by an expert from outside should be done **on a regular** basis to independently evaluate and determine how the media house implemented its gender policy. This evaluation will look at how the media house is mainstreaming gender in its structure, content and programming. If necessary, it will recommend measures that need to be taken to improve implementation of the gender policy.

## How does the media house perform?

# The Template

## 1. Aim

**What does the policy aim to achieve?**

For example: The aim of this policy is to create an environment that is gender sensitive, free of sexual harassment, and promotes equity in the day to day operations.

## 2. Background

**What are the key gender and media issues in the country?**

For example: Studies on gender representation in media in both content and structure; women in the company structure; men's and women's voices in the news

**The process of developing this policy:**

- The buy-in
- Situational Analysis
- Media house training on drafting of Gender Policies
- Technical support to media house as they draft Gender Policies
- Review of the policies and approval by management
- Adoption and implementation of the Gender policy
- Launch of the policy

## 3. Gender Policy Framework

**What are the key legal and policy conventions that inform this policy?**

For example, on national level:  
The Constitution of Kenya, Acts of Parliament, Building Bridges Initiative, Code of Conduct for the practice of journalism in Kenya

For example, on international level:  
Beijing Platform for Action, Sustainable Development Goals, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

## 4. Work Place Issues

**What work place measures will the radio station institute?**

For example: Promotion of gender balance and sensitivity in the structure, ensure institutional culture and practice are gender sensitive.

**Board and staff composition**

What is the stations threshold on this? Create a suitable time frame.

### **Affirmative action and staff development**

How is recruitment and selection of staff handled, especially for positions where women are underrepresented?

### **Family friendly practices and environment**

For example: Handling of nursing mothers, flexible working hours, paternity leave.

### **Sexual harassment and other forms of workplace harassment**

What is your position on this?  
(annex on a sexual harassment policy will be formulated and adopted in a second process).

## **5. Editorial Content**

### **Gender representation in the editorial content of the radio station**

For example: Recognition of gender as specialised beat.

Reporters and producers ensure that voices of women and men are fairly represented on various themes and in news content.

Development of a directory of contacts.

Is your story fair, accurate and balanced?

Is sexist language defined and forbidden?

Are voices and opinions from both men and women included?

## **6. Programmes**

### **Ensuring gender balance in programming**

For example: Gender sensitivity and challenge of stereotypes in programming, develop programmes that are gender aware, work with gender experts to help in designing of programmes.

## **7. Sales and Marketing/ Advertising**

How can gender sensitivity in advertising be assured?

## **8. Management System**

For example: What management structure will be put in place to provide strategic directions to this policy, who will develop the implementation plan, how will the adoption and launch of the policy be done?

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

For example: Keep gender-disaggregated data, review it, and define a time frame for implementation.

### **The gender project team:**

#### **Arthur Okwemba,**

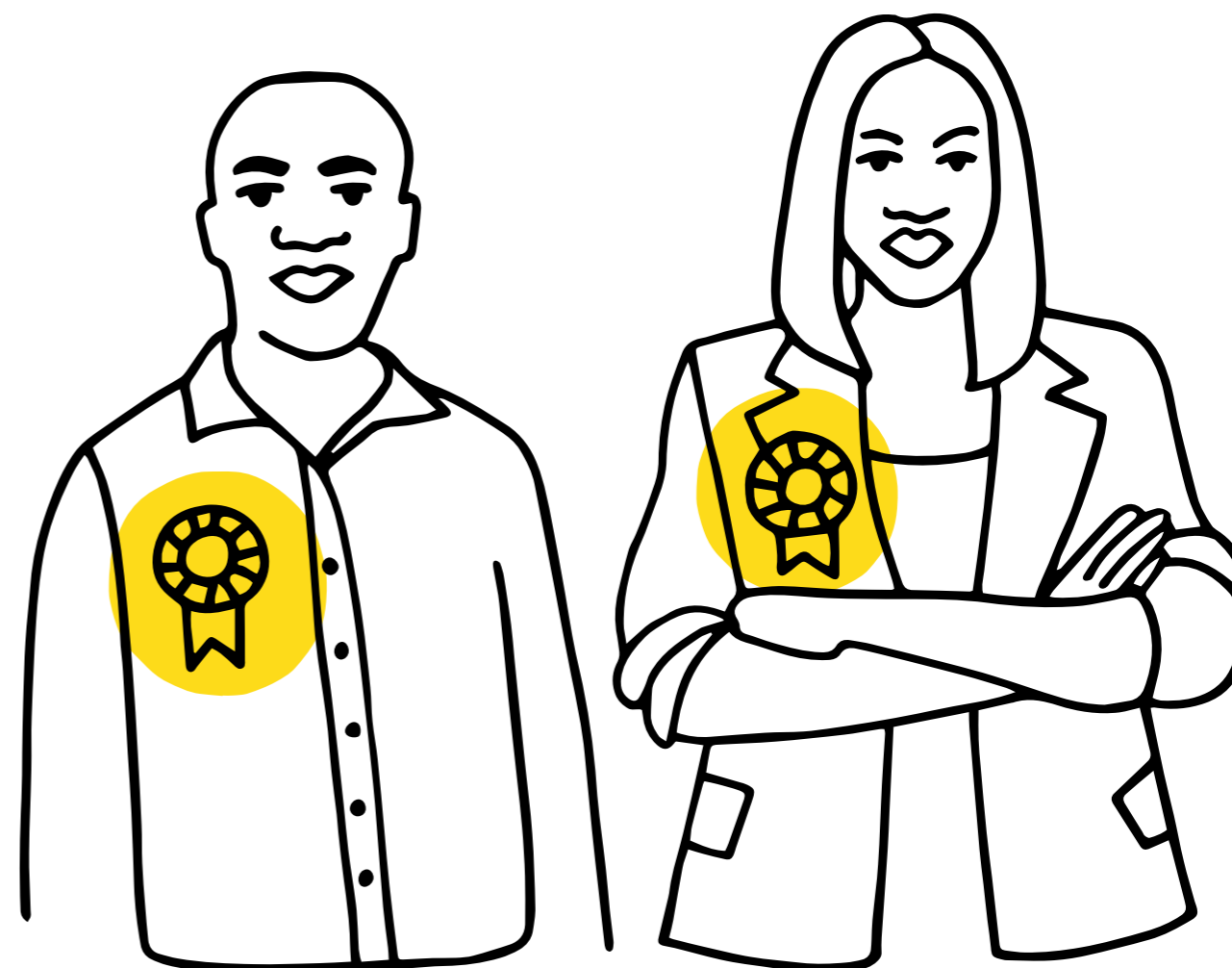
media consultant Kenya,  
okwembaa@yahoo.com

#### **Sigrid Thomsen,**

project manager DW Akademie Kenya,  
sigrid.thomsen@dw.com

#### **Josephine Waretta,**

project manager DW Akademie Kenya,  
awareta@gmail.com



# Acknowledgements:

We thank the South African organisation “Genderlinks” for sharing experiences and publications from a project of mainstreaming gender with 100 media houses in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Co-author Arthur Okwemba took the technical lead in the Gender Policy Development process in Tanzania between 2011 and 2013 and has led the development of similar policies in Kenya. The Gender Links’ handbook “Making every voice count” of 2011 and material used for developing gender policies informed this process.

We thank DW Akademie and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development for supporting this process with human resources and finances.

DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle’s center for international media development, journalism training and knowledge transfer. Our projects strengthen the human right to freedom of expression and unhindered access to information. DW Akademie empowers people worldwide to make independent decisions based on reliable facts and constructive dialogue. DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also receive funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in approximately 60 developing countries and emerging economies.

**Grand Wave Consortium (GWC)**  
c/o Sky FM  
P.O. Box 668  
40100 Kisumu, Kenya  
grandwavec@gmail.com

**Lulu Kitololo Studio**  
P.O. Box 539  
00606 Nairobi, Kenya  
lulukitololo.com  
designed September 2021

**DW Akademie**  
Media Development Africa/East Africa  
Kurt-Schumacher-Str. 3  
53110 Bonn, Germany  
T: +49-228-429-0  
info@dw-akademie.com  
dw-akademie.com  
facebook.com/DW Akademie



# In Search of the Missing Voice

