

Women in News has first 2016 Africa meeting

The Women in News (WiN) initiative, an editorial leadership programme for African women working in media, launched its sixth year in 2016.

It brings together 37 women in middle and senior management of newspapers in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as a team of coaches and mentors from local markets and abroad.

Organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, its goal is to help women media professionals, who are under-represented in top management positions, to excel in their careers.



The Women in News editors and senior journalists from Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania. Rwandan Women in News journalists will join the programme soon.

"WAN-IFRA aims to close the gender gap in the newsroom by ensuring women with strong leadership skills and passion for the news industry can reach the top positions in news media houses," said Alison Meston, head of capacity building for Women in News. "Already with just two days into their first media management training, the participants are saying this is a life-changing course."

The women, meeting in South Africa last week, heard from Bongiwe Mlengeni, of South Africa's Social Justice Initiative, who told the group that as women in news, they were "not just responsible for editorial leadership, but must view themselves as influencers of their communities."

Female sources to reduce media gender bias

Ferial Haffejee, editor of *City Press*, also addressed the group, saying that women not being used as sources made gender bias in news worse. "One of the first things I did as an editor was ensure our newsroom had a dedicated women source book, so there was no excuse not to ask for a comment from a woman in finance or politics or health."

Tikhala Chibwana, project director of WIN Africa East said, "There is such a high level of anticipation and excitement amongst the participants to add to their skill sets. I think this is going to be a productive week."

The WiN programme has partnered with Wits University to deliver a certified training course, where participants can use the certification to further their education towards an honours degree. The South African meeting included sessions and workshops on gender bias in news, social impact reporting, managing diversity in the newsroom, strategies to attract young readers, managing personal finances, project management skills and time management.

The initiative also engages the media industry at the global level, to sensitise and promote change from within, and forms part of WAN-IFRA's Gender and Media Freedom Strategy. The strategy combines WAN-IFRA's global experience in running advocacy and development initiatives in support of media freedom and democracy with the first-hand knowledge of the impact gender-based programmes can have on media and society. More on the WiN programme can be found at <http://www.womeninnews.org>.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>