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1. Foreword

For more than a decade, WAN-IFRA Women in News has worked to create a media landscape that is more inclusive, diverse, engaging and financially healthy. We believe that when the media embody these characteristics, we can promote a more equitable and just society.

This extends to inside WAN-IFRA Women in News as a programme. In order to create an inclusive environment that embraces and celebrates diversity - a key value of WIN - we need to ensure that all collaborators feel safe, valued and connected to their peers. Building an organisational culture that embodies these characteristics requires continual learning, and self-reflection. It also requires a set of principles to aspire, alongside clear and unequivocal guidelines on how we expect members of the WAN-IFRA WIN community to treat each other.

We also understand that this is an ever evolving and iterative process. We consider this policy to be a living document that will evolve as does our own learning journey on how to create more inclusive environments for all collaborators. We recognise that this is only a step in a larger process, but also that there is power of communicating and implementing such a policy. As always we encourage constructive feedback and suggestions on how we can make this document more relevant, clear and useful. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you would like to provide your input.

Melanie Walker

Executive Director
Media Development & WIN
WAN-IFRA

28.04.2023

2. Policy statement

WAN-IFRA Women in News (WAN-IFRA WIN) recognises that its team members, partners and collaborators come from different backgrounds and have different personal identities, with different experiences and needs. WAN-IFRA WIN is committed to ensuring that Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) is embedded in our daily work, relationships and practices. WAN-IFRA WIN has primarily focused on the fair representation of women in the media industry since 2010, given this is the largest diversity category facing systemic and historical disadvantages. We recognise that gender is a spectrum and is intersectional with other diversity categories. Therefore, in recent years we have introduced GEDI values and concepts into our efforts to promote a truly inclusive media industry that embraces diversity and inclusion.
We hold ourselves to account through our policies, programmes, relationships, partnerships and day-to-day practices, and we are committed to promoting equality, equity and combating discrimination. We are committed to continual learning and advocacy to understand, include and protect all people’s dignity, regardless of their gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability and nationality.

WAN-IFRA WIN has a zero-tolerance policy on all forms of discrimination in the workplace. We have developed this GEDI policy guidelines and procedures manual to support our gender equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. WIN will ensure that all team members and long-term consultants know about and have ready access to the guideline at all times and are familiar with its contents.

This policy, in alignment with our vision, mission and values, outlines clear procedures for all WIN team members, long-term consultants, and collaborators.

3. Mission, vision and values

Our vision is gender equal, inclusive, financially healthy, and safe media that support democracy and human rights

Our mission is to foster a media landscape that is more gender balanced, inclusive, safe, and financially healthy. We aim to achieve this by promoting representation of women and diverse people in leadership positions and in content. We strive to equip independent media with the tools and resources necessary to adapt to the continually changing media environment, recognising there is a particular and urgent financial crisis facing media. Additionally, we work to increase safety of media and journalists, with a focus on protecting journalists from sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse alongside digital and physical threats. We believe that when the media embody these characteristics we can promote a more equitable and just democratic society.

Our values:

We champion equality and inclusivity
We strive for excellence
We collaborate to drive change and innovation
We are a supportive community
We empower people and organisations
We embrace our diversity as our superpower
We challenge the status quo while respecting cultural differences
4. Purpose

This policy’s purpose is to:

a. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all consultants and suppliers we work with, whether temporary, part-time or full-time. This extends to our relationship with partners and stakeholders.

b. Ensure a safe work and learning environment free from any form of discrimination based on (includes but not limited to):
   - age
   - ability
   - gender marriage and civil partnership
   - pregnancy and maternity
   - race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
   - religion or belief
   - sex
   - sexual orientation

c. Oppose and avoid all forms of discrimination. This includes in:
   - fees
   - terms and conditions of engagement
   - dealing with grievances
   - dismissal
   - leave for parents
   - requests for flexible working
   - selection training or other developmental opportunities

5. Our Commitment

In order to fulfil its commitment towards adopting values of gender equality, diversity and inclusion, WAN-IFRA WIN commits to the following principles and actions to create an environment that embraces Gender Equality, Diversity & Inclusion:

- We recognize and embrace the nuances of intersecting identities such as, but not limited to, ability, gender identity, class, race, ethnicity, religion and marital status
- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- Provide GEDI training to WAN-IFRA WIN’s consultants, partner organisations, collaborators and WAN-IFRA WIN programmes’ participants
● Ensure that all team members and individuals WAN-IFRA WIN works with receive fair and equal treatment
● Provide a stylebook on how to embrace diversity and inclusion in the workplace to WAN-IFRA WIN’s partners and collaborators (is the GEDI in content handbook?)
● Identify a focal point within WAN-IFRA WIN team to receive grievance reports and complaints about any type of discrimination or unfair treatment; establish an accurate process for staff to raise concerns and report discrimination or retaliation in a timely, confidential manner;
● Conduct organisational culture audit to ensure our values are embodied throughout WAN-IFRA WIN in both practice and intent. Assist partner organisations and collaborators to monitor their unconscious biases, editorial content and organisational practices to best implement GEDI values
● Ensure all in person and virtual opportunities at WAN-IFRA WIN are accessible to all and introduce reasonable accommodations to facilitate participation when needed
● Promote and encourage participation of youth, ethnic and racial minorities, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ and other historically marginalised groups within WAN-IFRA WIN’s team and programmes
● Create and foster a safe and inclusive work environment where team members are treated with equity, dignity and respect; and enforce a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying
● Act as a role model to partner organisations and collaborators
● Continual evaluation and review of all internal policies, training material, texts, visuals and practices in order to ensure a fair representation to all diversity categories and that they are free from any type of direct and indirect discrimination

6. Scope

This policy applies to WAN-IFRA WIN team (full-time, part-time consultants as well as trainers, coaches and short term contributors, remunerated or not), partner organisations, collaborators, funded and sponsored organisations and individuals, programmes’ participants, events’ attendees and any person or organisation involved in any of WAN-IFRA WIN’s programmes.

Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion urges rights and responsibilities on every team member and collaborator. All team members will be informed that this policy is being implemented and that they are bound to comply with its requirements. The policy will also be shared through different communication channels with WAN-IFRA WIN’s partner organisations and individuals, collaborators and other stakeholders.

This policy applies to different workplace abuses that violate GEDI values. Please refer to section 8 for more details on workplace abuse.
7. Key Definitions

**Diversity** refers to the visible and invisible differences between individuals. These differences can be related to gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, mental health, physical disability, civil status, personal legal and housing status, marital status, cultural views, level of education, spoken language and life experiences.

**Gender** refers to the behavioural, cultural and psychological characteristics that are socially constructed, and often associated with a person's sex at birth. Gender is a spectrum, is different from sex and involves a variety of gender identities that include - but is not limited to - women, men and non-binary.

**Discrimination** is any direct or indirect unequal treatment of a person based on their personal identity (age, sex, gender, religion, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, social class, marital status, etc.)

**Harassment or bullying** is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the above listed discriminatory grounds that has the effect of causing undue stress on individuals and/or demotivating them.

**Sexual harassment** is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Please refer to WAN-IFRA's sexual harassment policy.

**Equity** is about recognising that not all people start from the same place, and it is different from equality. Whereas equality is about treating people in an equal manner, equity is about providing each individual with the individually needed tools to reach the same opportunities.

**Equality** is about ensuring that every individual is being treated equally, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.

**Intersectionality** is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, sex and gender, and other dimensions of identity as they apply to a given individual or group, creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Intersectionality recognizes the multiple ways in which people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression.

8. Safe Working environments

This policy aims to eliminate all types of abuse, discrimination and oppression that exists in the workplace to maintain a safe and inclusive professional environment. As WAN-IFRA WIN is primarily a virtual workplace, we define the working environment as any interaction on a digital platform, be it team, supplier or partner meeting or event, as well as in-per meetings
and events. **This policy holds for any in-person meetings, events and interactions that occur on behalf of WAN-IFRA WIN.**

Below is a list of types of behaviours that violate WAN-IFAR WIN's GEDI values:

### 8.1 Discrimination

**Discrimination** is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups of people.

**Racial discrimination** is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of people based on their race, skin colour, ancestry, origin country, or citizenship. Even attributes of a certain ethnicity - such as hair texture, skin colour, accent, food, customs, beliefs, holidays or celebrations, fashion style - may be the cause of racial discrimination.

**Examples of racial discrimination:**

- Insulting comments about the person’s race or racial attributes
- Sharing racial jokes, “memes” or images
- Using racial terms or slurs
- Acting disgusted to be around the person (e.g. refusal to share a common space or room, acting disgusted by the person’s cultural food)

**Gender discrimination** is a discriminatory behaviour towards a person based on their gender expression. It can happen to cisgendered women or men (people whose gender identity matches that they were assigned at birth), trans women or men, and non-binary.

**Examples of gender discrimination:**

- Ignoring a woman for promotion because she is not “a leader material”
- Displaying materials (e.g. comics, posters, screensavers) that are degrading to women
- Referring to a non-binary person as “it”
- Purposely misgendering a trans person (e.g. using the pronoun “he” on purpose when referring to a transwoman)

**Religious discrimination** is a discriminatory behaviour towards a person based on their religious belief, and it is often intersectional with racial discrimination.

**Examples of religious discrimination:**

- Being intolerant towards a person’s religious holidays
- Making fun of a person’s fasting method based on their religious belief
- Degrading stereotypical comments about a person’s religion
- Pressuring a person to convert to another religion
- Denying a person the right to celebrate a religious religion or execute a religious practice

**Ability-based discrimination** is a type of workplace discrimination directed towards individuals who either live with a physical or mental disability, are acquainted with a person with a disability or use disability services.

**Examples of ability-based discrimination:**
- Harmfully teasing a person with a disability
- Making patronising comments towards a person with a disability
- Refusing to reasonably accommodate a person with a disability
- Isolating a person with a disability from group activities, meetings and workplace-related events

**Additional definitions:**

*Patronising* is when someone treats another person in a way that is apparently kind or helpful, but that relays a feeling of superiority.

**Sexual orientation-based discrimination** is a discriminatory behaviour towards a person or a group of people based on sexual orientation. Sexual orientation-based discrimination can happen to all people of all sexual orientations.

**Examples of sexual orientation-based discrimination:**
- Being aggressive towards a person because of their sexual orientation
- Degrading comments about LGBTIQ+ communities
- Stereotyping homosexual people
- Expressing hate speech or phobia towards a person based on their sexual orientation

**Age-based discrimination** is a discriminatory behaviour towards a person based on their age.

**Examples of age-based discrimination:**
- Leaving team members out of social activities because of their age
- Not taking into consideration team members’ different ages when planning activities or meetings (e.g. planning an advanced-level hike as a group activity; or planning a meeting at a +21 years old venue)
- Refusing promotion to qualified employees because they are too young or too old
- Patronising a person, assuming they have less qualifications or knowledge, or treating them with disrespect because they belong to a younger generation
- Unfairly criticising a person for their limited skills in a certain area (e.g. making fun of a senior person for being less tech savvy)
8.2 Harassment (sexual, physical, personal, psychological)

**Sexual harassment** is an unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity and makes them feel degraded, humiliated, intimidated or threatened.

It is important to emphasise that, no matter the intention, the person on the receiving end of the behaviour decides if it is unwanted. This is regardless of the intention of the person accused of harassment.

Sexual harassment can be ongoing or a one-time occurrence.

Sexual harassment can be:

- **Physical** – someone uses physical pressure or force to have sexual contact with another person against their will;
- **Verbal** - someone gives another person unwanted sexual attention through verbal or written comments or conversation;
- **Non-verbal** – someone gives another person unwanted sexual attention through noises or actions at a distance.

You can find more details about sexual harassment and how to manage it here: [https://sexualharassment.womeninnews.org/en/sections](https://sexualharassment.womeninnews.org/en/sections)


**Physical harassment** is workplace violence that includes physical attacks and/or threats. This type of harassment can be classified as assault in certain cases.

**Examples of physical harassment:**

- Continuously invading a person’s personal physical space with the purpose of intimidating them or threatening them
- Direct threats to cause physical harm (e.g. “I will beat you”)
- Physical attacks (e.g. punching, kicking, etc.)
- Destroying a person’s belongings or assigned desk to intimidate them

**Personal harassment** is a type of workplace harassment that is not based on a person’s protected characteristics (race, gender, sexual orientation, religion). It often targets a person’s work, personality, body size or appearance. It is a form of bullying.

**Examples of personal harassment:**

- Laughing at someone because of their body size (weight, height, shape)
- Using intimidation tactics to offend someone or target their work or personality type (e.g. repeatedly inviting someone who has an introverted...
Psychological harassment is a type of harassment that targets a person’s well-being. Psychological harassment often aims to put people down and belittle them on a personal or professional level, and has a serious negative impact on a person’s well-being and mental health.

Examples of psychological harassment:

- Continuously telling someone that they are useless or bad at what they do
- Isolating a person from group gatherings or conversations
- Discrediting or spreading rumours about a person
- Gaslighting people

Additional definitions:

Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation in which the abuser attempts to sow self-doubt and confusion in their victim’s mind. Typically, gaslighters are seeking to gain power and control over the other person, by distorting reality and forcing them to question their own judgement and intuition.¹

8.3 Bullying or power harassment (online and offline)

Bullying or power harassment is a type of workplace harassment that includes attempts to prove or increase disparity between the harasser and the victim. Power harassment happens when a person bullies another person who has a lower hierarchical work position. Bullying or power harassment is often psychological.

Examples of bullying or power harassment:

- Excessive demands, tasks or deadlines that are impossible to meet
- Demeaning demands that are below a person’s capabilities or position
- Intruding into the person’s personal life
- Patronising someone

9. Management and delivery of this policy

Adhering to and upholding the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is the responsibility of everyone within the WAN-IFRA WIN team.

The WAN-IFRA WIN leadership team is committed to embedding gender equality, diversity and inclusion within day-to-day work ensuring that all our programmes and WAN-IFRA WIN’s practices are managed to respect our GEDI objectives.

The policy will be communicated to all team members, partners, collaborators and other stakeholders using a variety of communication channels, such as WAN-IFRA WIN’s internal communications channels, the website, the newsletter and publications where appropriate.

The WAN-IFRA WIN team as well as regular collaborators such as coaches and trainers will receive appropriate training to ensure they understand their responsibility not to discriminate and to treat everyone with respect and dignity, as well as support on how to manage and overcome unconscious biases, stereotypes and personal prejudices that detract from an inclusive professional environment.

The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy will be reviewed annually and updated where needed.

10. Reporting mechanisms

All WAN-IFRA WIN team members, as well as long-term full time and part-time consultants, partners and programme participants are encouraged to report if they have been abused at work or during any of WAN-IFRA WIN events and training, both offline and online, or witnessed someone else facing workplace abuse. The WAN-IFRA WIN workplace is defined as digital meeting platforms as well as in-person meetings and events. All reports will be taken seriously and will be dealt with sensitively, consistently, and fairly, respecting the rights of all parties involved. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to bring in external assistance or expertise to ensure a fair, impartial and objective investigation.

10.1 Who can make a complaint

All WAN-IFRA WIN team members, long-term consultants, partners and programmes’ participants have a right to complain if they or someone else is facing workplace abuse or discrimination. Workplace abuse or discrimination can be reported by:

1. The person who has been abused or discriminated against
2. A witness to the abuse or discrimination
As a manager, if someone reports to you an incident of workplace abuse, you should encourage him/her to report this to the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Senior Manager (myra.abdallah@womeninnews.org).

10.2 Who handles workplace abuse complaints

The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager is the designated person in WAN-IFRA WIN for dealing with workplace abuse and discrimination cases with the support of the WAN-IFRA WIN Executive Director, and the WAN-IFRA Executive Director of Administration & Finance.

A WAN-IFRA WIN team member, long-time consultant, partner or participant can make a complaint to the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager. They can also make a complaint to any person with responsibility in WAN-IFRA WIN, including:
- An immediate manager;
- Another manager at WAN-IFRA WIN;
- A regional director;
- A programme’s director

Each of these individuals should refer the complaint to the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager, who will put the complaint on the record.

10.3 Reporting procedures

General note on investigations:

Those responsible for investigating complaints should consider all available evidence, including any surrounding evidence, and make their finding on the balance of probabilities.

It is important to note that even if there is not enough evidence for a complaint to be substantiated, it does not mean that the discrimination did not occur or that the complainant is a liar.

Sequence of events

Step 1 – Complaint on workplace abuse or discrimination made

- A verbal or written complaint is made about abuse experienced at WAN-IFRA WIN or any WAN-IFRA WIN-related event.
- The complaint is made to a person with responsibility in WAN-IFRA WIN (defined above).
- Whoever receives the complaint informs the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager, who is designated person for workplace abuse and discrimination cases at WAN-IFRA WIN.

Step 2 – Complaint received
- The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager contacts or requests a meeting with the person making the complaint.
- If the complaint was verbal, the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager will make a written note of the complaint and share a copy with the person making the complaint to:
  - Inform them of their rights, the process going forward and answer any questions;
  - Explain about confidentiality and what it means for them and the person they are accusing;
  - Explain what the potential professional and legal consequences will be for the person they are accusing if a case is found;
  - Explain what support is available to them and ascertain what support they might want or need;
  - Put the above in writing.

- The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager contacts or calls a meeting with the person accused of workplace abuse or discrimination and:
  - Informs them about the case against them;
  - Informs them of their rights (including their right to respond) and the process going forward and answers any questions;
  - Explains about confidentiality and what it means for them and the person who is accusing them;
  - Explains what the potential professional and legal consequences will be for them if a case is found;
  - Puts the above in writing.

- An incident file is opened.
- A small number of senior management are informed about the case: the relevant regional director where appropriate, the People and Performance director, and the Executive director.

**Step 3 – Investigation**

- Interviews are conducted with:
  - The person being abused or discriminated against;
  - The person being accused of workplace abuse or discrimination;
  - Any witnesses or third parties.

- The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager will represent WAN-IFRA WIN alongside a WAN-IFRA WIN director in any meeting or interview. If any of these parties are implicated either as a complainant or accused, WAN-IFRA WIN Executive director alongside another WAN-IFRA WIN director may represent WAN-IFRA WIN. Where appropriate, an external, non-partisan HR expert will also be engaged by WAN-IFRA WIN to advise on proceedings.

- Written statements are taken from:
  - The person facing abuse or discrimination;
  - The person being accused of abuse or discrimination;
  - Any witnesses or third parties;
The facts of the case are compiled, including diaries and evidence collated by the person facing abuse or discrimination and any counter evidence from the person being accused.

- A confidential record is kept of all information relating to the case, including all discussions and communication with all parties. Current GDPR on data protection will be observed.

- Confidentiality of all parties is safeguarded.

**Step 4 – Decision and Outcome**

- WAN-IFRA WIN (represented by the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager, the People and Performance director, or the Executive director) decides whether or not workplace abuse has happened, based on the facts and evidence compiled.

- WAN-IFRA WN decides on what response measures are to be taken if any.

- If no case is found, all documents relating to the case will be destroyed after an appropriate time (normally a few weeks).

- WAN-IFRA WIN will produce a report detailing the investigations, findings, outcomes, and disciplinary measures taken if a case is found. WAN-IFRA WIN points out that disciplinary measures are recorded in the personnel file. In all respects, the GDPR data protection provisions shall apply.

- WAN-IFRA WIN will detail an appropriate plan for follow-up and support as necessary.

- Feedback is given to the parties involved in the case while ensuring that confidentiality is safeguarded.

- Outcomes will depend on factors such as:
  - the severity or frequency of the abuse or discriminatory behaviour;
  - the wishes of the person who was abused or on the receiving end of discriminatory behaviour
  - whether the accused could have been expected to know that such behaviour was a breach of the policy;
  - the level of contrition;
  - whether there have been any prior incidents or warnings.

**Step 5 – Follow-up & support**

- The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager will systematically follow up with both parties to ensure that the abuse has stopped.
- The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager will also conduct follow-up meetings with line managers.
- The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion senior manager will continue to assess the need for support.
11. References

- WAN-IFRA sexual harassment policy
- WAN-IFRA WIN list of GEDI terminology

12. Contacts

If you have any question regarding this policy or need any guidance, kindly contact one of the following WAN-IFRA WIN team members listed below:

Melanie Walker, Executive director: melanie.walker@wan-ifra.org
Tamala Chirwa, Director, People & Performance: tamala.chirwa@womeninnews.org
Jane Godia, Deputy Executive Director: Jane.Godia@womeninnews.org
Myra Abdallah, Senior manager, GEDI: myra.abdallah@womeninnews.org

13. Resources

- Disability Language Style Guide, National Center on Disability and Journalism
- GLAAD Media Reference Guide, GLAAD
- The Language of Gender, Gender Spectrum
- ACS Inclusivity Style Guide, ACS
- Global Press Style Guide, Global Press Journal
- 11 Types of Workplace Harassment (and How To Stop Them), i-Sight
- Inclusive Language: Words to Use and Avoid When Writing About Disability, UK Government, Disability Unit