

that society — particularly in those areas which are most likely to be featured on news and current affairs — is unequal. In the United Kingdom, 78 % of the Cabinet and 79 % of members of parliament in general are male; 83 % of FTSE 100 directors are men and the figure is even higher for FTSE chief executives. The same imbalances are replicated in academia, journalism — particularly print — where only 5 % of newspaper senior editors are women, the judiciary (only 14 % of senior judges are women) and across most political, professional and business life including in the more senior levels of public office.

This is not how it should be — but it is the reality. So it is probably unrealistic to expect an equal representation of male and female contributors in the short term, across genres such as news and current affairs for example. As well as recruiting and growing our own female on-screen talent, the BBC (and wider industry) must work doubly hard to identify more female contributors wherever possible, so that we see and hear a more balanced range of faces and voices. Half of our audience is female and intrinsic to our public purpose remit is the BBC's commitment to reflect all society and to give a voice to those who are not always heard or seen as well as to the mainstream.

One initiative the BBC has recently put in place is a simple and practical programme ('Expert women programme') which identifies and trains expert professional women to appear on screen/air and gives them exposure to programme editors

who are looking for new perspectives, voices and programme participants. This has been hugely successful in terms of diversifying BBC programming: from the 92 women we have trained so far, 31 have made 97 appearances and several are producing and writing their own series for radio whilst others are in detailed discussions with TV channel controllers and commissioners regarding series. Moreover, it has raised the profile — in wider society — of talented women who are experts in a range of (often male-dominated) fields.

The BBC is working hard to tackle female representation both on-screen and at work, but we fully acknowledge that we have some way to go. However, this is by no means just a BBC, UK, or even European issue. It is a global issue. Recently at the Davos (World Economic Forum) summit, Christine Lagarde (Head of the IMF) pointed out that: 'ensuring that women are able to reach the highest levels of leadership and responsibility — and be seen at those levels as role models — is important for humanity and economics.'

The question of whether the media reflects society or society is influenced by the media becomes irrelevant; what matters is the perception — and actuality — that women are still under-represented and that needs to change. I believe it is through supporting diversity at the top, careful monitoring and through taking small but systematic and disciplined steps that we will change that.



What about gender equality in the media? Interviews with women experts

Interview with Maria Edström



Dr Maria Edström is a senior lecturer in journalism at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, and a scientific coordinator at Nordicom, a Nordic resource centre for media and communication research.

that today, despite the fact that there are many women in high editorial positions, the financial decisions within media houses are more likely to be taken by men.

Although the EU Member States are concerned about women's participation in decision-making, this issue has never been addressed with respect to the media. What is the reason for that?

Self-regulation has been the main strategy for the media industry. Many politicians have been reluctant to take action concerning gender equality in the media because there is a risk that it could be seen as a form of censorship or a way of limiting freedom of expression, if the media industry becomes more regulated. On the other hand, it is time to ask ourselves whose freedom of expression is being protected or hampered. It is only since recently that news agendas have been made mostly about men for men. That is why in 2006 Agnes Callamard from the NGO 'Article 19' coined the expression 'gender-based censorship' to describe how the news media logic fails to include women in the news. But it is not only in journalism that you have gender equality problems; it is present in the video games, film production and advertising industry, which are all part of the media industry and as such need to be closely monitored or, at least, have a mechanism of self-monitoring in place. A systematic, transparent self-monitoring could be a first step in addressing the lack of gender sensitivity of the media industry.

There have been encouraging signs in recent years with large numbers of women becoming involved in media-related education and careers. Why is it important to have more women in media organisations?

There are several reasons: one of them is the business argument that the industry is losing out on potential and competence if half of the population is excluded from certain positions. The other argument is that if the media is to play a credible role in any democratic society it needs diversity both in the media organisations themselves and in the media communication outputs. Women do not per se mean a different news agenda, but with more diversity in the media houses they are more likely to cover stories that are important for both men and women.

Despite improvements, women still do not occupy many of the top influential decision-making posts of media organisations. Why is that, do you think?

In many organisations, men have a tendency to recruit people who are similar to themselves, and this is also true for the media industry. With more knowledge and courage, this situation can change. Another factor is the 'journalistic culture' itself, which is very strong, both among women and men, and within that culture you tend to think of news as news, not that there could be a gender dimension to the choices made in a newsroom. News is always a matter of choices; when women are not present in the news that is because of editorial decisions, often in combination with a lack of gender awareness. It is also important to recognise

What can be done to encourage positive changes in relation to the low representation of women in decision-making roles in media organisations?

It is important to collect comparative data as EIGE has done on the EU level and, similarly, as the IWMF, the International Women's Media Foundation, has done on a global level. The information revealed by these data needs also to be discussed within newsrooms. I also think it is important that society in general demands that media companies are more transparent in how they work with gender and diversity issues, both within their organisations and in their media content. The media needs to be accountable for these issues. Sharing good practices is also important. Every country and company has its own distinct culture and history, but it is possible to benchmark with others for examples or for good practices to follow.

EIGE's report 'Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations' is available at: <http://www.eige.europa.eu/content/women-and-media>

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans, by providing them with specific expertise and reliable information on gender equality in Europe.

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You have been working in the Nordic countries, specifically in Sweden, in the area of mass media and gender equality. Is there anything particular or specific to the Nordic countries that you consider interesting or relevant for other EU Member States to implement in this area?

Every country needs to find its own path, but I don't think that you should underestimate structural gender equality measures, such as parental leave and equal pay. The legal gender equality structure in the Nordic societies affects all industries, even the media. But it is also important to note that usually all measures in the media industry, such as gender equality plans, etc., have been taken after the legislative processes, not before.

It is also clear that the media companies which work with these issues on a regular basis are more likely to be gender equal in their organisational structures and in their outputs.

Last but not least, it is important to understand that the gender dimension permeates all areas of discrimination such as ethnicity, age and sexuality. And it is up to both women and men to engage in gender equality issues.

You can read more about women and the mass media in some of Maria Edström's recent publications (in English):

1. Edström, M. (in press), 'Women reach parity but gender trouble persists', *Palgrave international handbook on women and journalism* (Carolyn M. Byerly (Ed.))
2. Edström, M., Ladendorf, M., 'Freelance journalists as a flexible workforce in media industries', *Journalism Practice*, Vol. 6, Nos 5–6, Routledge, 2012, pp. 711–721.
3. Edström, M., 'Is There a Nordic Way? A Swedish perspective on achievements and problems with gender equality in newsrooms', *Medijske Studije/Media Studies*, Vol. 2, Nos 3–4, University of Zagreb and the Croatian Communication Association, 2011, pp. 64–75 (http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=130755).

Interview with Amanda Rice



Amanda Rice joined the BBC in 2007, and in 2009 was appointed Head of Diversity Department at the BBC. Her brief is to support and advise the BBC Executive to develop and deliver a coherent equalities and diversity strategy in relation to employment, audiences, programme content and portrayal and corporate strategy. Throughout 2011 and 2012, she also co-ordinated the work of the Creative Diversity Network (CDN), a network of UK broadcasters and other industry bodies who work in partnership to promote diversity on and off screen, whilst the BBC acted as CDN chair.

Do you think it is important to explicitly introduce measures in your organisation that encourage women into top decision-making positions? What have been the effects or benefits of any practical measures the BBC has implemented to promote more women at higher levels?

First and foremost, it is important to find ways — including using interventions — to encourage people (men and women) from diverse backgrounds into decision-making positions in any organisation. Naturally there should be a particular focus on women because they are still under-represented in the higher levels of management, whilst women from minority ethnic or more socially diverse backgrounds, are even more so. Greater diversity at senior and strategic decision-making levels will help develop a greater culture of inclusiveness, trust and respect for different perspectives and help dismantle the 'group-think' that can lead to faulty or risky decision-making.

At the BBC, the numbers of women in senior positions in different work areas does vary considerably. In our television division, for example, we have around 50 % women in senior management roles and have just appointed a second female channel controller for BBC One (two out of three filled controller positions) — a very senior and editorially influential role. In other areas the picture is different and we have focused in the last 18 months on those areas where we know we have far fewer female senior managers: in technology and engineering in particular.

This year we set gender targets specifically to focus efforts on the recruitment and progression of women within these work areas. One of our female senior managers was nominated for a Leader of the Year award (2012 Everywoman in Technology Awards) for her work in acting as a role model and encouraging and supporting other women to enter and progress their technology/engineering careers. We have run a series of women in technology and women in engineering events and initiatives to encourage more women to progress.

The BBC also works in partnership with other organisations. We support two mentoring schemes specifically for women who are hoping to further develop their careers and progress to more senior levels within the industry. One focuses on women in radio ('Sound women' mentoring scheme) and one on women in television ('Women in film and TV' mentoring scheme). This year we are also working with Directors UK to understand why there are fewer female directors working across the industry. The reasons are fairly complex but, once we have a better understanding of those reasons, we aim to develop some practical actions that the BBC at least can take to help change the balance.

In addition to our own internal areas of focus and schemes, I believe that building and maintaining collaborative relationships across the industry — where freelance and casual working patterns increasingly dominate — is critical. It is through providing practical hands-on support and delivering concrete and sustainable initiatives to promote, nurture and support women that we will make a difference to the wider industry. Then we will begin to see more changes at the top.

What do you think is the impact on media content of having more women in decision-making positions in media organisations?

It is now well evidenced that women in senior decision-making positions in any organisation can improve efficiency and I believe it is critical to have a gender (and broader diversity) mix at this level, to help break down 'group-think' which will enhance creativity and innovation and help to make better organisational decisions that are informed by a wide range of perspectives. For the media sector, diverse decision-makers — particularly in influential editorial positions — are more likely to help us connect with and reflect a wider range of audiences, so clearly a good gender balance here is important too.

We know that across the wider industry — and that does include the BBC — the ratio of women to men on screen remains at around 2:1. It is higher in some areas — continuing drama and entertainments for example — but remains stubbornly static in the more serious areas such as news and current affairs.

That said, in terms of direct impact on the representation of women in specific content areas, we cannot ignore the fact