Professional journalist guide
FOR A POSITIVE APPROACH TO WOMEN IN THE MEDIA
Professional journalist guide
FOR A POSITIVE APPROACH TO WOMEN IN THE MEDIA
This guide is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Department of State. The contents are the responsibility of Search for Common Ground - Morocco and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of State or the United States Government.
Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is an international organization created in 1982 that works in the field of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. SFCG works currently in 35 countries with 600 employees and is headquartered in both Washington D.C and Brussels.

Since 2001, SFCG has worked in Morocco with the Moroccan civil society to transform the way in which individuals and institutions manage conflicts. SFCG has different partnerships with institutions and civil society in projects that contributed to the institutionalization of mediation in Morocco and have obtained international recognition.

SFCG’s mission in Morocco is to promote a culture of dialogue and mutual respect in which everybody’s voice is heard. This is done by strengthening the capacity of individuals, organizations, institutions, and the government to cooperate and constructively resolve conflict. SFCG’s vision is a society in which everyone can fulfill their potential, and where differences are viewed as catalysts of social progress. This inclusive society would allow participation in decision-making processes at all levels through three main avenues: dialogue, media and community. Cooperation and constructive conflict transformation would be the norm.

The present Code of Conduct falls within SFCG’s project: “Everyone Gains: Promoting Women’s Socio-economic Empowerment”, financed by the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). Through this project, SFCG is working to create new opportunities for dialogue and to break down socio-economic barriers for women in Morocco. “Everyone Gains” enables women and women’s organizations to form a network of support for women’s empowerment and to engage with other community leaders, religious leaders, and journalists on this issue. Recognizing that gender equality is more than just a women’s issue, this program also works with male allies to develop support for change in equal rights and equal opportunity policy in Morocco.
SFCG-M encourages women’s rights groups to engage with the media by fostering direct relationships with local journalists. At the same time, SFCG trains journalists on how to write about women’s socio-economic issues and encourage them to form sustainable relationships with women’s rights organizations. Collaboration is further supported through workshops, practical exercises, and competitions.

This project promotes the creation and development of an informal network of women’s rights organizations, both rural and urban, through training sessions, roundtables, supplementary workshops, and discussions. This sustainable network will give these groups opportunities to collaborate and to share information and best practices after the project’s completion.

The overall goal of this project is for the Moroccan women’s rights CSOs to successfully advocate for consistent enactment of legislative reforms to reduce the economic constraints on women. Engaging media institutions, religious leaders, and other key male stakeholders in the project will broaden the support base for the adoption and implementation of legislative reforms. Furthermore, it will bring in male allies as key positive role models, thus strengthening the effectiveness of women’s rights CSOs campaigns and efforts.
The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) of the State Department offers assistance, training, and support to groups and individuals striving to create positive change in society. MEPI works in 18 countries and territories, partnering with civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, youth and women activists, and private sector groups to advance their reform efforts. MEPI’s approach is bottom-up and grassroots, responding directly to local interests and needs.

MEPI has been active in the MENA region since 2002, contributing over $600 million to more than 1,000 grant projects administered by MEPI’s offices in Washington, D.C. and the region.

MEPI administers the Economic Support Fund (ESF) in Morocco through a unique combination of assistance that includes local grants awarded directly to indigenous civil society organizations (CSOs) in order to build their capacity and promote sustainability. Current MEPI projects focus on strengthening the leadership of rising youth political party members, combating child marriage, advancing equal rights for people with disabilities, and improving economic opportunities for rural women. MEPI supports the implementation of recent constitutional reforms through two parallel programs with CSO coalitions to draft, advocate for the adoption of, and increase public awareness of laws that enable citizens to present legislative initiatives to parliament (Article 14) and that establish parity among men and women (Article 19).

During this period of promise and uncertainty, MEPI’s Women’s Empowerment projects are helping women throughout the MENA region reach their enormous potential. MEPI projects assist women seeking greater political and economic participation, provide training to enhance women’s capabilities to contribute to reforms and change, and build the capacity of civil society to secure equal rights and opportunities for women.
The Media Diversity Institute (MDI) works internationally to encourage and facilitate responsible media coverage of diversity. It aims to prevent the media from intentionally or unintentionally spreading prejudice, intolerance and hatred which can lead to social tensions, disputes and violent conflict. MDI encourages instead, fair, accurate, inclusive and sensitive media coverage in order to promote understanding between different groups and cultures.

MDI applies a comprehensive and holistic approach of engagement, education, and training for all the actors in society who can influence media coverage of diversity. They include: Media decision makers: (owners, editors, and managers); journalists; journalism academics and students; civil society organization (CSOs) concerned with diversity issues; and governmental organizations.

MDI employs the following means in order to achieve its goals:

- A Media decision-makers conference brings editors, managers, and media owners together to explore the importance of proper diversity coverage for the societies that they serve.

- Strengthening community media organizations through providing education and training in all basic aspects of running a media organization.

- Introducing Reporting Diversity courses into journalism schools and faculties.

- Providing media relations and advocacy training for CSOs on how to use the media to overcome negative and inaccurate portrayals of their communities.

- The opportunity of its workshops, conferences and other events to bring together media actors and CSO representatives, in order to break down the barriers of misunderstanding that can exist between the parties and establish long-term partnerships.
- Producing and publishing a wide range of manuals and resource materials.

- Conducting research and media monitoring studies to identify problem areas and recommendations for action.

- Running the Global Media Diversity Network (GMDN), made up of like-minded organisations.

- Providing a web portal which includes news and resources, and networking, blogging and debating facilities, for those involved in the media & diversity field.

MDI has worked in Europe, the former Soviet States, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and South East Asia.
This document: «Professional journalistic guide: For a positive approach to women in the media» is the property of Search for Common Ground Morocco.

The professional journalistic guide is the result of 2 years of partnership and collaboration between Search for Common Ground - Morocco and the Media Diversity Institute.

SFCG-Maroc warmly thanks MDI for its contribution through its project: "Promoting Freedom of Expression, Diversity and Inclusion in Morocco" in the trainings and workshops designed for better-covering the women in the media and strengthening the relationships between the media professionals and our beneficiary CSOs within SFCG-Maroc project:

**Everyone Gains**

Promoting Women Socio-economic Empowerment
Table of content

- Acknowledgment 14
- Introduction 15

I. For a positive media approach to women:
   Starting points and principles 17
II. Stereotypical images of women in the media 27
III. Positive media treatment of women:
     Professional and ethical rules 31
IV. Positive media treatment of women in the media:
     Rules and Guides for Editors 45
V. General framing introductions for the advancement of women's status 49
Acknowledgement

Search for common ground Morocco would like to expand its sincere thanks and appreciation to the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) for all its support and funding of this project.

We would like to extend our deep gratitude to our partner organization: Media Diversity Institute and partner associations: AinLeuh Women’s Cooperative, Amal Center, Association Nawat Al Mustakbal, Chourouk Center, Dar Si Hmad, Touama women’s Cooperative, and High Atlas Foundation. Their invaluable input and willingness to work along with the premise and ideas put forth have been key motivating factor in producing this “Professional Journalist Guide for a positive approach of women in the media” as part of the Everyone Gains project funded by the Middle East Partnership Initiative.

I express my sincere words of appreciation and acknowledgement to the author of this code of conduct, M. Abdelouahab Rami, for his valuable efforts and patience throughout the production of this work.

Thank you and congratulations to the Search for Common Ground – Morocco team for their invaluable contributions and insights that immensely added to the quality of this Code of Conduct for journalists:

- Jessica Lambert, Former Program Manager
- Nada Diouri, Project Manager
- Moujahid Abaddi, Communication & Outreach Coordinator
- Houda Zekri, Member of the Project Advisory Group
- Naciri Safi, Member of the Advisory Group
- Sahar Bouhafs, Project Coordinator
- Emily Beth MacDonald, Former Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator
- Selma Talha Jebril, Former Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
- Samir Qasemi, Senior Finance & Administration Manager
- Fouzia Mountacir, Former Administrative & Financial Assistant
- Omar El Hayani, Media and Productions Consultant

Noufal Abboud
Country Director, Search for Common Ground-Morocco
Women are a key element in a society. They constitute a political, economic and cultural stake. This makes them a matter of law, human rights and development: a matter that is necessary when advocating for better position for women in society.

Conferences and debates were held, international and national committees met together, and studies, reports, and bulletins were published for the advancement of women’s status. “Improving” women’s image in media was also given importance, as it is one of the mechanisms to better women’s social status.

If the term “improving” is common in the media regarding women’s image in society, it is wise from the professional approach perspective to talk about “positive treatment”, which is an approach that intends to improve the performance of journalists in topics on women and gender issues.

There are many journalists that can answer “why” a positive media approach to women must be adopted, though many of them do not know “how” to perform positively and in conformity to the professional and ethical rules and principles they should be based on when addressing women’s issues. It is observed that the general recommendations and principles related to women and issued by the various parties concerned often fall into “the declaration of intent”, which remains insufficient to compile a guide for a proper professional approach that would lead to clear tangible results in all kinds of media outlets.

In this logic, This “Professional journalist guide for a positive approach to women in the media” aims to fulfill the need of a professional approach to gender issues to promote women’s status through understanding the issues posed by media & women. Such an approach would deconstruct the stereotypes inherent to women, while remaining detached from the male discourse, and would base the portrayal of women in law and developmental advances. Among other aspects this approach would support the means of women’s social participation, and facilitate the quantitative and qualitative presence of women in media.
The guide meets the collective desire of journalists throughout the Arab world for a practical reference that relies on procedural rules when covering women’s issues in media. It consists of five sections; the first section includes the premises and founding principles for a positive representation of women in the media, which has to be assimilated by journalists.

The second section tackles stereotypes about women in the media and defines their nature and type. This section is an introduction to understand the representations that women endure in the media and that inhibit women’s emancipation from traditional views that perpetuate their inferiority to men.

The third section discusses the practical aspect to media’s positive representation of women. It suggests practical methods to improve the professional an ethical media performance regarding women and gender. Since they have a responsibility in establishing the positive media approach to women, the fourth section introduces the chief editors’ role in improving women’s image in the media.

This guide ends with general framing introductions to the improvement of women’s status. These introductions are diverse and concern women’s access to the decision making positions and support their institutional presence, networking, trainings, improving women’s performance in the media, providing information on women and gender issues, studies, and researches.

This Code of Conduct is considered the first of its kind in terms of objectives and vision. We hope it contributes to greater gender inclusive awareness within the boundaries of media standards and regulations.

Phd. Abdelwahab ERRAMI
Expert in media skills development
I. For a positive approach to women in the media:

Starting points and principles
There is a set of starting points and basic principles that journalists of both sexes must take into account to promote a positive media approach to women's issues. These starting points and basic principles can be categorized as follows:

1. **Understand the relationship between women's image in the media and her social image and status.**

A woman's image in the media is directly linked to both her social status and the perceptions formed by members of society. This is illustrated in the following figure:

1. The journalist forms his image about the woman starting from her social status, and forms her image in society.
2. The journalist must correct the image of the woman in society through an untethered perception of her social status.
3. The stereotypical image society has of women can have a negative impact on images women in the media.

2. **Journalists of both sexes must adopt the objectives of a gender-sensitive approach in the media.**

The "National Charter to Improve the Image of Women in the Media," issued in Morocco in 2005, determined a set of general objectives for dealing with women's issues at the media level. These objectives complement the aims of the "Professional Journalist Guide for a Positive Approach to Women in the Media," which is to refine the media's performance and embed a gender-sensitive approach in the media coverage of women's issues.

* This guide contains terms related to both media and journalism, and actors in both areas, based on context and taking into consideration that the term “media” is broader than the term “journalism,” which specifically refers to people who collect and edit news.
The objectives of the "National Charter to improve the image of women in the media" (Morocco)

1. Mobilization of journalists, politicians, economists, and social actors to engage in perpetuating the culture of gender equality and respect for human dignity in the media;
2. Development of a media strategy based on a gender sensitive approach to promote women's image in various media outlets and communication platforms;
3. Reinforcement of the status of women working in the media and involving them in decision-making processes based on transparent measures that depend on professional competence and equal opportunities;
4. Perpetuation of a media culture based on human rights principles, the respect of women’s dignity, and countering all forms of discrimination and exclusion;
5. Ensuring a woman’s right to express and defend her case, and treating all women objectively and professionally;
6. Facilitating communication and cooperation between the media, women's associations, and all civil society bodies dealing with women's issues.

3. Journalists should adopt and put into practice social gender principles.

**Gender:** How is it understood professionally?

Gender: How is it understood professionally? The term “gender” does not only mean women and female children, but also men and male children. In a gender sensitive approach, the journalist does not defend women from men but he/she defends both of them for the purpose of promoting equality within the broader community.

A gender sensitive approach adopts a basic rule: The sex of an individual (be it woman or man) should not be a factor in determining his/her social role.
The Global Media Monitoring Project about media practice and gender

An interactive form proposed by the Global Media Monitoring Project can be used to measure the extent to which journalists have adopted a gender approach in their professional practice. It includes ten proposals on the gender sensitive approach and introduces two options as an answer for each proposal. The form’s results are classified into four levels, which are linked to the journalist’s professional perceptions on gender.

The website explains that the form is not a test; rather, it is a starting point for enabling journalists to think about gender issues in media practice.

The link to the form can be found below:
http://whomakesthenews.org/journalism-kit/gender-ethics-compass

4. A woman should not be reduced to her sex, or seen as a social being solely in the biological sense.

The journalist should be well aware of the differences between (man/woman) and (male/female).
The terms ‘male’ and ‘female’ are two biological sex features used to distinguish the sex of all living beings. Whereas, the terms ‘woman’ and ‘man’ refer to a division of humans into two biologically distinct groups who have the same human characteristics, should enjoy equal civil rights, and be equally subjected to the obligations associated with these rights. Stereotypical images are often generated in the human mind when man is reduced to male, and women to female.

5. Awareness of the general features of the media’s representation of women

Some general features of media’s representation of women  
(Including characteristics related to the Arab-Muslim world)

➤ Women’s presence in the media is rare in politics, limited in meetings, and almost non-existent in economy, but is present in art, culture, family, childcare, cooking, fashion, and advertising.
➤ The media’s focus is on women between 20 and 40 years of age, deemed a phase characterized by fertility, in which women are biologically more attractive to men.
➤ The media focuses on women with elite professions.
➤ The media neglects women from rural and marginalized areas.
➤ Documents and papers on family matters are mostly written by women.
➤ Women appear frequently in weekend media focused on entertainment and recreation.
➤ Images of women’s are often linked to miscellaneous news.
6. Awareness of the existing obstacles in the way of how women are depicted in media.

Many studies on women in the media are characterized by insufficient knowledge, as they tend to start with a "systematic bias" of women, which causes the results of these studies to be full of stereotypes or leaves the studies themselves to reinforce the stereotypes associated with society's perception of women, through the media's discourse. When talking about the media's discourse as an alternative to social perceptions, one should also ask how the media's discourse could serve as a substitute to the negative social representation, without being separated from society itself.

7. Journalists should hold the belief that the media could make fundamental changes in societal patterns, norms and traditions, and create a public opinion supportive of women's rights, as well as encourage women to participate in social life as equal counterparts to men.

8. Journalists should be aware of the negative role that media can play when it's not based on a social gender sensitive approach.

Such a discourse would result in the perpetuation of the stereotypical social roles of women and enhance the perception of women's inferiority.

9. Journalists should be aware that the media often commits professional and ethical breaches of the rules on how to positively address women and gender issues.

It seems that violations of these rules are on the rise, especially with the advent of electronic media which, until now, is not structured so as to ensure professionalism and ethics. Electronic media uses multiple platforms, including those such as videos produced by amateurs, which do not take into account the ethics of the profession. New media also enables visitors to comment on the content, which leads to multiple infringements.
10. Journalists should be aware that certain social classes may reject some of the social gender principles they have adopted.

Deemed by the principles of gender to be one of the elements of democratization of the family and society, financial independence may face disapproval from some of the largest social classes, especially the lower and middle ones. These groups could interpret women working outside of their homes as a rejection of her femininity, which could cause a spark of disagreement and irritability within her family. Educated women could be viewed as intrusive, ambitious women as social climbers, and women who are successful in their work could be viewed as masculine.

11. Journalists should realize that the subject of women’s equality is complicated and has become an ideology.

The topic could produce ideological, political, or dogmatic infighting between conflicting parties. Shaping the vision of society will build on the perception of women's social status.

12. Journalists should be aware that women as an entity are heterogeneous.

Not all women live in situations in which change is being advocated. There is a perceived distinction and inequality between the statuses of affluent, poor, educated, illiterate, working, unemployed, veiled, and non-veiled women. These statuses relate to problems that must be taken into consideration when being addressed by the media.

13. Journalists should be aware of the difficulties associated with having a clear and harmonious social model for women’s roles in Arab-Islamic societies.

There are political, economic, social, and cultural characteristics of the status of women in Arab and Islamic communities that raise the question of a social model for women within these societies. This model is subject to ideological and doctrinal
polarity. Conservatives may present the modern woman as morally indecent, and modernists may present the conservative women as dogmatic, dependent, and non-liberal. At least two kinds of perceptions of women coexist in these communities:

- Traditional style (family, mother, housewifewife, sister...with segregation of woman from society).
- Western style (women engaged in social action and frequenting production sites as a partner of the man, breaking the patriarchal system).

Media in these countries do not adopt a single model of woman in society, but rather project images of the Arab Muslim woman as a woman with her cultural and diametrical specifications, and the Western woman with her own cultural and diametrical specifications.

14. Journalists should consider that the reality of women in the media is linked to media professionals and community behaviors and mindsets involving men and women.

The journalist must also insist on the common responsibility that women and men have regarding the detriment of the position of women in society. It is also futile to attribute to only one of them the responsibility of such a decline.

15. Journalists should be aware that improving women’s image in the media should not be done at the expense of the image of men.

16. Journalists should adopt two main approaches for the improvement of women’s image.

- Developmental approach: “In order for women to be liberated, independent and with dignified, they should be productive”

- Human rights approach: “In order for women to be productive, they must be equal to man in both rights and duties”
17. **Journalists should be aware of the complexity of getting accurate information about women**, either from official institutions (such as ministries, which could account for the scarcity of studies and in-depth researches), or non-official departments (such as civil society organizations, and private sector). For example, families often covered up abuses against women, particularly, those related to sex.

18. **Understanding that women, as a topic, are deemed among the most important entrances to media incitement.** Women are often used as a means of selling (attracting the audience including both men and women).

19. **Awareness that journalists who prepare media materials about women do not necessarily portray a positive representation of women.**
II. Stereotypical images of women in the media
It is important to note that stereotypes affect both women and men in society and can be either negative or positive. Men may be presented as violent towards women, or that they always vote with prior knowledge of public affairs and of candidates, and that they are brave, intrepid, prudent, frank, decisive ... These are not things that are true in all cases, simply because there are a lot of men who do not treat women violently, and others who vote without any prior knowledge of public affairs and the candidates, and some of them are not prudent ... The problematic raised by the positive stereotypical image exclusively given to men, lies in its comparison with women, which reinforces the negative stereotypes about the latter.

**Awareness of stereotypes towards women:**

Fighting stereotypes is ongoing work. Media professionals should be vigilant and continuously evaluate their work to ensure they adhere to the ethical and professional principles of women and gender issues.

**Journalist must know the following points regarding the nature of stereotypes and how to deal with them:**

1. Stereotypes are not only a mere interpretation of the reality, but they produce a second reality feeding itself from the stereotypes that were already formed.
2. Stereotypical images create other opposing stereotypes, which could generate societal violence about issues related to it.
3. Monitoring the stereotypical images about women within the community helps the journalist separate himself/herself from them while producing his/her media materials.
4. Awareness of stereotypes about women needs definitions of the stereotypes for someone to understand their basis, their construction, their methods of functioning, their structures, and their models, as well as an education on stereotypes and how to deal with them in the media. It must be clear that media professionals cannot be familiar with stereotypical images if they are not armed with a solid human rights culture, which is not always available at the level of media professionals in Arab countries.
5. Female journalists are not necessarily apart from the stereotypes. There is a need for women to fight the stereotypes for themselves (in interviews, for example). When a woman uses stereotypes against herself, she can ultimately be undermining her own abilities (e.g. absolute faith in the man’s superiority over the woman in leadership).

Classification of stereotypes about woman in society and media

1. Women/body (the use of a woman's body against her femininity): Seductress women, the devil, prostitute, treacherous, stunts, sedition igniter, selling her services, showing her charms to weaken a man, consuming perfume, clothing and cosmetics, graceful, elegant ...  
2. Women as consumers and (non-producers): obsessed with buying and shopping, spends her time gossiping and boasting...  
3. Women as physically and intellectually less efficient than men: weak ability to manage society, participate like men in public affairs, present in decision circles (in all its types), incapable of strategic thinking and planning ...  
4. Women as a subordinate to men: The wife, a woman is a means of procreation, women are dependent economically to men, a woman is subordinate to her husband's decisions, women care, protect and obeys men, woman waits for man's permission in all areas of life.  
5. Women as negative and edgy beings: women do not take the initiative unlike men who are presented as effective, active and positive within the community.  
6. Women are associated to traditional roles: housewife, cooking, laundry, cleaning, raising children, satisfying her husband's desires and providing comfortable conditions…  
7. Women are not trustworthy: Capricious, moody, selfish, deceitful, irresponsible, reckless, cowardly ...
Improving the Quantity and Quality of Women’s Portrayals in the Media

**Quantity:** It is important that media outlets and journalists improve their coverage of women in the social sphere. Women participate in all sectors of society; media outputs need to reflect this. When journalists downplay or omit women’s role in public events, it reinforces negative stereotypes regarding women’s limited role in the social sphere and gives men the position of monopolizing the public space. It is the ethical duty of journalists to accurately reflect the social participation of women and avoid treating them as passive agents.

**Quality:** It is not only important that media improve the amount of coverage women receive, but also the type of coverage. Journalists need to avoid covering women in ways that demean or lessen their contribution to society and role in the public sphere.

"A bad media approach, be it restrictive or unprofessional, will result in stereotypes against women."
III. Positive media representation of women:

Professional and ethical rules
Positive representation of women does not mean that journalists need to fabricate, or dishonestly embellish stories about women. Rather, media needs to use its platform to accurately and truthfully depict the range of women’s involvement in society and avoid using stereotypical or derogatory language and behavior.

Journalists of both genders should abide by the following ethical and professional principles to ensure good implementation of gender sensitivity.

1. Avoid the use of double standards of the behavior of men and women:

This is especially pertinent with issues of sexual mores and notions of “dignity.” Arab media generally tends to disparage women’s moral standing more than men’s, even in cases where men initiate condemned acts. An example of such a double standard is an article condemning women for wearing bathing suits in a public beach while reserving any judgment for their male counterparts. Here, issues of modesty are applied differently to men and women despite being engaged in similar behavior.

2. Avoid stereotypes concerning women’s social roles:

Here, stereotyping refers to confining women’s depiction in media to specific roles that limit her social participation and equality with men in public spaces. If, in fact, women’s public roles are limited or monopolized by men, then it is the media’s responsibility to note the discrepancy.

3. Deal carefully with customs and traditions:

Media’s approach to women’s and gender issues should not be used as a pretext to attack cultural traditions and customs existing in society. Journalists should be sensitive to the lifestyle choices of all individuals. It is not the journalists’ place to condemn family structures or modes of living. Rather, it is the media’s responsibility to promote the agency that all individuals have to make their own choices and to promote the freedom and equality of all citizens.
4. Highlight women’s achievements and participation in society.

Media should:

1. Ensure that it reports on positive female role-models that showcase women’s productive and beneficial involvement in public life. This includes women in positions of leadership and authority.

2. Report on women’s role in various social and professional areas: democratic transition, transitional justice, good governance, the new concept of authority, the integrity of elections, political representation.

3. Monitor her advancement in the areas of legislation, law, education, health, media, and the government ...

5. Caution in not being lulled by fictitious positive situations (fake) of the woman:

A journalist must be careful that sometimes in society, women can be placed in the wrong place which draws on the credibility of such a woman. In this case, men seem to lead a primary role.

The journalist should also be aware that the social, economic and political development of woman’s roles does not equal to all women benefiting from and being involved in these roles. If there is no equality of opportunity between women, as well as for men, not every woman would have access to these social roles.

6. Respect women’s privacy and dignity:

Journalists need to respect women’s privacy and dignity and take great care to not reveal personal information or hurt her dignity (such as names, picture of a woman who carried out an abortion, a specific picture personifying a general subject, considering a woman as less efficient than her male colleagues without an objective support...).
7. Renounce any media representation of women’s reality based on extreme ideologies

Professional journalists work on real situations. These situations are complex and can not be described as entirely good or entirely bad. The ideologies that should not be adopted in the media discourse fall under two categories:

a. Ideologies of stultification:

In this case, the media discourse does not keep up with women’s progress on official texts and in their social life. Media discourse should be set to evolve, update, and improve its approach towards women’s issues.

b. Ideologies of deification:

In this case, the media discourse is more advanced than reality, in the sense that it embellishes it, sometimes to the point of sanctification. This is not required. If women’s reality is poor, the media should treat it as such. This reality should be shown without retouch in informative journalistic genres, including the major ones (the interview, survey, investigation), and emphasized in opinion pieces.

8. Monitor abuse of woman.

Reporting on the abuse of women should be comprehensive, i.e. domestic abuse, street harassment, workplace harassment, etc. Abuse of all types and in all venues should not be tolerated.


These pieces would be an introduction to the work done in favor of equality between man and woman.

10. Monitor women who are working in the background, introducing them to the public and break the conception that only men work publicly.

11. Advocate for women’s economic rights to strengthen their independence.
12. Take into consideration positions of the most vulnerable women:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOST VULNERABLE WOMEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls and youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick or disabled women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Use the women’s rights approach by focusing on the aspects of human rights violations and their consequences:

While tackling women's rights, journalists must focus on the aspects of violations, as well as the personal and societal consequences of this violation.

The table below lists some of the fundamental rights of women as outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UN in 1979.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right (some fundamental rights)</th>
<th>Aspects of breaching rights (models)</th>
<th>Consequences of breaching rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Right to life, health care, and security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Right to high-quality services in sexual and reproductive health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sexual abuse of women in conflict and war zones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The lack of basic equipment in obstetrics centers</td>
<td>1. Serious injuries, or disability, forcible prostitution and sterilization, unwanted pregnancy, abortion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Death during pregnancy and childbirth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to education</td>
<td>- High proportion of dropping out of school among girls</td>
<td>- Most of the illiterate adult are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to private property</td>
<td>- Deprivation of land ownership for some women (Ancestral lands in Morocco)</td>
<td>Perpetuation of women financial dependency for men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to a life free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment</td>
<td>- Female child labour</td>
<td>Perpetuation of violence against women, which is a global rampant phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right (some fundamental rights)</td>
<td>Aspects of breaching rights (models)</td>
<td>Consequences of breaching right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Right to equality with men      | 1. Senior positions monopolized by men  
2. Women do not vote, or do not vote independently from their husbands and families  
3. Women work inside the house on the basis that they are better than men in its management, and they do not need a high level of education for exercising that | 1. Perpetuation of patriarchal decision making in society.  
2. Women do not exercise their political, civil, cultural, economic and social rights.  
3. Women situated in a lower position compared to men, which deprives her from ensuring all her rights (For example, in cases of divorce, or when the girl is coerced to marriage without her consent) |

14. **Adopt an innovative orientation when dealing with women's issues:** This means foreseeing how women's status should be (to go beyond what exists).

15. **Do not automatically attribute each negative feature of a gender to stereotypical images.** Otherwise, the media would become anxious of all that is negative in the community about women. Media tends to focus more of negative aspects rather than positive aspects of society.

16. **Avoid the assumption that stereotypes are always stated in bad faith.**

17. **Rational media approach with the concept of positive (political) discrimination in women’s favor:**

Media professionals should consider positive political discrimination in favor of women (in some communities, including Morocco) as an interim step necessary to enable women to highlight their management, planning and operational capabilities. They should also eliminate women's quota, which is discrimination by appointing an attendance rate for women, because it means that women cannot develop themselves by employing their special capabilities and competencies. In the case of positive discrimination (such as a quota system for Parliament), media should monitor the process based on the criterion of efficiency, and incite political parties to use the same standard to banish favoritism and opportunism.
18. Prioritize social aspects rather than personal ones when dealing with women's issues:

An example of this is the subject of prostitution. Media output on the subject should discuss the social conditions contributing to the spread of sex work, the living conditions of women involved, and the societal implications.

19. Know that stereotypes may pass in the form of ideas or reduced to a label.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of stereotypes in the form of ideas</th>
<th>Examples of stereotypes reduced to labels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Women have not yet reached electoral maturity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Women always need a breadwinner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Women are not competent enough to conduct public affairs.</td>
<td>- Women are (always) nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Women are (always) weak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Women are (always) vulnerable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Women are (always) appealing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Awareness regarding how to treat violence against women:

The following points should be respected while covering violence against women.

**Rules for covering stories of violence against women**

1. Address violence against women as a society issue and not as isolated cases.
2. Avoid talking on behalf of women; give survivors of abuse the opportunity to speak for themselves.
3. Do not disclose the identity of abused women, especially in instances of sexual abuse.
4. Do not justify acts of violence or blame the victim.
5. Adopt a legal procedure when dealing with the phenomena of violence against woman.
6. Consult a variety of sources when covering stories of violence against women (i.e. security personnel, legal scholars, judges, academics, etc.)
21. Identify the sources of violence against women:

When dealing with violence against women, journalists must specify its source (man, woman, society, law ...) and take into account that sources can be mixed depending on the cases. For instance, when a man does not object his wife’s violent treatment of a maid, he is a partner in the practice of violence. A woman could practice violence against another woman (cases of housewives’ mistreatment to maids). Having seen it as something positive done by the masculine authority, women might consequently emulate it.

22. Distinguishing between types of violence against woman:
There are verbal, physical, psychological, symbolic, economic, social, and political violence.

23. Positive identification and association of women in the media:

Rules for identifying woman in media

1. Avoid double standards when identifying men and women. Both genders should be referred to using neutral and factual information, such as their name, occupation, place of residence, and/or age.

2. When identifying a woman, do not automatically refer her through “traditional” associations with their husband, children, and/or parents, except in cases in which it is absolutely necessary.

3. Identification of women should be linked to their social participation to demonstrate that she contributes to the greater public good.

4. Bring to light women’s social commitments, especially those outside their work (political and syndicate-related, associative, cultural, social, economic, sportive, human rights, and entertainment activities, etc).

5. There is no need to mention women’s marital status (except in cases in which it is professionally imposed).
24. Mitigation of the masculine aspect of language:

Journalists need to be conscious of using masculine and feminine verb construction. Some words do not have a feminine construction, but those that do should be used alongside the masculine construction. Whenever possible, journalists should offer the masculine and feminine versions of words to reinforce gender parity, especially in the case of Arabic and French. Examples in Arabic can be found in the Arabic version of the guide.

25. Avoid referring to women as objects; rather, refer to them as individuals:

Journalists should avoid using terms that present woman as objects and/or merchandise. It is never appropriate to commercialize women as a commodity. Such terminology is prevalent in the media’s characterization of women’s organizations. A journalist cannot adopt such words, except in some professionally justified cases.

26. Use appropriate and respectful images of women: cartoons, photographs, videos, or other.

Editors and journalists must ensure that images of women are in good taste and do not objectify or belittle women.

**Best Practices for using images of women**

1. Seek equality between women and men’s image (photos or animated) either in written, electronic or audiovisual press, at least in relation to the size of her activity in the community.
2. Whenever possible use a balanced number of women and men’s images.
3. Avoid consistently using the image of men first and women second.
4. Avoid using “gendered” background colors for images of men and women; for example, pastel and pink colors for women and blue, black, and gray colors for men.
5. Avoid consistent use of images that link images of women with traditional roles that minimize her equality to men.
The table below note frequently used images that tend to perpetuate stereotypical or disparaging roles for women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Man</strong></th>
<th><strong>Woman</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work environment, public space.</td>
<td>The home and the family environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With his male colleagues in a work situation, in an office or another place related to decision-making or possession of power.</td>
<td>With children, husband and parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A superior setting in terms of administrative or institutional organizational hierarchy (Surgeon, engineer, head of an establishment, Pilot, etc.).</td>
<td>An intermediate or lower setting in terms of administrative or institutional organizational hierarchy (nurse, secretary, hostess, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man gives a lecture or speech</td>
<td>A woman listening to a lecture given by a man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy playing football</td>
<td>Girl looks at herself in the mirror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man looks into the camera lens with insistence, determination and confidence.</td>
<td>Woman looks at the camera lens passively or demurely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A man rides a luxury car.</td>
<td>A woman is shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man uses modern technology</td>
<td>Woman uses traditional technology (for example, means of communication).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27. **Use women as a source for an article, report, etc. (or actor or expert witness) professionally and ethically.**

- Bring in women as primary sources in different subjects.

- Show that women’s advocacy for rights works for the progress of society as a whole:

  It is recommended that journalists show women as not only defending their own rights but defending society’s rights altogether. It is also advisable that journalists highlight women’s voices in all topics of social interest and not limit them only to “female” topics.

- Ensure a fair and factual representation of women’s legal testimonies:

  - Must avoid woman’s testimonies that:
    1. Are emotional;
    2. Always refer to women;
    3. Show the woman as a victim;
    4. Show that the woman is complaining, because that will create stereotypes depicting women as victims of men, which could result in a clash between them.
    5. Interpret futile perceptions and interests, and of no value to the society;
    6. Could be understood as the woman being unable to understand the society in which she lives, or being incapable to suggest alternatives that would lead to the development of society.
    7. Give the impression that the woman could not keep up with political, cultural, social, economic, legal novelties, etc.

- Use an equal mix of men and women as sources, whenever possible.

- Encourage women to express herself freely.
- Adopt women as a source of opinion.
- Give uneducated or simple educational level women an opportunity to express themselves, of course, alongside to women with a high level of education.
- Adopt women experts and specialists in vital topics of discussion.

28. Review materials using a gender-sensitive lens:

Journalists should review their material using a gender-sensitive approach in order to ensure gender sensitivity. A shallow review involving changing a title or an image or altering an audio commentary is not sufficient. A gender-sensitive lens review should assess the fundamental tone and structure of the media material. This may require, for example, contacting new sources or editing material to present a better balanced discussion inclusive of female voices and opinions.

29. Avoid professional media dealing with a female audience:

We must avoid adopting a media treatment that only aims to attract the female audience, which violates the professional rules constituting the basis of any journalistic work. Magazines, women emissions and women sections in written and electronic press usually incline to this method, which favors temptation over professional principals.

30. Recognize that women’s presence in advertising is not wrong, but rather “the use of allusions, pictures, symbols or phrases which may damage woman’s image or affect her dignity” (National Charter to improve the image of women in advertising, Morocco, 2005).

31. Ensure equal presence of men and women in radio and television news bulletins:

Studies conducted on women’s image have shown that women are less present in radio and television newsletters than men. The news is usually about subjects or community projects with a national strategic dimension where men are the main actor or source of these topics and projects.
32. Cover legislative and legal matters related to women:

Cover important issues related to legislative action, legal pronouncements, proposals, and/or recommendations issued by official authorities and non-governmental organizations at the national and international level that aim to improve women’s situation. In regard to the signing of the agreements and international conventions, journalists should not assume that the clauses that resulted from such agreements conventions are implemented faithfully. Coverage of these issues provides a space for journalists to critically assess the application of the treaties’ terms, agreements, and conventions formally adopted.

33. Engage in positive interactions with human rights and women’s rights organizations:

There are two main subjects discussed by human and women’s rights organizations in which journalists should always be interested in:

- Advancing women’s status in society.
- Improving women’s image in the media.

Interaction between these organizations and the media is not always effective and productive. Journalists should work to ensure that they cover the activities of these organizations in a professional manner using neutrality and objectivity.

34. Do not focus on behaviors of consumption of women.
IV. Positive media treatment of women: Rules and Guides for Editors
There are a set of tasks that must be carried out by editors in chiefs to improve women’s image in the media.

1. Develop a gender strategy within editorial boards and involve female journalists in the development of said strategy.

2. Produce a document for women’s positive experiences by the editor in chief.

3. Ensure that hiring procedures are free of gender bias.

4. Recruit female journalists based on their competencies, allow them to demonstrate their abilities during internship periods, and help them improve their capacities.

5. Ensure that the voices of male and female opinion leaders are given equal space.

6. Adopt a gender-blind policy of story assessment. Do no relegate female journalists to “soft news.” Additionally, women should not be restricted from the photography or film departments.

7. Ensure that appropriate images of women appear throughout newspapers sections and are not only exclusive to “female” sections.

8. Involve women in the formulation of editorial lines.

9. Cover women’s issue year around. Do not limit their coverage to female-centric holidays such as Mother’s Day.

10. Amend the standard discourse towards women at the level of the editor in chief. It is imperative for the editorial board to discuss and take into account different perceptions for male and female journalists about this model.

11. Encourage women to tackle different issues usually addressed by male journalists, specialize in it, and be involved in subjects that used to be restricted to man, such as documentaries, filmmaking, etc.
12. Deal with female journalists in editorial meetings as lead in determining the order of news stories, and media priorities. Thus, releasing them from the role of simple executor.

13. Make a list of female experts in all disciplines available to editorial boards and recommend journalists to contact them when dealing with cases that correspond to their expertise and specialization.

14. Encourage male and female journalists to search for new female sources.

15. Support female journalists who feel inferior when compared to their male colleagues, or state that their social situations and constraints (especially in the Arab and Islamic societies) do not allow them to cover specific topics or areas of discussion, prepare some subjects, or work during certain times. This support should be done to find appropriate solutions through which they could enhance their own qualifications.

16. Understand the professional position of female journalists and the social constraints placed upon them in Arab and Islamic societies.

17. Insist on the fact that there are some female journalists who have the ability to tackle some subjects which even male journalists could not approach.

18. Abandon the habit of representing the media audience as being only male, particularly in the written and electronic press, (something which is traditional in the perception of comprehensive printed press).

19. Direct the editorial lines and comprehensive media to a female audience.

20. Assign female journalists to do material within the major journalistic genres (signing media material).
21. Take into account the balanced presence of women as agents, experts, and witnesses participating through their opinion and suggestions in the society. Her presence functions is through being agent, expert, and witness sharing her ideas and perceptions through the journalistic genres.

22. Make sure that the quantitative and qualitative presence of women in subjects associated to politics, economy, sociology, culture, art, justice, miscellaneous items, environment, recreation and entertainment as agents, experts, and witnesses who are giving their opinion in public life, and avoiding their intense and negative presence in subjects related to justice and miscellaneous items.

23. Consider social technical affairs or social, artistic and journalistic sections as an introduction to political and economic spheres. Women's interest in these two areas, that were monopolized by men, could help them access the said areas alongside men, in both medium term and long term.

24. Avoid the differentiated use of man and woman in editorial marketing operations:
   Woman and man are two ways to sell in the sense of the commercial concept of media. But what is unethical is to treat a woman, in this regard, differently from man. The image of a man, when he is heavily involved in politics, sells this man to the public and media, but at the same time the image gives the impression of importance, while the image of woman may perpetuate some social situations diminishing her chances for an active participation as a partner of the man. Thus, we must avoid using women as a device of temptation.

25. Facilitate women's access to the media.

26. Make a journalistic guide for how the media should deal with mobilization campaigns of the feminist organizations.

27. Proscription of sexual harassment against female journalists within the editorial boards.
V. General framing introductions for the advancement of women’s status
Below is a set of recommendations to ensure a positive portrayal of women in the media.

- **Women in decision-making positions:**

  1. Support female journalists in the middle and upper levels of management and decision-making.
  2. Encourage women to invest in the media private sector.
  3. Avoid gender bias in promotions and positions of administrative authority.

- **When supporting women’s presence in institutional affairs:**

  5. Grant women an opportunity to assume prominence within the representative bodies of journalists (syndicates, publishers, self-regulatory bodies).
  6. Create a collaborative mechanism for editors in chief from various media outlets to encourage a positive discussion about women in the media.
  7. Engage female journalists in the administrative and editorial management of media institutions.
  8. Create editorial councils within media institutions with gender parity.

- **Networking:**

  9. Forge partnerships with organizations interested in connecting women and media, and in national and international female media professional associations.

  10. Benefit from the experiences of feminist organizations funding special bulletins and information annexes within the media institutions.

  11. Prepare an index that includes the addresses and specialties of female journalists.
Journalism Training:

12. Train journalists in gender issues, especially public media journalists.
13. Train journalists in issues concerning women’s rights.
14. Include a gender-sensitive approach in journalism schools and training programs.
15. Organize discussion sessions and round-tables on issues concerning women and media.
16. Establish collaboration mechanisms for male and female editors to encourage relationship building.

Improve professionalism and performance of female journalists:

17. Advance women’s media and filter it from what might have a negative impact on the image of women.
18. Carry out periodical surveys for the audience of feminist media.

Provide data about women’s issues and gender:

20. Establish a source bank of documents regarding women’s rights and qualified sources of information on gender issues.
21. Monitor sources of information about women (women’s rights associations, relevant international organizations, etc.).

Studies and research:

22. Encourage studies and research of media discourse and women.
23. The governmental institutions and feminist organizations should adopt the idea of creating awards for the best researches and studies about women’s issues.
Professional journalist guide
FOR A POSITIVE APPROACH TO WOMEN IN THE MEDIA