



# STEP IT UP

FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA

## GENDER AWARE REPORTING ON COVID-19

With each passing day, South Africa and the world is grappling with the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic on every sphere of life. In the day to day reporting on COVID-19, the impact on women, girls and gender non-conforming persons can at times be invisible. As you report on one of the most challenging health crises of the century, 'Step it Up for Gender Equality in South African Media' urges journalists, content producers, media creatives and editors to keep the gender lens on!

A gender lens highlights the specific risks and vulnerabilities women, girls and gender non-conforming persons face because of unequal gender dynamics, patriarchy, social norms and traditional gender roles. The crisis of Gender Based Violence and Femicide that South Africa faces will continue during this health crisis and in some cases, intensify.



## GENDERED IMPACTS OF COVID-19 TO CONSIDER

Here are some considerations to keep in mind when reporting on Covid-19. These considerations have been derived from lessons from the Asia and Pacific on the outbreak as well as previous health crises such as Ebola and Zika:



For many, home is a dangerous space, increased household tensions can increase the risk of domestic violence. Women and girls' need for protection services – including gender-based violence (GBV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention and mitigation – are likely to increase. This increase will happen while access to life saving support and care for survivors of GBV and IPV may be limited as response services will be focused on COVID-19.



Social norms put a heavy caregiving burden on women and girls. The burden of unpaid care work is exacerbated when healthcare systems are stretched by efforts to contain outbreaks. The responsibility of caring for ill family members and the elderly will disproportionately fall on women and children; making women and girls more vulnerable to infection.



Women will be on the frontlines of response as women constitute 70% of the workers in the health and social sector globally. Women healthcare workers have called attention to their specific needs beyond personal protective equipment, including to meet menstrual hygiene needs and psychosocial support.



Economically, crisis pose a risk to women's engagements in economic activities, especially where women are more likely to be engaged in informal or low-wage activities or migrant work. This reality can increase the gender gap in livelihoods.



Women and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services run the risk of being interrupted as resources may be diverted to contain the outbreak. This could affect access to clean and safe delivery, treatment of STIs, availability of contraception, and provisions for clinical management of rape.





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## HOW YOU CAN KEEP THE GENDER LENS ON?



### REPORT ON HOW THE COVID-19 IS IMPACTING EVERYONE DIFFERENTLY

Interview women as sources of news to ensure women, girls and gender non-conforming persons voices are heard.

Women only constitute **39%** of TV news sources



### ACCURATE REPORTING REMAINS CRITICAL AT THIS TIME

Ensure that all reporting on the gendered impacts are evidence based.



HELP

### HIGHLIGHT THE HIGH LEVELS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Give the public information on how they can assist survivors of GBVF and where survivors of GBVF can get help.

Only **16%** of TV news stories on GBV mention where to go for help



### HIGHLIGHT THE ROLE MEN CAN PLAY

Men can play a role in alleviating the gendered impacts of COVID 19, for example, assisting with the burden of unpaid care work in the home.

HeforShe - <https://www.heforshe.org/en>



### INTERVIEW MORE WOMEN AS EXPERT SOURCES

Interview women as expert sources on the impacts of COVID-19 politically, economically and socially.

Men's views dominate in the politics, economics and social topic categories of TV news



### HIGHLIGHT THE ROLE THAT WOMEN PLAY IN THE OUTBREAK

Women play an indispensable role in the fight against COVID-19 as:

- Health care workers
- Scientists and researchers
- Social mobilizers, community peace builders and connectors
- Caregivers.

