

Report:

Mainstreaming gender into science journalism and maximising the diversity of SciDev.Net Audiences – workshops

Between the 25th and 27th of November 2014, SciDev.Net (SDN) hosted a series of workshops for its regional coordinators, assistant editors, user engagement coordinators, and three freelance journalists. These workshops were a collaboration with the organisation Gender InSITE – Gender in science innovation, technology, and engineering and made possible through funding from Sida. This document outlines key findings and recommendations arising from the workshops, as well as feedback from participants.

WORKSHOP AIMS

The workshops consisted of two streams; one focused on editorial output whilst the other focused on communications strategies. The overarching objectives for each stream were as follows (see Appendix 1 for further details regarding the objectives of the sessions):

1. **Workshop for regional coordinators and assistant editors:** *To establish the importance and benefits of understanding social gender dynamics in science reporting and develop guidelines for mainstreaming gender awareness throughout the commissioning, editing and publishing process. The workshops also went beyond this and explored gender trends in science journalism opportunities, professional situations, and wider impacts.*
2. **Workshop on Maximising Gender Diversity in Science Journalism Audiences for user engagement professionals:** *To develop guidelines on how to attract, reach, and maintain female readers and contributors for science journalism.*

BACKGROUND

Following a review of its systems and processes in 2012, SDN decided to establish an independent Gender Review Group (GRG), which meets annually to review the organisation's operations and outputs with a view to setting new targets for improved performance each year.

Crucially, this group structures its annual review to engage staff and management, to explore approaches to gender in their work and discuss areas for change. The approach maximises the learning opportunities in the process of these reviews. The first meeting was in November 2013 and have set targets for 2014 to include: increasing the access we provide to our editorial team for gender focused networks. The group has commended SDN on the number of articles it produces about the role of women in science and the impact of programmes on gender relations and encouraged maintaining this as a specific indicator in our institutional log frame.

The group comprises Anita Gurumurthy, Director of IT4Change in India; Muthoni Wanyeki, East Africa's Regional Director for Amnesty International; and Alyson Brody, Manager of Bridge (producers of gender focused knowledge resources for development).

The November workshops were organised so that they coincided with the meeting with the independent GRG in order to have a discussion informed by the recommendations outlined in this document and thus maximise the impact of the workshops.

Ultimately, both SciDev.Net and Gender InSITE felt that together they could work together on the premise that you can tell a more complete, honest, richer, and fulsome story if you take gender into account in science journalism and user engagement activities.

ATTENDEES

The following people attended the workshops for each stream:

EDITORIAL STREAM	USER ENGAGEMENT
Luisa Massarani – <i>Regional Coordinator for Latin America and Caribbean</i>	Caitlin Flint – <i>User engagement manager for Global Edition (based in London)</i>
Bothina Osama – <i>S Regional Coordinator for Middle East and North Africa</i>	Andrea Small – <i>User engagement coordinator for Latin America and Caribbean</i>
Ranjit Devraj – <i>SciDev.Net Regional Coordinator for South Asia</i>	Yasser Teilab – <i>User engagement coordinator for Middle East and North Africa</i>
Joel Adriano – <i>SciDev.Net Regional Coordinator for South East Asia and Pacific</i>	Smriti Daniel – <i>User engagement coordinator for South Asia</i>
Ochieng Ogodo – <i>SciDev.Net Regional Coordinator for Sub-Saharan Africa (English edition)</i>	Bernice Nduta – <i>User engagement coordinator for Sub-Saharan Africa</i>
Amzath Fassassi – <i>SciDev.Net Regional Coordinator for Sub-Saharan Africa (French edition)</i>	Aamna Mohdin – <i>Freelance journalist</i>
Daniela Hirschfield – <i>Assistant Editor for Latin America</i>	
Nehal Lasheen – <i>Assistant Editor for Middle East and North Africa</i>	
Fides Lim – <i>Assistant Editor for South East Asia and Pacific</i>	
Albert Otieno – <i>Assistant Editor for Sub-Saharan Africa region</i>	
Jan Piotrowski – <i>Freelance Journalist</i>	
Gareth Wilmer – <i>Freelance Journalist</i>	

FACILITATORS

Kath Nightingale – *Science writer at the Medical Research Council and freelance journalist*

Kaz Janowski – *Editor, SciDev.Net*

Juan Casasbuenas – *Training Coordinator, SciDev.Net*

Corinne Podger – *Independent Journalism and Media consultant.*

GENDER EXPERTS SUPPORTING THE WORKSHOPS

Sophia Huyer – *Director – Gender InSITE*

Shirley Malcom - *Head of Education and Human Resources Programs, AAAS*

Shirin Heidari - *Executive Editor of the Journal of the International AIDS Society*

Mainstreaming gender into the Editorial Process

How good are our mainstreaming guidelines?

The below is feedback from our Regional Coordinators and Assistant Editors on the current gender SDN mainstreaming guidelines, this was a key activity in terms of identifying ways to revise and improve these.

<p>Key Strengths</p> <p>References to interviewing both men and women as much as possible.</p> <p>Reflects the needs of poor, marginalised communities.</p> <p>Suggests we should consider the impact of research on communities and its actual usefulness.</p> <p>Explicitly refers to reduction of stereotyping</p> <p>The guidelines allow SciDev.Net to have a unique approach to science coverage.</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Implicit assumption that women are always ‘gender aware’, this isn’t always the case.</p> <p>Gender means both men and women. Current guidelines are still very ‘women in gender’, and not ‘gender in development’. Needs updating.</p> <p>Should consider conscious measurement of participation of men and women in science leadership roles.</p> <p>Doesn’t consider that most experts/scientists for resource interviews are men.</p> <p>Should encourage opportunities to maximise female writers.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Two thirds of SEAP region contributors are women. Half of the team & advisory group are also women. Learning opportunity here.</p> <p>Reporting in more gender sensitive way will increase relevance to user groups of our content.</p> <p>In certain regions, seek opportunities to increase the number of women writing.</p> <p>There is a broad range of topics that could be tagged with ‘gender’ (but not everything should be tagged like this).</p> <p>New gender topics might arise: e.g. ‘How to survive as a transgender scientist in a traditional scientific community’.</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Need to make sure bias towards a ‘female angle’ is avoided, might be perceived in situations where for example there are few women at a science event.</p> <p>Equal relevance to gender groups, all subjects can be relevant to both sexes.</p> <p>If we interview too many women or endeavour to, stories might be perceived to ‘quotify’ too much.</p> <p>Could reinforce stereotypes if you pay too much attention to differential impacts.</p> <p>By encouraging pitching stories on gender, men could think that stories are only interesting just because there is a woman involved.</p>

What areas of the editorial process should be prioritised for mainstreaming?

There was limited consensus over the most important areas where gender can be mainstreamed; all parts of the editorial process were deemed important. However, the following list is the closest the group got to a priority list:

1. *Commissioning*
2. *Interviewees*
3. *Images*
4. *Headlines*
5. *Sub-editing*
6. *Editing*

What can we learn from content analyses?

The following were the main questions participants suggested could be answered from a content analysis if performed on the SDN website:

1. Which roles do women and men authors have in our stories?
2. How are men and women portrayed in our stories? E.g. role should not just be tokenistic.
3. In teams or families, how are we portraying the relationships between men and women?
4. Does the gender role/analysis challenge gender stereotypes or does our approach lack 'cutting edge' in this respect?
5. What percentage of our stories have gender considerations?
6. 'Process indicators': sources, authors, image acquisition, sub-editors, etc.

Participants were also keen to find out whether there are other tools beyond content analyses that could be used, that perhaps could capture context more accurately. The tool QDA miner was also recommended as a mixed-method qualitative data analysis method.

Pitch perfect:

The below are good-practice recommendations that were highlighted throughout the workshops in terms of pitching and key considerations when dealing with typical SciDev.Net stories.

- ✓ Consider: Are women invisible in the story and can their presence be surfaced?
- ✓ Consider: Is it risky to reporter/interviewees to report this with a gender angle? How can risk be minimised?
- ✓ Consider: Who is marginalised by this technology/change/money?
- ✓ Pull apart statistics – has the data been disaggregated for men and women?
- ✓ Has the underlying research considered differential impact on women and men?
- ✓ Consider a gender-focus angle if that is the strongest news angle
- ✓ What is the bigger picture? And what are the implications of this? Think creatively about implications for men and women.
- ✓ How is funding/aid/finance/resources being allocated? Are all stakeholders included?
- ✓ How are opportunities being distributed and what criteria is there for success?
- ✓ If appropriate interview a gender analyst.
- ✓ Remember that 'gender sensitive' means men and women.
- ✓ Consider impact on families and individuals within families
- ✓ Diversify sources, which stakeholders may be impacted, have they been consulted?
- ✓ Consider tapping into available statistics and data on gender.
- ✓ How will you avoid stereotyping male and female roles when including a gender angle?
- ✓ Recognize class as well as gender: women and men at different socio-economic levels in a country might have more in common than women at different levels.

Case studies— a few things to consider

Biofuels, mining, transport, ICT/Mobile, construction

- ✓ Lifestyle impacts?
- ✓ Indirect impact of technologies e.g. mining → environmental and labour dimensions.
- ✓ Impact on health, differences within families.
- ✓ Labour movement/migration required by some industries.
- ✓ Who receives the income from this technology?
- ✓ Impact of a technology on other resources required by the families?
- ✓ Impact of new technology on small/traditional producers? Retraining for access? Other support?
- ✓ Urban versus rural men and women, consider how these may be affected differently.
- ✓ Affordability differentials for a new technology?
- ✓ Is compensation (i.e. land resettlement, employment training/resources, payments) accessible and appropriate/relevant for both women and men? I.e. if fishing communities are relocated to agricultural areas, how are women and men involved and affected?

Climate/health/Nutrition/Biofuels

- ✓ Women's input into health/nutrition stories as parents, involvement in child health.
- ✓ Differential outcomes for male/female beneficiaries.
- ✓ Differential access for potential beneficiaries, consider gender dimensions. E.g. food.
- ✓ Think of a maternal health angle.
- ✓ Lifestyle/physiological + cultural aspects of disease vectors.
- ✓ Should the basic science respond to any of the above?

Policy makers

- ✓ Impact of change at community level?
- ✓ What needs to be asked of policy makers? E.g. inclusion, barriers, participation, opportunity.
- ✓ Are policies being implemented in gender-blind fashion?
- ✓ Policymakers deciding on a new technology – have civil society/user groups been consulted about access and usability?
- ✓ Have implementers considered women as participants/beneficiaries of a technology? What are the barriers to these?
- ✓ Have implementers considered women as a market, or considered gender balance as an issue?
- ✓ Is the financing taking all stakeholders into account?
- ✓ Ask policymakers specific questions about men and women as participants/beneficiaries of a technology. Are there any barriers in this respect?
- ✓ What has been promised and is there any follow through on it?

Worked Examples

The following are stories that were analysed by our Regional Coordinators and Assistant Editors, suggesting alternative approaches or opportunities through a 'gender lens'. The titles of the stories are hyperlinks to the source.

Example 1: Plastic bricks could protect Indian homes from monsoon

Gender Lens Strengths: Good balance between male and female sources, and covers a female-driven initiative that is traditionally a male area. The background of the sources is varied too: female researcher, female NGO worker, and a male at an Indian waste institute.

Opportunities: Talk to local women and explore how they differentially get involved in the initiatives. How do they work together on them? There are also opportunities to focus on women and men's collaboration on new sustainable living initiatives (perhaps this would be another story).

Example 2: Push for biodiversity to have deeper role in SDGs

Gender Lens Strengths: The story includes a quote from the female head at UNDP and the programme DIVERSITAS.

Opportunities: The story could acknowledge the differential impact or pressures on either gender. Habitat destruction, overfishing, and pollution impact differently on people and certainly on different genders. The photo could perhaps have been something about the diversity of people that SDGs will have an impact on (e.g. showing farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples, women).

Example 3: Woman scientist wins TWAS prize for fighting against AIDS

Gender Lens Strengths: Highlights key issue that women are 8 times for susceptible to infection than men (and 70% of women living with HIV are found in sub-Saharan Africa). The picture is appropriate, showing the researcher receiving the prize. Academic researchers quoted were qualified and relevant.

Opportunities: The story covers the impact on women only, not on men (and only portrays women). Missed opportunity to get comments from couples as this is a common issue that also involves men. It would also have been good to get commentary/feedback from women who have used the gel, and men's perspectives.

Maximising Gender Diversity

Communications strategy good practice

The following are general recommendations that the User Engagement Coordinators made with regards to good practice in communications strategies, some of which are related to maximising gender diversity in audiences.

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider the meaning of images carefully before deciding on their use e.g. they might portray stereotypes ✓ Show diversity through wide range of image choice ✓ Use language carefully and where possible use gender neutral terminology ✓ Let men and women speak for themselves ✓ Use a range of women and men ✓ Adapt your social media strategy to cultural differences ✓ Be respectful to your audience and don't patronise them ✓ Be responsive, user engagement should be a conversation – genuine engagement is a relationship with the audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Asking questions is a good way to involve your audience ✓ Pull out key messages from content ✓ Highlight key gender stats e.g. differences in women and men ✓ Celebrate success, differences, and role models in science. ✓ Show men in non-traditional roles too. ✓ Include men in the message ✓ Find out what your audience is thinking through polls and surveys ✓ Relate the message to people's lives. ✓ Work with other organisations. ✓ If possible, convey your message with real people – it will make your message genuine |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Don't patronise your audience. ✗ Don't sexualise ✗ Don't stereotype. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Don't make it seem like women in science or a certain position is something that needs additional highlighting. ✗ Try not to use images that require captions to convey meaning |

Useful networks to maximise gender diversity

The following networks were presented as being useful, especially in order to maximise engagement with women.

International

OWSD
 INWES
 World Federation of Engineering Associations
 Women's committees of International Science Associations –
 IUPAP – [Women in physics](#)
 IEEE – [Women in Engineering](#)
 Gender Summit
 WOCAN
 Practical Action
 ENERGIA
 Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender

Regional

Pacific Science Association
 Chinese Academy of Science and Technology

Regional networking and information exchange

ISIS-WICCE – Women's Cross-cultural exchange
 Uganda – www.isis-wicce.org
 Farm Radio International
 WOUGNET
 femLINK Pacific
 FEMnet
 ITforChange

News and media

IPS Gender news

Worked example of communication strategy to generate debate:

User engagement coordinators presented brief communication strategies to generate debate around three case studies. These communications strategies are largely focused on social media due to the nature of the user engagement coordinator role.

Example: Transportation a gender issue

✓ Timing:

- Host online debate in the build-up to important conference or meetings relevant to the topic, e.g. UNEP conference on Sustainable Transport in Africa.
- Consider timing of posts and invitations to contribute at times which are suitable for both men and women and different regions. Take into account routines of users in different regions.

✓ Generate engagement through:

- Impactful facts: e.g. *It takes women in Zambia 5hrs 20min to get to hospital, how can we overcome these challenges? Join our transportation debate @scidev.net*
- Open ended questions: e.g. *Women transport more than three times as men in Africa, but infrastructure doesn't fully take this into account... why?*
- Questions to provoke debate: e.g. *Women's work is often not defined as work in many places. Consequences of this?*
- Simple 'polling' questions to invite opinion: *Is transport in Africa an issue to be approached via a gender lens?*

✓ Target relevant networks and speakers

- Engage experts in transport and gender issues in development. E.g. Africa Transport Policy Program and OWSD.
- Maximise coverage using popular hashtag combinations such as #transportation #gender #Africa #development.

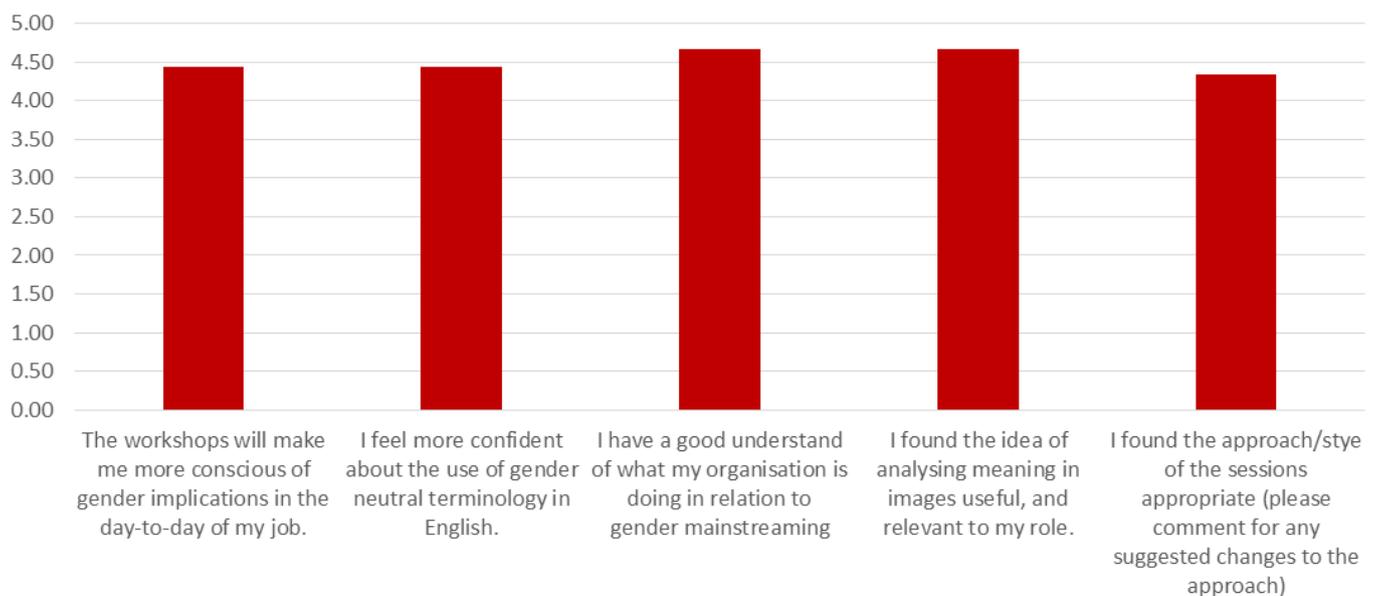
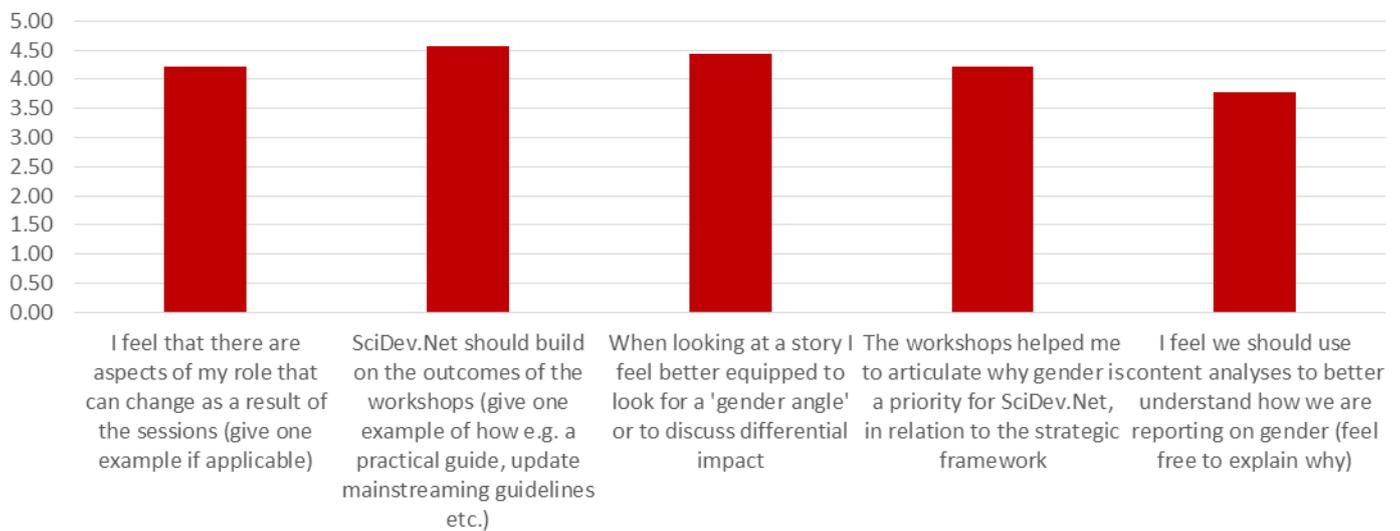
Participant feedback

Key findings from staff survey:

Participants were asked to rate how strongly they agree with a number of statements relating to the training. Below is the average rating for each statement across all participants (1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree).

All respondents either agreed or strongly agreed for with all statements except for the use of content analyses where two people felt neutral about their use. There were also two instances where the respondents didn't agree with the statements because they felt the statement didn't apply to their role and put 'neutral' down as a response.

Summary of responses to post-workshop survey



The following are selected quotes for how participants from both strands of the workshops can apply their experiences in the sessions.

“BOTH AS A JOURNALIST AND A USER ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR, I SEE THIS AWARENESS RAISING AS CRUCIAL. IT WILL HELP ME LOOK FOR NEW AND UNIQUE ANGLES INTO THE STORIES THAT MATTER AND HAS MADE ME MORE AWARE OF HOW I COMMUNICATE ACROSS ALL MEDIUMS.”

“KEEN ATTENTION TO GENDER FACTORS DURING COMMISSIONING AND EDITING PROCESS.”

“I JUST EDITED AN ARTICLE ON ZERO OPEN DEFECATION AND PUT IN A DEFINED GENDER SLANT”

“THE HIGHLIGHT FOR ME WAS HEARING FROM THE TEAM FROM GENDERINSITE. THEIR HANDS ON EXAMPLES OF HOW WE NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND THE GENDER ANGLE TO MAKE OUR SOLUTIONS AND TECHNOLOGY APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE MADE A GREAT POINT FOR ME OF HOW THIS WENT BEYOND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS.”

“I THINK A PRACTICAL GUIDE ON HOW TO RECOGNIZE GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA WOULD BE REALLY USEFUL. I KNOW IN MY REGION MANY READERS USE THEM AS A TOOL TO SPREAD INFORMATION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.”

“A GENDER SECTION IN THE STYLEBOOK IS NEEDED, ESPECIALLY ON GENDER-NEUTRAL TERMINOLOGY AND HANDLING.”

“ASIDE FROM CONTENT ANALYSES, ISSUE PLANNING IS ALSO NECESSARY TO COME UP WITH DEFINED GENDER ARTICLES”

“I PARTICULARLY LIKED THE LAST SESSION WHEN NICK ELUCIDATED ON THE VALUES OF SciDev AS THIS MADE ME FEEL NOT ONLY THE DYNAMICS OF THE ORGANISATION BUT ALSO THAT I AM A CONTRIBUTORY PART OF IT.”

Key improvement/focus areas:

- **Practical work:** Participants on the whole liked the interactive approach to the sessions but one respondent felt that more opportunities for more practical work could have been created.
- **Regionalised input:** Although regionalised input was planned into the session discussions, one respondent felt that a greater focus on the regions was necessary.
- **Gender of external experts:** One respondent felt that we should have also sought out male gender experts as external resources to achieve more balance. It should be highlighted that the lead facilitators were 50% female and 50% male for both streams.

Next steps

There are several ways in which SDN has identified that the outcomes from the workshops can be put into practice. Some of these are for internal use to inform our work, whilst others are ways of disseminating lessons learned from this experience to wider audiences – some of these activities are dependent on acquiring further funding.

- Updating commissioning guidelines to include key ‘pitch-perfect’ recommendations from the workshops.
- Updating our style guide to include gender neutral terminology guidance.
- Creation of a resource bank with guidance documents, presentations, and relevant case studies to support staff when approaching various development topics through a gender lens.
- Disseminating recommendations from the workshops to all staff.
- Inviting all SDN staff to engage in discussions on gender mainstreaming and the organisation’s work through a short masterclass/workshop.
- Completing a content analysis, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to rigorously assess how we report science in development, including the treatment of gender issues.
- Publication of a Practical Guide on how to mainstream gender into science journalism to share best practice to a wide audience.

- Creation of an online course or adaptable resources for wider use, by modifying resources from these workshops.
- Revising the gender mainstreaming guidelines to reflect some of the discussions and outputs of the workshops.
- Collect sex-disaggregated on mode of access by readers, i.e. mobile vs computer.
- Develop a set of guidelines for moderating reader comments.

APPENDIX 1 – SESSION OBJECTIVES

Mainstreaming Gender into Science Journalism

Session	Objectives
Setting the scene: Why is it important to mainstream gender into science journalism?	<p>Reflect on why it is important to mainstream gender in science journalism</p> <p>Highlight gender issues that affect different regions that participants work in.</p> <p>Identify priorities to be tackled coming out from discussions</p> <p>Identify gender issues that aren't necessarily considered in the editorial process.</p>
Gender awareness in the editorial process	<p>Identify areas in the commissioning, editing and publishing process where gender awareness can be mainstreamed.</p> <p>Describe ways to incorporate gender awareness into the profession at different stages of the editorial process.</p>
Science news, and implications on gender dynamics	<p>Describe the differential impact science stories (e.g. technologies) can have on gender dimensions</p> <p>Outline explicit ways of how to address the differential impact of stories or new technologies.</p>
Addressing differing gender perceptions from readers to science content using SDN website as a case study.	<p>Interpret and reflect on M&E data from SciDev.Net surveys.</p> <p>Suggest next steps in terms of understanding the data and questions that need to be answered.</p>

Maximising Gender Diversity in Science Journalism Audiences

Session	Objectives
Setting the scene: Why is it important to maximise gender diversity in science journalism audiences?	<p>Establish the link between user engagement activities, gender awareness, and our theory of change.</p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of good practice with regards to gender sensitive user engagement.</p>
Gender aware communications strategies	<p>Identify ways to tailor comms strategy to increase engagement with women using a variety of sources e.g. social media trends, industry best-practice, networks.</p> <p>Tailor a communications strategy in order to raise gender awareness for key topics, for an online debate</p> <p>Identify stereotypes that are common and highlight issues surrounding these.</p>
User profiles	<p>Describe gender dimensions in region relevant to work in user engagement</p>
Addressing differing gender perceptions from readers to science content using SDN website as a case study.	<p>Interpret and reflect on M&E data from SciDev.Net surveys.</p> <p>Reflect on how this data might be useful for user engagement activities.</p>