

# WIN - leading the drive to greater gender balance

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Many women enter the media and media-related industries, but there are still very few at the upper and board levels in the sector. This is set to change with the launch of WIN South Africa.

Launched last week in South Africa last week at a function hosted by Print and Digital Media South Africa Association (PDMSA) at their Auckland Park premises the Women in News (WIN) initiative is conducted under a strategic partnership to advance media development and press freedom worldwide between WAN-IFRA and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

WIN South Africa is in partnership with WAN-IFRA member association PDMSA and the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef).

Twenty women have been selected for the first programme, which kicked off at the end of June. The women, who are selected from the industry from both the business and editorial side of newspapers and magazines, come from the media houses of Independent Newspapers, The Times Media Group, Caxton, Media 24, Mail and Guardian, the Association of Independent Publishers and the MDDA.

## Nominated by their companies

All applicants were nominated by their company as a first step to submitting an application. Each application was reviewed and agreed upon by the WIN South Africa selection committee, made up of the programme implementers.

The participants will also receive a NQF 8 Media Management and Leadership Skills certification and accreditation in Media Management from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Speakers at the launch included Mathatha Tsedu, executive director, SA National Editors' Forum (Sanef), Hoosain Karjieker, PDMSA President, Paula Fray, Trainer, frayintermedia, Ferial Haffajee, the Chair of the Diversity and Ethics committee at Sanef, and Prof Anton Harber, the head of Wits University's Journalism faculty.

For Haffajee the programme launch was a dream come true. "We have been trying to put this together forever," she told the gathering.

She said being a women in a senior position in the media was a perilous job, and quoted Jill Ellen Abramson, former executive editor of *The New York Times* who was fired for apparently being a difficult person to work with and allegedly after she challenged management on the issue of unequal pay when compared with that of male colleagues. Haffajee said she herself was not sure how she had survived given that she was terrible at golf and prefers yoga. "My point is that I do not possess the traditional qualities needed to be an editor. However, in South Africa we have context and Madiba. The Constitution has enshrined Employment Equity and that assisted me."

However she said the industry was still very patriarch and male-dominated.

## Current media leaders not up to meeting challenges

Prof Anton Harber said they are very pleased to be associated with this initiative. "In the industry we are facing enormous



WIN aims to redress the imbalance in the composition of the media leadership ranks; currently males far outnumber females in leadership positions.

challenges, and while some of these are exciting, we need to find people who can meet these challenges head on. The current bunch are not up to it and so the only way to meet the challenges is to stop sourcing people from the small pool that exists and to get rid of the glass ceiling and make it representative. If an organisation is not representative, it cannot meet the challenges it faces."

However, he reminded those present that the programme is a structure and will not deliver success. It is up to the participants to make use of this initiative, but their success will be up to them.

Hoosain told the launch attendees that while young females do join the profession, they are not represented at the top levels, while Fray said that media freedom is dependent on sustainable newspapers.

The programme, which is a results-based one, comprises facilitated group mentoring, skills development, networking, and individual coaching.

Botswana, Namibia, and Zambia have had the WIN programme for three years, with 50 women graduating to date. Research at the end of last year showed that 88% of participants were given more responsibility, 35% secured a promotion, and 62% reported more opportunities given to them to progress in their companies.

## The first WIN South Africa intake:

- Kate Henry, deputy news editor, *The Citizen - Caxton*
- Rose Morapama, journalist, *Greater Alex Today*
- Nelisiswer Ndlovu, managing editor, *Bushbuckridge News*
- Mmanaledi Reginah Matagoge, senior political reporter, *Mail & Guardian*
- Zodwa Kumalo-Valentine, online content editor, *Mail & Guardian*
- Chandre Prince, news editor, *The Times*
- Nicki Gules, assistant editor, *City Press*
- Nonzwakazi Cekete, deputy editor, *Move Magazine*
- Liezel De Lange, news editor, *Beeld*
- Stephanie Saville, news editor, *The Witness*
- Linda Pretorius, group sales manager and trainee branch manager, Caxton Publications,
- Vahl Michelle Susan, sales manager, Caxton Local Publications,
- Nicolette Christians, accounts and admin manager, *The Soweto Bulletin*
- Shirley Govender publishing editor, *Globe/Orange Farm News*
- Sithembile Moyo, marketing management, *Inner City Gazette*
- Patricia Hlungwani, publisher/CEO, *Alex Pioneer*
- Thando Pato, deputy business manager, Times Media,
- Tiny Koaho, account manager, Times Media, and
- Mbali Soga, beauty editor, *Grazia Magazine*

The PDMSA represents more than 500 newspaper and magazine titles from the country's leading publishers. The Sanef members are editors, senior journalists, and journalism trainers from all areas of the South African media.

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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