

Press release

Male experts outnumber female experts by 11 to 1 on radio and television programs in Ghana. Data gathered by the **Ghanaian Women Experts** project between February and June 2021 shows that men dominate radio and television programs. The survey found that politicians, lawyers, doctors, university teachers, and men who called themselves experts and analysts dominated the programs.

Out of 1,476 experts featured on the six monitored radio and television shows, only 128 of them were female experts, representing just 8.7 per cent of the total number of experts interviewed on all the programmes. While men dominated all the four Breakfast shows monitored, Starr FM's Morning Starr interviewed more women experts than the rest.

The survey was conducted under the direction of Nana Ama Agyemang Asante and Betty Kamkam-Boadu, both freelance journalists in Accra with support and funding from the City University of London's Journalism Department. The six programs surveyed are: Peace FM's Kookroko, Citi FM's, Citi Breakfast Show, Starr FM's Morning Starr, TV3's Key Points, Joy TV's PM Express and Joy FM's Super Morning Show.

Nana Ama said: “ The study shows that despite being more than half of the population, 51.2 percent to be exact, Ghanaian women's voices and expertise remain unacknowledged in the media. Producers argue that the disparity is due to a reluctance on the part of women to appear on shows, but the figures also show that male experts were given more time during interviews than women. It is evident from the data that policies, laws and other national programs are being framed by

men for men. The media's gender gap is not only unfair to women, but it also reinforces harmful and dangerous gender stereotypes.”

Some highlights from the first round of Ghana women experts survey include:

Please click on the link below to view the full report:

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Introduction for the report

The problem

When people turn on the radio every morning across Ghana, the voices they often hear belong to the hosts, politicians, analysts, experts, and other newsmakers -most of whom are men. Men dominate the media landscape in Ghana. A global report on the status of women in the news media found men outnumber women by almost a 2:1 ratio in the six news [companies surveyed](#) in Ghana. A Media Foundation of West Africa survey found that “men consistently dominated all programs between June and November 2014.” Out of the over nine thousand guests featured in the five thousand programs monitored on 24 radio stations, only 1,842 were [women](#).

The underrepresentation of women’s voices and issues in media is reflected across other sectors in the country. Only 30 women are in Ghana’s 275-member house, while only eight of the eight-five ministers are [women](#). Only 36 out of the 212 persons appointed across the [country were women](#). The numbers of women in top administrative positions are also low, with only three out of the 12 Justices of the Supreme Court being women. Men dominate leadership positions even in organizations where women dominate, like the Ghana Registered Nurses Association and the Ghana Union of Traders. Yet, women account for more than half of the population, 51.2 percent to be exact.

The Ghana Expert Women project sought to count the number of women interviewed in the media as experts and authority figures. The project aims to highlight the gender gap by drawing attention to the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women in media. For the first round, six flagship programs were sampled from four radio and two television stations between February and June 2021. Over the five months, monitors counted the women interviewed as experts and authority figures, the time allocated to them, and the topics they covered. We found that a low number of Ghanaian women were interviewed on radio and television in the media for their expertise during the period. The monitors observed that even men who had no expertise in a subject were accorded respect when they offered views during discussions. They also found that male experts were given more airtime than female experts across the shows.

Where are the women: Responses from producers, hosts and journalists

While the study did not explore why women's voices and expertise were absent, we interviewed some journalists, hosts, producers, and women experts from different fields about the media gender gap. Some journalists, hosts, and producers say that aside from the majority of top positions being held by men, women are generally unwilling to participate in programs. Others explain that the nature of some radio and television shows makes it impossible for them to get women. On their part, some of the women professionals we interviewed cited the timing of programs and interviews, sexist backlash, the hostile nature of some shows among others as some of the problems

“I don't think that there are not enough women in different areas. We have a lot of women who are in different sectors. The issue is their willingness to come out to speak, and their availability. The way that news cycle runs, there are lots of times where you do not pre-plan what you want to do. So, for example, Eyewitness News, it's a bit difficult to say you are pre planning for 5:30pm, because they are looking at the running news, and what will make the biggest news. Sometimes your biggest news comes out after 3 pm. So then we say okay, we want to speak to this guest and prepare the person for this evening, and you try to reach out to a

woman. One, there's a fear of speaking out in public. So then even when you get a person you now need to convince the person why they should not be afraid to speak out and then convince the person how the interview will be done so the person will not be worried and affected. and this has to do with women experts in the various fields of work, and politicians. It's very difficult, you now need to convince them why they should do it and everything and try to assure them that they shouldn't be scared of what is happening.”

--Fred Tettey Djabanor, producer, Citi FM

I've had many female guests you chase give many excuses why they cannot be on the show. They blame the timing, or the subject is just simply too controversial or that it is too political and they don't want to get involved. -- **Evans Mensah, host, PM Express, Joy FM**

If you need a woman, then the notice must be long. There are no two ways about that. There is no way you would get a woman with a short notice, and the woman would be able to avail herself. So on our part, yes, we need to consciously make an effort to get more women resources. But the other question is, why is it so stressful to get them to appear on the show or to speak, sometimes even via phone? Because of the glass ceiling that we talk about, because of the marginalisation, suppression

that women have suffered. I personally think that when women are able to first of all get educated, get enlightened, they must make a conscious effort to be projected and project themselves. So others can also be encouraged. We, as producers, mostly go for a quick fix. We go for the easiest route. Yes, there's more we should do and we can do and we will do. But the women must equally avail themselves. They must first of all know that they are not speaking for themselves. They are representing an entire gender.

-- Ibrahim Alhassan, producer of Morning Starr.

“We want to get the biggest newsmakers about whom those controversial issues revolve in the studio, so that we can expand on it. At the end of the day, our goal is to provide a full appreciation of a story that you had about, that had been treated in the news that you didn't get closure on. We want to bring the key personalities, driving that conversation into the studio, so they can expand on it, and hopefully get some closure for audiences. The guests select themselves. If you are not subject to the controversy, story or the issue, you are rarely on the show. The only other people who get onto the show, although they are not a subject of the controversy, will be civil society voices. In essence, and maybe on the list so if you're doing a security subject you want the security analysts, if you're doing a governance

subject you want the governance to analyze the subject. So, if ever the most controversial story hasn't got a female protagonist in it, as in the controversial biggest story of the day, isn't about a female personality, you're not getting them on the show, it's as simple as that. PM Express focuses on controversial stories on a daily basis so Monday to Wednesday. Mainly, often the characters in there are men. So, women can be 50%, but If the characters in it are not women, they simply don't get on the show.”

- **Evans Mensah, host, PM Express, Joy FM**

When we have heard a woman already speak on a forum then we know what she's made of and we are sure that she can give us the eyeballs we're looking for. But if we've not heard her speak before, it's difficult for us to put her on our show and then say that this is somebody who can give us the eyeballs we're looking for. But once we know them already and we know their worth, it is easier for us to put them on our show. We will always go for people who make the news, who will give us the headlines, who are controversial. That's how sometimes we tend to gravitate towards men because the men tend to give you what you're looking for. The women are a bit reserved, they want to be careful and that's by their nature

okay, they want to be careful, but the men will always give you what you're looking for. -- **Thomas Adotey Pappoe, producer Key Points on TV3**

I don't get to interview a lot of women. Every morning things happen and when things happen, the natural order is to find somebody as soon as possible, who can readily respond to what's happening on the go. Now, often when you call a man they may give you a minute or two to ask for context and then they will say, okay, let's go. But for a woman they will say, Well, I will need about six to 12 hours to prepare well to give you proper context. And so once that happens, the natural fall on option is not the woman.

I have a segment on Tuesdays we call Gender one-on-one. Now this year, we have not been able to do it for a number of reasons. First, we are looking at how things are changing in space to restructure the program. The second concern t is the pool of resource persons that we draw from. After three to six months, we hit the dry patch. We found that we were recycling virtually the same people to talk about different strands on gender issues. AAnd of course we are finding a way around to

broaden the pool but what's clear is that many of those who engage us who are women won't agree to an interview immediately.

Now, even for all those ones, with experience, you call them for conversations.

And half the time they'll tell you I can't speak. The natural reaction, you get is I'm not being cleared to speak on this matter. I'd have to get back to you. When you investigate sometimes, you realise that it's not really a question of them getting clearance, it's just the discomfort of having to come and speak about tissues and the kind of reaction that they may get subsequently. S So the natural reaction for many is, I don't want to come and say anything and tomorrow, my job is on the line, or I become a subject of insults or ridicule or criticism, which sometimes you find as unfounded. -- **Francis Abban, host, Morning Starr.**

