

Women in News reaches half-way point

Women in News (WIN), an initiative from the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) that aims to help female media professionals advance their careers, will see participants from Zambia, Namibia and Botswana meet in Johannesburg, South Africa, next week, with the programme reaching its half-way point.



"The WIN programme is an initiative that helps instil confidence and strengthen the position of women in media organisations," said Yvonne Pele, editor of *The Education Post* in Zambia and a participating mentor in the programme. "This is a programme that one would like to see spread to other African countries, knowing very well that there are a lot of women that wish to excel in their careers and are faced with similar problems."

Locally-driven, self-sustainable

The WIN programme combines training in management and leadership skills, mentoring, panel discussions, networking and one-on-one coaching through multiple national and programme-wide gatherings held throughout a six-month period. WIN has a specific focus on creating and promoting local connections among participants to complement input from international trainers and coaches. This approach helps ensure that it is locally-driven and largely self-sustainable; an approach that is consistent with WAN-IFRA's overall media development strategy.

Participants and trainers have thrown their support behind WIN's approach in a region where only 10% of the industry has strategies in place to help women attain leadership positions.

Empowering women

"We are so fortunate to have the opportunity to work with these amazing women who are dedicated to the media business," said Beth Oakes, principal of The Oakes Group Executive Coaching Firm in Canada and a WIN executive coach. "Our mandate is to empower them to be more in control of their careers and work situations. We are giving them the skills and tools to have them think differently about their careers. We are providing them with the tools to transfer these skills to others in their networks and therefore make the learning self-sustaining."

"It is great to be understood and to share the challenges and difficulties we all encounter. To learn from our mentors and to develop within our group makes a huge difference," said Alita Louwrens, sales coordinator of the *Republikein* newspaper in Namibia.

First phase in project

The goal of the project, supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), is to help women media professionals, who are underrepresented in top management positions, to advance their careers. This is the first phase of a multi-year project, which will expand in scope in Africa in 2011.

The 16 participants all in middle management in a variety of media companies are meeting from 27-29 September in South Africa for the second programme-wide gathering since WIN was launched in July. Two national meetings held in the capital cities of each of the three participating countries have also taken place, along with virtual coaching sessions.

Sida and WAN-IFRA conduct an ambitious strategic partnership to advance media development and press freedom worldwide. The partnership allows WAN-IFRA to broaden and develop its activities to support free and financially sustainable media worldwide. A series of pilot projects to test new methods and approaches in strengthening media in emerging markets was launched this year.

For more on these projects, go to www.wan-press.org/pfreedom/articles.php?id=5826.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>