Gender Sensitive Media Content: Media Monitoring Toolkit

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1.   Introduction

According to the Global Gap Index annual reports, the Arab region ranks lowest on both women's political and economic participation.[1] The MENA region ranked last globally in terms of gender gap in 2017, closing only 60% of its gender parity.[2] The region is also characterized by gaps between men and women in terms of power, influence, and access to/control over resources.[3] The region is mostly lagging behind in the political empowerment sub-index where it has closed less than 9% of its gender parity. The average gender gap score of the MENA region is 0.61; with an estimated 157 years needed to close its gender gap.

One of the most pressing issues in gender equality in the region is violence against women (VAW), and especially intimate partner violence (IPV) where being married is correlated with experiencing more physical violence. A World Health Organization study revealed that 35.4% of ever-married women in the MENA region have experienced partner violence.[4] For example, in Jordan, one-third of married women reported experiencing physical violence, while in Egypt, the prevalence is at a high of 46%.[5] Violence in public spaces is also more prevalent in Egypt, where almost all sampled women have experienced sexual harassment.

The UN Women Regional Programme Men and Women for Gender Equality funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), is addressing the root causes of gender inequality in the region by advocating for policy change in an evidence-based manner, strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and partners, and developing community-based solutions for the promotion of gender equality. The programme has a strong focus on engaging men and boys in gender equality. The International Men and Gender Equality Survey in the MENA region, produced under this programme, recommends using new and traditional media to question gender stereotypes and men's conventional roles.[6]

Numerous research studies have been conducted on the outreach and impact of television programmes and movies on popular culture since the early 1960s. Television shows, dramas, comedies and films are powerful and immediate influencers, and can be used to disseminate valuable information, influence consumption patterns, and perpetuate or challenge accepted belief systems and practices.

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[1] Global Gender Gap Report (2017). World Economic Forum. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf
Global Gender Gap Report (2016). World Economic Forum.
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf
Global Gender Gap Report (2015). World Economic Forum. Available at:
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/The%20Global%20Gender%20Gap%20Index%202015.pdf
[2] Global Gender Gap Report (2017). World Economic Forum.http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf
[3] Ibid.
[4] WHO, Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence (Geneva, 2013), p. 47. Available from:
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf.
[5] UN Women (2017): Status of Arab Women Report 2017; Violence Against Women, What is at Stake? Available at:
http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20arab%20states/attachments/2017/arab-women-report-violenceagainst-women-english.pdf?la=en&vs=4651
[6] UN Women (2017). Understanding Masculinities, MENA https://imagesmena.org/en/

While there is a significant gap in empirical data on Arab media and its reach, recent research shows that over 95% of the Arab region's population watches television programmes, and over 65% do so on a daily basis.[7] Accordingly, television shows and programmes are an essential medium for information transmission and can contribute to raising awareness of more equitable attitudes and practices. The media could therefore be an effective tool for inspiring both men and women to challenge male privilege and gender inequalities.

This toolkit is intended to help users establish a framework for monitoring and assessing current representations of women and men in the media, particularly in an Egyptian/Arab context. It provides a guide for analyzing the portrayal of gender roles, gender relations, masculinities, and violence against women in the public and private spheres for the purpose of understanding and combatting gender stereotypes and harmful representations of gender dynamics in the society and advocating for a more gender sensitive and socially conscious media.

Gender Media Monitoring can be broadly defined as the process of "monitor(ing) the media and consult(ing) with the media to ensure that women's needs and concerns are properly reflected."[8] For the purpose of this toolkit, gender media monitoring is defined as the process of reading, listening to, or watching any media outlet for the purpose of analyzing its content, setting, audio-visuals, and creation from a gender perspective.

The process involves asking a set of critical questions in order to identify subliminal or underlying gender-related messaging and assess the implications/potential harm. It capitalizes on both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis in order to capture both the frequency and nature of gender stereotypes. Quantitative monitoring gathers data on how often women are depicted in certain ways or in certain roles (e.g. frequency of domestic violence used against women, number of women in leadership roles, etc.), while qualitative monitoring involves analyzing the values, attitudes, and assumptions reflected in the storyline/plot, dialogue, character development, setting, and images of the produced media.

The purpose of this toolkit is to:

1. Raise the awareness of media content producers on what to consider when producing gender sensitive media content and provide them with guidelines for developing socially conscious plots/storylines, characters, advertising, etc.

2. Enable media professionals (e.g. critics, reviewers, etc.) to perform deeper, more socially conscious evaluations of media productions.

3. Complement existing media monitoring efforts and counter misconceptions with insights and guidelines about gender sensitive and healthy representations women and of masculinities and manhood.[9]

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[7] NorthWestern University (2016). Media Use in the Middle East. Available at: http://www.mideastmedia.org/survey/2016/chapter/television/
[8] Who makes the News? (2015) What is Media Monitoring? Available at: http://whomakesthenews.org/mediamonitoring
[9] MENA Media Monitoring. URL: http://menamediamonitoring.com/en/category/reports/-

1.1.   Who Can Use This Toolkit?

Gender media monitoring can be performed by both **media producers** and **media viewers**. Media producers have a responsibility to the public for the messages they disseminate, and their participation in such an exercise by **self-monitoring** is a direct and effective way to reduce harmful gender-related messaging. **When referring to Key Media Producers, the following groups are included:**

- Screenwriters
- Directors
- Producers
- Actors/Actresses
- Journalists
- News producers
- Marketers/Advertisers
- Editors

On the other hand, media viewers (both media influencers and audiences) are critical for **holding media producers accountable** for the messages they disseminate. **When referring to Key Media Viewers, the following groups are included:**

- Academics
- Film critics
- Groups, organizations, and festivals that recognize achievements in the film industry
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- UN personnel
- Organizations and individuals who fund media projects/ the arts

2. Why Media Monitoring Matters: The Landscape of Gender in the Media

The media industry plays a critical role in representing, reinforcing, and even introducing cultural concepts, attitudes, behaviors, and norms. The selection of specific stories, language, points of view and perspectives by the media is usually affected by the society and environment in which the content developers are socialized. With the use of positive or negative character portrayals, these selections can communicate messages about what is "normal" and accepted in society. Actors, especially superstars, are often seen as role models by generations of viewers who admire and may aspire to duplicate their lifestyle, appearance, language, and behavior.

"Gender Definitions." UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming and Implementation Framework. (2003). URL:
http://portal.unesco.org/en/files/11483/10649049699Definitions.doc/Definitions.doc
"Gender Analysis Toolkit" by Queensland Government (2009). URL:
https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/communityservices/women/resources/gender-analysis/genderanalysis-toolkit.pdf
Who makes the News? (2015) What is Media Monitoring? URL: http://whomakesthenews.org/media-monitoring - "Mission Possible: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit" (2008). URL:
http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/AdvocacyEducationTools/mediaadvocacytoolkit_wacc_2008.pdf

Through television, films and advertising, viewers unconsciously absorb particular social notions that can be either positive or negative, including gender roles and gender stereotypes that are deliberately or non- deliberately reinforced by the media[10]. Voluntarily or involuntarily, the media sends overt and subliminal messages through its content that underpin cultural notions about acceptable gender roles, notions of masculinities, acceptable forms of violence, and normalized gender relations.

Despite recently growing efforts, media has not been adequately utilized as a tool to enhance the portrayal and acceptance of gender equal relations, especially in the Arab region. Any efforts at intentional positive portrayals of gender roles and relations have mostly been individual efforts, i.e. an extension of the personal beliefs of the producers, editors, writers, and actors. Through the help of systematic and regular gender media monitoring and the recommendations of how men and women should be portrayed, producers can challenge common negative depictions and replace them with alternative, positive depictions that promote gender equality, mutual respect, healthy relationships between genders, and combat violence against women. Recognizing media as a powerful tool for socialization will allow us to utilize it for creating positive change.

In order to determine how women and men are represented in entertainment media, Ahead of the Curve on behalf of UN Women conducted an extensive review of existing studies, and a thorough examination of 10 Ramadan series produced in Egypt from different genres that were aired in 2016 and 2017. The choice of Egypt was based on the fact that it is a key player within the Arab media production industry, and Egyptian media content is viewed regionwide.[11] Given the great influence of the Egyptian media on the whole Arab region, findings and conclusions from the analyzed Egyptian series are safe to mainstream for the region.[12] The analysis focused on the following key themes: representing women, representing men, and representing relationships between men and women.[13] As the below sub-sections demonstrate, summaries of the findings, paired with supporting international literature, point to the dominance of negative stereotypes in media and reinforce the critical importance of better understanding them. Detailed findings can be read in the stand-alone report on the conducted media monitoring exercise.

2.1. Representing Women

Research in the US has shown that men occupy more screen time than women, resulting in a gender imbalance of representation in both news and TV shows. Findings also revealed that male characters in TV shows and movies received double (28.5%) the amount of screen time compared

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[10] Wood,J.(1997). Gendered Media: The Influence of Media on Views of
Gender. Department of Communication, University of North Carolina at Chapel Retrieved from:
https://www.nyu.edu/classes/jackson/causes.of.gender.inequality/Readings/Wood%20-%20Gend ered%20Media%20-%2094.pdf
[11] Tutton, Mark. CNN (2011). "Egypt's cultural influence pervades Arab world."
http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/02/12/egypt.culture.influence.film/index.html
[12] An average of 71% of nationals in Lebanon, Tunisia, UAE, KSA, and Qatar watch TV shows produced elsewhere in the Arab region. NorthWestern University (2016). Media Use in the Middle East. Available at:
http://www.mideastmedia.org/survey/2016/chapter/television/
[13] Inspired by the structure followed by Wood, J. (1994). Gendered Media: The influence of media on views of gender. [ebook] North Carolina, USA: University of North Carolina, pp.32-38. https://www1.udel.edu/comm245/readings/GenderedMedia.pdf

to women (16%) and male characters' speaking durations are double those of female speaking durations. Moreover, in films with male leads, male characters' screen time and speaking duration are almost triple than those of female characters.[14]

Research also shows that globally, females appear less on the screen not only in TV shows and movies but also in the news. The majority of the quoted stories of daily events are of males. The lack of space women occupy on screen promotes the normalization of a culture that is male-centric.[15] This is aggravated by the fact that certain groups of females receive even less representation in the media, such as elderly women, women of ethnic/racial minorities, women with different sexual orientations, and women with disabilities.[16]

The underrepresentation of women in media happens both on screen and behind the scenes, as most media creators – i.e. producers, writers, and directors – are men. Globally, only 11% of directors of the top 250 films in 2017 were women.[17] In Egypt, only 9% of the production crew of the Egyptian Ramadan series analyzed were females. This means that media is more likely to tell stories from a male perspective.

Moreover, women are often presented in both global and Egyptian media (especially TV shows, series, ads, and films) as sex/beauty objects or victims. Women who do not confine to stereotypical gender roles are often depicted as "deviants". In TV shows and films, women receive significantly more comments regarding their appearance or weight than do men.[18] Based on the conducted analysis of Egyptian Ramadan TV series,[19] women are mostly portrayed either as housewives, or as occupying what are stereotypically believed to be female jobs, such as teachers, nurses, secretaries, etc.[20] Whenever portraying a household, it is usually the female (mother, wife, daughter, sister) who is doing – or expected to do - household chores like cooking, cleaning, tidying, or doing laundry. As for women working outside the home, it is less common to see women as engineers, doctors, ministers, or policy-makers. Women are also often portrayed as soft, naïve, emotional characters, often concerned with shopping, their physical appearance, or other "superficial" issues. Women's conversations mostly revolve around marriage, kids, and household affairs, with little emphasis on their aspirations, dreams, and ambitions.

[14] Wambui, K. ITU News Magazine (2016). How can we close the digital gender gap? https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itus/opb/gen/S-GEN-NEWS-2016-P4-PDF-E.pdf
[15] WACC (n.d.) "Mission Possible: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit." http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-thenews/Imported/images/advocacy_toolkit/toolkit_module_2.pdf
[16] Morna, Colleen. UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) (2002). "Promoting gender equality in and through the media. A Southern African case study" (p. 3) http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/media2002/reports/EP5Morna.PDF
[17] Lauzen, Martha M. (2018). "The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind the Scenes Employment of Women on the Top 100, 250, and 500 Films of 2017." http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2018/01/2017_Celluloid_Ceiling_Report.pdf
[18] Wood, J. Gendered Media: The influence of media on views of gender [ebook] (1994). North Carolina, USA: University of North Carolina, pp.32-38. https://www1.udel.edu/comm245/readings/GenderedMedia.pdf
[19] This study is part of the same exercise under the auspices of UN Women that includes the production of this toolkit at hand. 21 Psychology Today (2015). Are women more emotional than men? Available at: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sexual-personalities/201504/are-women-more-emotional-men
[20] Devon, 2017. You are your looks: that's what society tells girls. No wonder they're depressed https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/22/girls-looks-teach-children-appearance-stereotypes

Misconception	Fact
Women are very emotional, more so than men	Both women and men experience emotions at different levels. Some emotions are actually more prevalent in men. [21]
Women are helpless, incompetent, and dependent on men	Women can have the same set of skills, abilities, confidence, and competence as men. They are often socialized into having less confidence, which should not be equated with being less competent
Women are superficial and obsessed with their appearance and beauty standards	Women are socialized to having their value lying in their physical appearance.

2.2.   Representing Men

The ways in which men are represented in entertainment/media can also be harmful to both men and women as the media reinforces stereotypical notions of masculinity. By portraying men as strong, violent, macho/aggressive, and unemotional, the media implies that men are not supposed to express emotions. Based on the conducted analysis of Egyptian Ramadan TV series, adult males are portrayed as responsible for their female relatives/friends, and they often engage in violent confrontations in order to protect their family and their manhood. Males are also mostly portrayed as having full control over and bearing the financial responsibility for their families.

Finally, men are often portrayed as driven by their sexual desires, which facilitates the objectification of women or is used to legitimize minimal accountability for male acts of sexual harassment/violence. Depicting women's bodies as objects that seduce men contributes to normalizing the harassment of women and is used to excuse/justify physical harassment/assault and rape. According to the analysis and international literature, both Egyptian and global media contribute to reinforcing harmful myths about men and masculinity. Examples are provided in the table below.

Misconception	Fact
Men are not emotional	Young boys are socialized into hiding their emotions since showing emotions is considered weak. Men are born with the same emotional capacity to hold emotions as women are.[22]
Men are obsessed and controlled by their sexual drives	Both men and women have sexual desires, and men have the physical capacity to curtail their desires.
Men are aggressive by nature	Men are socialized into the aggressive behavior, relating it to notions of masculinity.[25]

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[21] Simon, R. and Nath, L. American Journal of Sociology (2004). "Gender and Emotion in the United States: Do Men and Women Differ in Self-reports of Feelings and Expressive Behavior?"
[22] ibid. 25 Omar, Audrey R. Iowa Research Online (2011). "Masculinity and the acceptance of violence: a study of social construction." https://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2433&context=etd

Men are not good at and should not interfere in child nurturing	Men have the same capacity as women to raise children. A present and involved father is important for child development.[23]

2.3. Representing Relationships between Men and Women

While analyzing individual gender portrayals in the Egyptian Ramadan series of 2016 and 2017, we also examined portrayals of how women and men engage in relationships with each other. Notably, similar research in other countries (in the region and worldwide) has yielded similar findings. The analysis yielded the following five main themes that reflect gender stereotypes and normalize gender-based violence:

Women as Dependent on Men: women are usually portrayed as submissive, striving for men's responsiveness, and dependent on men in social situations and for financial needs. On the other hand, men are often represented as independent figures who manage their social and financial issues independently. This leads to the portrayal of a dynamic where men are seen as condescending, superior, inconsiderate, and controlling of women.

Women as Caregivers, Men as Breadwinners: A division of gender roles is usually reinforced in media, where women are depicted as caregivers who are occupied by household chores and child-nurturing responsibilities, while men's primary role is financially providing for their families. Very few men are portrayed sharing household responsibilities with their wives. Career-women are often depicted as either incompetent at work because of their pre-occupation with their families, or as having failed marriage relationships, and not satisfying their husbands.

Men as Authoritative, Women as Incompetent: Even if unintentionally, the analysis of Egyptian Ramadan TV series shows that men are usually depicted as the proficient authority and the problem-solvers and decision makers, while women are often shown as inept, helpless, and emotionally ridden when facing any problem. Thus, men are often portrayed as the "rescuers" whom women need to solve problems.

Men as Aggressors, Women as Victims: women are often depicted as objects that satisfy men's sexual desires. They are often characterized with a set of attributes like powerlessness, beauty, sensuality, and submission, which are similar qualities that may portray women as victims. Dominance, sexuality, aggression, and strength are the common qualities that characterize manhood and may also characterize men as aggressors.

Boys and Girls as Men and Women in the Making: young boys are presented as men in the making, accordingly the same traits seen as desirable in men are transferred to young boys, such as being tough, not showing emotion, taking on responsibility over female family members. The situation is the same for young girls, who should be modest and demure, focused on their appearance, concerned with caregiving, and having their ultimate goal be marriage.

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[23] Honig, Alice S. Early Child Development and Care Volume 178 (2008). " Supporting men as fathers, caregivers, and educators." https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03004430802352020?journalCode=gecd20

2.3.1. Normalizing Gender-Based Violence

Media plays a role in perpetuating stereotypes that reinforce attitudes and behaviors that negatively impact both genders, particularly women. By portraying violence against women or among men, the media communicates the acceptance/normalization of violence as this violence does not have any consequence, by facing legal or societal retaliation.

Women are often expected to accept this violence for the sake of their households and in many cases blamed for the violence they endure. Such messaging can discourage women from defending themselves and rejecting such abuses in their own lives. As one report by Julia Wood titled "The Influence of Media on Views of Gender" notes: "*the heavy exposure to media violence within relationships tends to normalize it, so that abuse and violence are considered natural parts of love and sex.*"[24]

The table below provides examples of regularly found misconceptions in both fictional and non-fictional media productions that need to be identified and addressed as they reinforce harmful notions surrounding sexual harassment, sexual violence, and domestic violence:

Misconception	Fact
Women enjoy being cat-called and other forms of sexual acts (teasing, glances, comments, touches)	Most women reject and despise sexual harassment. They deem it humiliating and intimidating.[25]
Acts of sexual harassment are harmless acts of flirtation.	Sexual harassment is defined as any form of uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature and it is often offensive, humiliating and/or intimidating. [26] Men are less likely than women to perceive certain behaviors and actions towards women as sexual harassment.[27]
Women who are perceived as "dressing provocatively" are asking for sexual advances by men.	Women should have the freedom to move and dress freely without being subjected to any threat or form of violence. Shifting blame away from the perpetrator and onto the victim can be psychologically debilitating for the victim. Moreover, absolving perpetrators of accountability for their actions can perpetuate a regressive society.
Acts of sexual harassment on the street are a way of expressing masculinity.	The freedom to express oneself should never be at the cost of limiting someone else's rights/freedoms. Healthy notions of masculinity, just like any other form of self-identification, cannot depend on the discomfort, degradation, humiliation, intimidation, or any other form of emotional or

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[24] Wood, J. Gendered Media: The influence of media on views of gender [ebook] (1994). North Carolina, USA: University of North Carolina, pp.32-38. https://www1.udel.edu/comm245/readings/GenderedMedia.pdf 28 UN Women, Understanding Masculinities; Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES): Middle East and North Africa (2017).

[25] Reach Out. (n.d.). "What is Sexual Harassment." https://au.reachout.com/articles/what-is-sexual-harassment

[26] Merriam Webster. "Sexual Harassment." https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sexual%20harassment

[27] Sweeney, D. The Sacramento Bee. (2017). "One in four U.S. men say exposing yourself isn't sexual harassment, survey finds." *http://www.sacbee.com/news/nation-world/national/article187512098.html*

Misconception	Fact
	physical harm of women or any other group of people. Failing to depict acts of sexual harassment as problematic promotes a sexist and patriarchal environment that perpetuates male control over female bodies and choices.
Men are sexually harassing women because of the deteriorating economic situation in which they can't afford to get married.	Research has shown that men from various backgrounds (including affluent and married men) participate in sexual harassment, which refutes the myth that sexual harassment occurs because of sexual repression and/or an inability to get married. IMAGES MENA research shows that younger men and men with more education are actually more likely to engage in sexual harassment on the street.[28]
Rape is caused by the way women dress.	Women should have the freedom to move and dress freely without being subjected to any threat or form of violence; the majority of rape incidents are planned in advance and are not perpetrated by strangers[29]. All females, regardless of how they dress, how they look, or how/ where they walk can be subjects of rape.[30]
Rapists are abnormal or mentally ill individuals.	Research has not shown any differences in rapists' relationships, attitudes, or patterns of behavior.[31]
Rape is only experienced by female youth.	Older females, males, and male and female children are also prone to rape.
There is no rape within marriage	Marital rape is a form of rape that entails nonconsensual sexual intercourse between a married couple.[32]

3. Gender Media Monitoring Framework

3.1. Media Producers

Media Producers can use the contents and indicators in this toolkit to ensure that their productions are more gender sensitive throughout the media production process – from the writing phase to the editing phase. As a media producer:

a) When making production decisions (e.g. writing dialogue, casting, etc.), ask yourself critical questions (such as those provided in section 4) regarding how you may be portraying gender roles, relations, and stereotypes, and how you can ensure that the messaging related to such portrayals is promoting gender equality

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[28] Promundo & UNWOMEN. (2017). "Understanding Masculinities: Results from the IMAGES Study" *https://imagesmena.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/05/IMAGES-MENA-Multi-Country-Report-EN-16May2017web.pdf*
[29] Rape and Abuse Crisis Center. (n.d.). "Myths and Facts about Sexual Assault." Retrieved from: https://www.raccfm.com/files/sexual%20assault.pdf
[30] Ibid.,
[31] University of Michigan. (2018). "Understanding the Perpetrator." *https://sapac.umich.edu/article/196*
[32] Rape and Abuse Crisis Center. (n.d.). "Myths and Facts about Sexual Assault." *https://www.raccfm.com/files/sexual%20assault.pdf*

E.g. When portraying domestic violence, ensure that such acts are depicted as unacceptable and resisted by focusing on male and female positive deviants who explicitly reject violence

E.g. When casting for an advertisement for a household cleaning product, cast male alongside female actors to depict husbands sharing in household chores

b) When reviewing/editing media content, identify potentially harmful images/messaging and replace with content that promotes gender equality

E.g. In scenes where a female character is faced with hardship or danger, ensure that she is demonstrating agency, leadership, and courage rather than helplessness and fear

E.g. Where it does not affect the plot, replace stereotypically "feminine" professions for female characters with stereotypically "masculine" professions that require leadership, high technical capabilities, and a high degree of career commitment (e.g. doctor, engineer, lawyer, etc.)

E.g. *Consider casting men outside of stereotypically male professions, and cast them in 'feminine' professions that imply caregiving and nurturing instead, such as secretaries, primary school teachers, housekeepers, etc.*

c) Identify where there is a lack of representation and work to achieve equality and diversity in representation, across genders, age groups, disabilities, etc. Focus on giving positive screen time to characters representing marginalized groups.

E.g. provide female actors with more meaningful screen-time or dialogue

3.1.1. Recommendations for Media Producers

In order to properly address harmful gender biases in media, media outlets should be capitalized upon to raises social awareness about gender equality and reflect the importance of mutual respect between men and women. Alongside efforts from civil society, serious commitment from key players in the media industry is needed to challenge people's perceptions about what is culturally acceptable and what isn't and disrupt social norms.

Providing media content that actually shows men and women going through a transformation in attitudes and behaviors is an extremely effective way of creating resonance with viewers, and in turn influencing change in viewer attitudes. It is important here to note that there is no tradition of age-restricting television viewing in the region, and children regularly watch adult television shows. Therefore, media producers should carefully consider their representations of children, to insure that boy and girl characters are given the same agency, opportunities, and responsibilities.

Below are some positive examples that writers, directors, and producers can refer to during the production of media material – especially TV shows, series, and films. These recommended depictions are meant to replace current ones that have been observed in the study of 10 Egyptian Ramadan series in 2016 and 2017. These recommendations contribute to the positive portrayal of women and of healthy notions of masculinity as well as the promotion of gender equal relations:

Current Depictions (Observed in the Study)	Recommended Depictions
Misrepresentation of Gender Relations and Roles	
Occupational Segregation: men portrayed in scientific and managerial roles (doctors, engineers, managers), and women depicted in nursing, teaching, secretary, or housewives).	More women should be depicted in decision-making positions. Women should be depicted as leaders/managers and in scientific jobs. Men should also be depicted in "typically feminine jobs" like nurses, teachers, and secretaries in order to avoid reinforcing occupational segregation.
Women are usually disparaged as too emotional or soft and lacking in rationality, while men are rarely depicted as emotional.	More men should be depicted as expressive of emotions: allowing themselves to be vulnerable, crying, and empathizing, while more women should be depicted as rational and able to make their own decisions.
Household chores and domesticity affairs are usually presented as being conducted by women alone (cleaning, cooking, washing dishes) while men are usually absent from the household (either at work or out with friends) expecting to return from work to find dinner served and the house tidied.	There should be more portrayal of men equally sharing domestic responsibilities without portraying this act as a favor or optional extra mile.
Independent/ career-oriented women tend to have unsuccessful relationships/failed marriages, or are engaged in unlawful affairs.	More successful career women should be portrayed and depicted as having successful relationships/ well-established marriages.
Women are usually attracted to men who are aggressive, uncommitted, brutal, or dishonest.	It should be depicted that understanding, expressive, and emotionally mature men are appealing to women.
Women with certain beauty standards (e.g. thin with long hair, curvy thighs, and big breasts) are the ones wanted/admired by men.	It should be depicted that women are loved for their character, charisma, sense of humor, independence, or personality regardless of their appearance.
It is culturally acceptable for a man to cheat on his wife, and she is advised by everyone around her to forgive in order to save her marriage, but not vice-versa. Sometimes the wife is even blamed for not taking good care of herself or of her husband's needs.	Cheating should be deemed as unacceptable behavior morally and culturally equally by both men and women. Women who have been cheated on by their husbands should have the liberty and be encouraged by their communities to take a stand and decide for themselves

	the fate of their relationship and be supported by her family and community for doing so.
Marriage is depicted as the ultimate objective in women's lives, while singleness for males is depicted as a privilege and peace of mind.	Marriage should be depicted as equally a woman's and man's choice, not as something culturally imposed. Marriage should define the value of women or men, or the way society views individuals.
A woman to woman conversation usually revolves around men, marriage, shopping, or beauty products.	Women's conversations should include more topics about their career, aspirations, ambitions, and things they want to learn and achieve in their lives.

Gender Based Violence

Men's use of violence against women is usually shown as normal and justified, and women are told/expected to accept it.	Violence against women should either be absent from creative media or should focus on both male and female positive deviants who oppose and resist it.
Male violence: aggression and violence are portrayed as signs of manhood and masculinity, and the stronger party is always praised and celebrated.	Male violence should be discouraged and portrayed as unnecessary aggression.
Young men are often portrayed as ambitious and violent; young women portrayed as naïve, lacking ambition, and aspiring for marriage.	Young men and young women should be portrayed as equally ambitious, with equal competence levels.

Under-Representation of Females in Production

9% of the production crews of the Ramadan series are females	Media producers should intentionally recruit more females as script writers, directors, or codirectors in order to make sure both male and female perspectives are represented in the content being created

Terminology and Phrases

"Man up": terminology is most often used when men express their feelings whether it's fear, sadness, remorse, etc.	Expressions like "let it out" or "it's okay to feel that way" should be used to inform men that it is healthy to have and express emotions.
Curse words are usually related to women and their sexuality (e.g. "your mother is a whore), while any attributes related to femininity are usually considered an insult to men.	Curse words that attack a woman's reputation or status is degrading and should be discouraged, frowned upon, or eliminated.
Women who do not abide by society's gender norms, e.g. behave aggressively or are career-oriented, are usually referred to as masculine.	Women's personalities differ – there is no one size that fits all. Women shouldn't be judged or referred to as

	masculine because they defy society's expectations. Femininity should be related to success as well.
Older women who are not yet married are usually referred to as "maidens" and depicted as undesirable.	Women who do not get married should not be labeled or seen as having a disability or defect. Rather, marriage should be portrayed as a woman's choice and not a defining factor of her life.

3.2.   Media Viewers

Media viewers can use this framework to study, monitor, and critique existing media in order to develop recommendations for the media industry, and third party solutions to the social impacts of gender-biased media. This toolkit can help media viewers to:

a) Produce research on the realities and effects of gender representation in the media and assess the implications/potential harm of gender blind media content, including assessing what has been accomplished over time with regards to addressing gender balance in media content; and following up on changes in public perceptions and reactions.

b) Pressure media producers through various avenues to create gender sensitive and gender transformative content; and to produce codes of conduct

c) Sensitize the public to perpetuation of gender stereotypes in the media

3.2.1.   Setting-Up the Monitoring Exercise (Methodology)

1. **Gather and prepare the media monitoring team.** As a result of the accumulation of cultural experiences and messaging, all individuals have conscious and unconscious biases. It is crucial when analyzing any source of media to try to distance oneself from those biases in order to ensure an analysis that is as objective as possible. This can be done by:

   • Familiarizing the media observers with the term "media monitoring," the rationale behind the approach, and the foundations of gender-based analysis (as outlined in sections 1-2);

   • Making sure all media observers have a good knowledge and critical understanding of gender-related issues;

   • Ask media observers to reflect on their own biases and do their best to avoid assumptions based on preconceived notions and be as critical as possible;

   • If possible, more than one person should monitor the same media product, preferably from both genders;

   • Familiarizing the media observers with the demographics and backgrounds of the producers of the media product to help them obtain a well-rounded understanding

of the product's content and how biases could potentially be embedded (see section 4).

2. **Set selection criteria** for the media products that will be used for analysis.

3. **Define and test the indictors** and any analysis framework to be used with the team (for guidance, refer to section 4). This will help align team members for a more consistent analysis, identify any gaps that need to be highlighted or addressed, and come up with any interesting approaches to be considered.

4. **Determine a standardized data collection format** in order to facilitate comparable data and effective analysis over time.

5. Before beginning the monitoring exercise, it is useful to **gather data on basic characteristics of the media product** that can be helpful for drawing correlations and conclusions later on. Examples of these include:

- Date of production/release
- Demographics (age, gender, racial/ethnic background) of the media producers
- Genre of the media product (comedy, romance, non-fiction, action, etc.)
- Plot characteristics, such as:
  - Setting (time/era, location, rural vs. urban)
  - Main themes (e.g. love, redemption, transformation, justice)
- Target audience

6. All collected data can be inputted into tailored spreadsheets, similar to the examples included in Annex 1. The team of researchers can then work on aggregating the frequencies for the selected indicators, as well as qualitatively coding the key themes that emerge. Key insights would then be synthesized into written reports, and/or audiovisual material summarizing key findings, depending on the monitoring exercise's objectives.

4. Suggested Media Indicators & Critical Questions

Media varies by medium (e.g., films, television shows, news programs, advertising, etc.), so it is useful to have standard indicators for monitoring media content that can be applied across different mediums. This section provides and extensive list of overarching indicators as well as critical questions to help you define specific indicators for quantitative analysis as well as for qualitative analysis. For example, if the overarching indicator is "prominence by gender," an example of a specific indicator may be "ratio of male to female characters."

It is important to note that not all the indicators are solely gathering data on gender, but also depictions of race, class, sexuality, age, and able-ness. The purpose of this is to identify other biases and representation issues that intersect with gender. One of the most important elements of analysis during the data is to consider the implications/potential harm of the stereotypes present in the work. It is also important to examine how the work covers topics related to

sensitive issues such as the/personal status laws, child marriage, inheritance rights, divorce, nationality? Media production could play an important role in promote gender equality relating to these issues.

The list provided below is a guideline and can/should be tailored based on the specific purpose of the media monitoring exercise being conducte

Overarching Indicator	
Characters & Traits	
Prominence by Gender	How many main characters/protagonists are male vs. female? How many secondary characters are male vs. female? How much screen time/speaking time do female characters occupy vs. male characters?
Prominence by Age/ Race/ Class/ Physical Ability / Sexuality	What is the age of the main characters (male vs. female)? How many characters are played by racial minorities? What are their roles? Which and how many of these characters are women? How many female vs. male characters are depicted as being rich vs. poor, and what are their personality traits? Are there any characters with physical or mental disabilities? How are they being portrayed? Are they male or female? Are there any characters portrayed as homosexual? How are they portrayed and how are other characters behaving towards them? How are girls and boys portrayed.
Degree of Masculinity / Femininity	How is each of the main characters portrayed in terms of his/her own masculinity/femininity? How is their masculinity/ femininity commented upon from other characters? How does that reflect on their way of speech, behavior, relationships, and the way they are received by society?
Sexualization of Characters	
Wardrobe / Dress/ Appearance	How are characters shown in traditional clothing portrayed and commented upon? Compare male vs. female characters Which female characters are dressed religiously (e.g. wearing a veil/hijab)? How are they portrayed and what are their roles? How do they compare to other women who are not dressed as "conservatively" in terms of occupation, family relations, and reactions towards violence? Which characters are being sexualized/objectified, and how are they dressed? Which female characters are perceived by other characters to be beautiful/attractive/desirable and which are perceived to be unattractive/undesirable? How are they dressed? Are any female or male characters are perceived to be seductive in a cunning way? How are they dressed? How do strong, respected female characters dress vs. negatively depicted female characters?
Desirability by Physical Appearance	What are the physical attributes of characters portrayed and commented on as sexually desirable? Compare male vs. female Which characters are portrayed as desirable in a non-sexual way (e.g. likable, respectable, etc.)? What are their physical attributes (male vs. female)?
Presence of Nudity	Are there any male/female characters shown nude? For what purpose?

Gender Roles	
Household Roles	Who is caring for children (male vs. female)? Who is caring for elderly people (male vs. female)? Are male characters shown as sharing in any household chores? Are they asked or expected to do so? Are they presented in a positive or negative light? Is their caregiving lauded or ridiculed? Who is managing household finances (male vs. female)? Which characters are contributing to the household income? Describe gender, age, social class, and occupation
Balance of Power in the Private Sphere	In each household, who is shown as having decision-making power on family affairs? Who is portrayed as submissive? How and to who? Which characters are portrayed as dominant? How and over who? Are they being resisted vs. applauded? What are men and women's access to and control over resources (land rights, property, access to taking a loan/credit, etc)
Familial Responsibility by Gender	Which characters are making sacrifices for their families? Is it voluntary or involuntary? Is it expected? Appreciated? Who is expected to bear financial responsibility for the households? Is it voluntary or involuntary? Is it appreciated? Is work-life balance commented upon? How often for males vs. females? What is the occupation and relationship status of characters portrayed as mismanaging the balance? Which characters receive comments or judgments related to their performance towards their families?
Professionalism / Career by Gender	Which characters are portrayed as competitive? Compare male vs female Which characters are portrayed as ambitious/driven? Male vs. female Which characters are portrayed as having full-time jobs? Male vs. female Which characters are portrayed as skilled vs. unskilled technically? Male vs. female What is the field of work of each character (by gender)? Which characters are shown in leadership positions? Which are shown as competent leaders (male vs. female)? Which leaders are being challenged? By whom? Male vs. female Do female characters with careers have successful/healthy relationships and family lives? Are independent career women portrayed positively or negatively? Do they face criticism from other characters? Are they sexually liberal?
Meaningfulness of Conversations by Gender	Is the show passing the Bechdel-Wallace test?[33] Do females conduct meaningful conversations? Do men conduct meaningful conversations? How often are female conversations about men, the home, gossip, or superficial topics such as shopping/beauty? How often are male conversations about work, money, power? What are exclusively male conversations focused on, as opposed to exclusively female conversations.

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[33] The Bechdel-Wallace test is a test of fictional media, a show/ episode passes the test if it has two named women talking together about something other than a man.

Prejudice/Discrimination	
Perpetuation of Prejudice / Discrimination	How often is sexism perpetuated? By whom? Is it portrayed as acceptable or unacceptable? Are slurs used against women and minority groups? By whom? Is it portrayed as acceptable or unacceptable? How often is gender-based discrimination/prejudice portrayed? Do any characters demonstrate other types of prejudice/discrimination such as racism, classism, able-ism, homophobia, etc.? Is this prejudice/discrimination directed towards male or female characters?
Experience of Prejudice / Discrimination	Which characters are most affected by sexism? What are their profiles/ demographics? Which characters are most affected by other forms of prejudice/discrimination? What are their profiles/ demographics? Are characters affected by prejudice/discrimination expected to accept such treatment? Do they stand up against it? Do other characters/society offer them support / solidarity / empathy / sympathy / pity? Do others take action to stop it?
Degree of Agency	How acceptable is sexual agency? Which characters are portrayed as having sexual agency? How? Is their sexual agency portrayed as positive/acceptable or not? Which characters are portrayed as having romantic agency (initiating and managing romantic non-sexual relationships)? Is romantic agency encouraged for male vs. female characters? Are casual relationships acceptable? Which characters are involved in non-committing/casual relationships and how are they portrayed (male vs. female)? How are they/their relationships perceived by those around them? How are non-marital sexual relations perceived? Which characters are demonized for having them (male vs. female)?
Violence & Aggression	
Presence / Frequency of Violence - Between Men	Which characters are portrayed as aggressive in a positive way vs. in a negative way? How and why? How are they perceived? Which characters perpetrate acts of violence? Why? Are they considered to be justified? Are they encouraged/celebrated or reprimanded? How often do men vs. women resort to violence to deal with problems?
Presence / fFequency of Violence - Against Women	Who perpetrates acts of domestic violence? Who are the main victims? Only female partners? Children? How often? Is this considered acceptable/justified? How do women who experience domestic violence from their partners react to such violence? How are they expected/told to react by the people around them? Which characters perpetrate acts of physical violence towards women who are not their wives/partners? What is their relationship to the victim? How is this violence portrayed and reacted to? In what situations (if any) do women perpetrate acts of violence? Against whom (other women? Men? Children?)
Presence / Frequency of Sexual Violence	Which characters perpetrate acts of sexual violence (including sexual harassment)? What are their demographics? How are these characters and acts portrayed? What is the motivation or reason given for the violence? Are these acts considered acceptable or forgivable? Are perpetrators of sexual violence reprimanded or punished? How? Who are the main victims of sexual violence (including harassment)? How do they react to such violence? How are they expected/told to react by people around them?

	Are victims of sexual violence blamed or considered to be partially responsible for the violence they experienced? Is this portrayed as acceptable?
Presence / Frequency of Violence Against Children	How often is violence towards children portrayed? How and why? Is violence towards children portrayed as acceptable/justified? How do the other characters react towards such violence? What is the relationship of the perpetrator to the child?
Level of Association of Violence to Masculinity	When do men resort to violence to deal with problems? Is violence perpetrated by the protagonist or the antagonist (or both)? Are acts of violence portrayed as a show of strength? What type of violence? Against who? Do male characters use violence to protect female characters? Is this expected? Considered heroic? Do male characters use violence to protect their own or their family's "honor"? Is this expected? Considered heroic? Is this notion of honor somehow related to a female character? Do male characters use violence towards their partners/female family members to establish their dominant role as "the man"? Is this considered acceptable/justified?
Level of Social Acceptance of Violence	When is violence considered heroic by the characters/society? When is violence considered necessary by the characters/society? When is violence considered justified by the characters/society? When is violence considered forgivable by the characters/society? When is violence considered unacceptable by the characters/society? When are acts of violence socially reprimanded or legally punished? Are their certain types of violence that are more acceptable than others (e.g. fist fighting vs. using weapons)?
Presence or Frequency of Emotional Abuse	Which characters are emotionally abusive? For what reason? How is this perceived by other characters? Compare male vs. female characters Which characters experience emotional abuse? What is their reaction/behavior towards it? Are they expected to tolerate/accept it?
Implications	
Implications	What is the overall theme/message the work transfers/implies regarding the categories above, as well as critical topics like personal status laws, child marriage, divorce, child custody, inheritance, sexual orientation, etc. and how can the treatment presented impact viewer attitudes and practices. e.g. If it can be perceived as condoning gender-based violence, what are the implications for women, men and children in society.

Annex 1. Sample Data Collection and Storage Templates

1. **Content Creators Table:**

	Director Name & Gender	Writer Name & Gender	Producer Name & Gender	Gender of the content creators	Average Age of the Crew
Series Name					

2. **Main Character Analysis Table:**

Name	Sex	Marital Status	Field of Work	Position	Decision Maker at Home?	Main Relational Roles[34] Is he/she a father/ mother/ son/ daughter/ husband/ wife…?

3. **Incidence of Violence Table:**

Type of Violence	Episode #	Describe the Scene
Domestic Violence against Women		
Domestic Violence against Men		
Domestic Violence against Children		
Sexual Harassment on the streets		
Street Violence		
Institutional Violence		
Crime-related Violence		

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[34] Relational role categories include: parent, child, ex or current husband/ wife, aunt/ uncle, grandparent, friend, co-worker, neighbor, friend, etc.

5. Annex 2. Useful Resources

1. UN Women Gender Equality Glossary URL: https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=&fullsearch=0&page=-1

2. "Gender Definitions." UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming and Implementation Framework. (2003). URL: http://portal.unesco.org/en/files/11483/10649049699Definitions.doc/Definitions.doc

3. "The Reel Truth: Women Aren't Seen or Heard An Automated Analysis of Gender Representation in Popular Films" By the Geena Davis Institute (2015). URL: https://seejane.org/wp-content/uploads/gdiq-reel-truth-women-arent-seen-or-heardautomated-analysis.pdf

4. "Gender Analysis Toolkit" by Queensland Government (2009). URL: https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/communityservices/women/resources/gender-analysis/gender-analysis-toolkit.pdf

5. "Immigration and Gender: Analysis of Media Coverage and Public Opinion" by The Opportunity Agenda (2012). URL: https://toolkit.opportunityagenda.org/documents/immigration-and-gender:-analysis-ofmedia-coverage-and-public-opinion_1378929028.pdf

6. "Gender mainstreaming strategies in decent work promotion: Programmatic tools" by International Labor Organization (2010). URL: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---srobangkok/documents/publication/wcms_143849.pdf

7. "Vibrant Communities; Gender and Poverty Project, Gener Analysis Tools" by Status of Women Canada. URL: http://focusintl.com/GD041-%20Gender%20Analysis%20Tools%20-%20Tamarack.pdf

8. "Who Makes the News?" (2015) Guides and Coding Tools? URL: http://whomakesthenews.org/media-monitoring/methodology-guides-and-coding-tools

UN Women is the un organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

UN WOMEN

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http://egypt.unwomen.org/en

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