



## REWRITING THE STORY

Media, Gender & Politics

### Call for Applications – Self-Nomination for Malaysian Journalists

#### *Rewriting the Story: Tackling Media Gender Stereotypes in Political & Public Life*

#### **Strengthening Malaysia's Media for Change (2020 – 2025)**

**Title:** “REWRITING THE STORY: MEDIA, GENDER & POLITICS IN MALAYSIA” - Tackling Media Gender Stereotypes in Political and Public Life in Malaysia

**Project:** Strengthening Malaysia's Media for Change Project implemented by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

**Funder:** European Commission (EC)

**Location:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

#### **About the IFJ training:**

How can journalists provide the public with the best quality gender aware reporting on politics?

This two-day training is a Training of Trainers (TOT) in the IFJ module “Rewriting the Story: Media, Gender & Politics” and is aimed to directly address barriers to the fair representation and portrayal of women and men in political life in Malaysia.

Working with frontline journalists, news media managers, journalists' unions and associations, gender experts, women active in political life, academics and, crucially, the next generation of media professionals, this IFJ-led national training of trainers is aimed to support a process of engagement, leadership and, ultimately, reforms in Malaysia's media with regard to newsroom culture, policies and processes. Trainers will be equipped to lead trainings within their networks or newsrooms and news organisations which improve the professional understanding and practices with regard to gender portrayal of women and men in political and public life. By taking a national approach on gender portrayal in political reporting, this work is aimed to empower citizens and the general public to make informed decisions, especially with regard to elections.

The national training will bring together a group of committed journalists from all over Malaysia who are keen to tackle this issue and help tailor national adaptation and creation of a “Malaysian Rewriting the Story” resource for journalists in Malaysian media. It is aimed to encourage journalists of all genders to reflect on their own news coverage and other coverage in their media pertaining to a diversity of representation in the media in politics and public life.

#### **Why Malaysian journalists need to tackle gender stereotypes in political and public life:**

In the 2024 World Economic Forum's (WEF) Gender Gap Index, Malaysia ranked 114th out of 146 countries, a drop of 12 places from the previous year. While Malaysia is ranked first (along with 28 other countries) in terms of gender equality in educational attainment, it still heavily struggles in other areas.

In the March 2024 report by *Utusan Malaysia*, it was highlighted that only 17 percent of Members of Parliament in Malaysia are women. Out of 222 seats in the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives), 192 are occupied by men, with women holding just 30. The Dewan Negara (Senate) shows similarly low representation, with only 8 of its 70 members being women. Despite Malaysia being home to many trailblazing female leaders, the political landscape remains heavily male-dominated.

One of the significant barriers to female participation in politics is overcoming entrenched patriarchal mindsets. Women politicians often face difficulties in being recognized for central leadership roles, despite their qualifications and capability. So too, women must contend with both societal and political patriarchy, making their journey into politics even more challenging.

### **Call for Applications: Nominations by journalists to the IFJ training certificate program**

The IFJ is calling for applications from all Malaysian journalists from all sectors of the media, particularly news leaders and journalists with strong interest or experience in gender, equality and diversity issues and/or experience in reporting and covering politics in Malaysia.

Up to 20 applicants will be selected as Malaysia national gender delegates to take part in the IFJ national training to be held in Kuala Lumpur on Friday, October 4 and Saturday, October 5, 2024.

Particular preference will be accorded to:

- Women and men working in the media sector who are considered leaders in the workplaces, unions, CSOs and/or gender sector;
- Journalists reporting on politics and local government or managing the coverage and assigning of stories in newsrooms;
- Activists and newsroom leaders committed to take the program outcomes back to their newsrooms and organisations to support local, national and regional programs.
- Journalists from outside KL are strongly encouraged to apply (including outside from Sabah and Sarawak). Travel and accommodation will be covered for participants travelling to the workshop who are successful in their application.

Other criteria strongly favoured in candidates will be:

- Effective communication and demonstrated capacity for skills sharing;
- Previous training experience;
- Fluency in English (written and spoken) as this meeting will be conducted entirely in English;
- Some involvement in union and journalists' training or activism;
- Balance in representation of delegates to represent a diversity of media including print, online, broadcast, community and regional media.

Applicants must submit the following to be eligible:

- a current **curriculum vitae (CV) and short bio**;
- a brief **300-word outline** – providing your reasons for applying to the program and your perspectives of media coverage of women in politics and public life in Malaysia and/or ways you would like to change the way newsrooms manage news content on reporting women in politics and public life.
- A small portfolio (one page, including links) of your own coverage on the issue, of stories and/or news content from your media house if you have not directly covered the issue.
- A current photograph of the participant (jpg or png)

### **Trainers:**

The training will be led by IFJ international expert Marie Palmer who developed the IFJ module. The module will also include inputs from key Malaysian gender journalists/experts and IFJ regional director and gender trainer, Jane Worthington.

### **Course Content:**

The training modules are composed of five key components :

- 1) understanding the qualitative and quantitative underrepresentation of female politicians in the media,
- 2) exploring issues such as gender newsworthiness,
- 3) framing a story through a gender lens and understanding the challenges facing women in positions of leadership where expectations are framed in exclusively masculine terms,
- 4) exploring the power of language choice,
- 5) Decoding multimodality and visual semiotics.

All modules are tackled with an intersectionality angle to ensure all aspects of discrimination against women are taken into account. A sixth component looks into training skills and tips to run the training.

### **Submission Instructions:**

Please send your expression of interest no later than September 26, 2024 to IFJ regional director, Jane Worthington at [jane.worthington@ifj-asia.org](mailto:jane.worthington@ifj-asia.org) with the subject "Rewriting the Story Application". Applications will be assessed as they are received. Note that we will only be able to contact successful applicants. Early application is strongly encouraged.

**Any applications received after September 26 cannot be guaranteed consideration for participation. Due to limited places for this meeting, not all nominations can be accepted.**

### **Additional Information about the IFJ's Malaysia project:**

The "Strengthening Malaysia's Media for Change" project (2020-2025) is building the capacity of civil society organisations to instigate and lead sustainable media development in Malaysia. Quality journalism is the bedrock of democracies and a defender of the rights and interests of civil society and the interests of media workers specifically. Through this action, the IFJ is supporting media CSOs, journalists and media organisations to take a strategic role in promoting and advancing a strong, independent and diverse media in Malaysia. This includes tackling gender and diversity issues in the media sector. Women remain underrepresented in media and, as a result, their perspectives are often ignored. Key challenges for women in media in Malaysia include traditional role division in newsrooms, restrictive working conditions and work-life balance, lack of mentoring and capacity-building opportunities, increasing safety concerns and sexual harassment (both offline and online), and insufficient legal and organisational protection.

The IFJ puts the [fight for gender equality](#) at the heart of its work and campaigns. Alongside unions and social movements across the world we are making the struggle against gender-based violence in the workplace a priority campaign. We are committed to a fair gender portrayal in the news. Based on our commitment to ethical journalism, we fight against discrimination and help support positive quality journalism by publishing reporting guidelines and promoting best practices.

The IFJ has already supported national programs in 11 EU member states in 2023 and 2024 and is now extending this work to Asia-Pacific.

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