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**QUOTE THIS WOMAN+**

**YEAR-END EVALUATION: 2022**

December 2022 | Final version

*Prepared by [ALT Advisory](#)*

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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This Evaluation Report reflects the views of the authors only and not that of Quote This Woman+.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALT Advisory was contracted in late 2022 to conduct a year-end evaluation for [Quote This Woman+](#), a non-profit organisation seeking to enhance the representation of women+ experts in the media and other public platforms. The evaluation was conducted from September to December 2022 with the objective of understanding the organisation's impact to date and identifying signposts to enhance future impact, taking into account the early stage and small size of the organisation.

The evaluation relied on a desktop review of internal documentation and qualitative interviews with key stakeholders to sketch a picture of how the organisation has made change in the ecosystem in which it operates.

The findings of the evaluation are summarised as follows:

<b>1. Relevance: how relevant is QW+ to the needs of journalists, women+ experts and the public?</b>
1.1. The gender gap exists in South African media
1.2. The gender gap likely has serious social consequences
1.3. QW+ meets the needs of journalists
1.4. QW+ meets the needs of experts
<b>2. Coherence: how well does QW+ fit in the eco-system?</b>
2.1. Other interventions seek to address a similar problem around the world, with no comparator in SA
2.2. QW+ addresses one of the main drivers of a lack of representation
2.3. QW+ aligns with international standards and trends
<b>3. Effectiveness: is QW+ achieving its objectives?</b>
3.1. Overall, it appears that QW+'s objectives have largely been met.
<b>4. Efficiency: how well are resources being used?</b>
4.1. Financial resources appear to be frugally used
4.2. Staff time is under strain and there may be areas for savings
<b>5. Impact: what difference does QW+ make in the world?</b>
5.1. More women+ and more diverse women+ are on the database
5.2. It is unclear whether more women+ are quoted in the media
5.3. Experts have widely varying experiences in being quoted
5.4. Quoted experts value the symbolism of being represented
5.5. Journalists generally know about the gender gap, but QW+ helps them keep it front of mind and to act
5.6. Journalists' use of QW+'s services is robust
5.7. Experts and journalists believe the inputs have shifted narratives
5.8. Women+ report career progression
5.9. It is unclear whether women+ feel more empowered and willing to engage with the media
<b>6. Sustainability: will the benefits last?</b>
6.1. Impacts appear likely to continue and to scale provided risks are addressed

## INTRODUCTION

### *About QW+*

Quote This Woman+ (QW+) is a non-profit company that works to advance gender transformation of the media landscape. It does this by curating an online database of woman+<sup>1</sup> experts from under-represented groups in society that is made available to vetted news journalists in order to diversify the pool of ‘expert’ voices who dominate the news media and deepen and nuance the news narratives in South African society. QW+ also lobbies journalists and other media decision-makers to broaden the pool of experts and sources with whom they engage. Finally, QW+ also offers media and communications training for database members and private clients to enhance the ability of women+ to engage with and represent themselves in the news media.

### *About the evaluation*

QW+ was founded in 2019 and began as a database of 30 women+ experts collated for news coverage of South Africa’s 2019 national elections. It has since grown to a community of over 700 experts accessed by journalists across the globe. During this time, QW+ has sought to not only make progress in achieving its objectives but also to develop and institutionalise the organisation. As a small and new organisation, which faced the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic less than a year after its launch, QW+ has shown commendable resilience, including success in securing funding from various philanthropic donors. Most notably, the Open Society Foundation (OSF) provided a grant to the organisation in January 2022. As part of this agreement, QW+ has commissioned this first impact evaluation to better understand its impact to date and areas for growth going forward.

ALT Advisory was contracted by QW+ in September 2022 to conduct the year-end evaluation with the objective of:

- Evaluating the progress made against the organisation’s objectives during the timeframe January to December 2022;
- Evaluating impact achieved or observed during that time in terms of improvements in women+’s representation in the media;
- Identifying areas of particular success and/or development for future growth and impact;
- Testing the validity of the existing Theory of Change and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Logframe;
- Making recommendations on an effective and meaningful M&E programme for the organisation, including an analysis of progress made to date.

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<sup>1</sup> In line with QW+’s own practices, we refer here to “women+” to indicate all people whose voices are traditionally marginalised and/or under-represented in the media, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community and others who identify with the initiative

- Contributing to the strategic development of the organisation by supporting an active and informed process of learning and reflection.

## METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is intended to provide a first-stage analysis of how well the organisation has implemented its intended activities and achieved its intended objectives, as well as an informed review of its tangible impact at this very early stage in its evolution. Given that the organisation remains new and small, the evaluation is not intended to provide definite conclusions on QW+'s long-term efficacy, but rather to inform its future development and strategic programming so as to maximise impact. The evaluation has considered all aspects of the organisation's work to date, including the use of the database and direct contact with QW+ staff by journalists, advocacy and engagement with media houses, journalists, and journalism schools, and the provision of media training and capacity-building to women+ experts.

Formally, the review is limited in scope to the 2022 year; however, for the sake of providing a richer understanding of the organisation's impact to date, a strict delineation has not been kept in this regard. This approach reflects an understanding that as a new organisation, QW+ has undergone rapid change and growth in its first three years.

### *Principles*

The evaluation has been conducted with the following principles in mind:

- **Objectivity and credibility:** As an external evaluator, we aim to provide an independent and unbiased view of the organisation's work to date.
- **Flexibility and contextualisation:** Because of its stage of development, we have designed a flexible evaluation framework that adapts to the specific context in which the organisation operates and takes into account the practical realities that affect its operations.
- **Utility:** The evaluation is designed to be actioned rather than theoretical and is oriented to the contemporary needs of QW+'s leadership team, supporters, and other stakeholders.
- **Inquisitory but not conclusive:** As a result of tailoring the evaluation design to the unique circumstances of the organisation, this evaluation interrogates assumptions and progress made with the aim of providing indicative signals for future impact.

### *OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance*

The evaluation draws on the framework developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) [Evaluation Criteria](#), which "provide a normative framework used to determine the merit or worth of an intervention (policy, strategy, programme, project or activity). They serve as the basis upon which evaluative judgements are made." It draws on the Theory of Change and Logframe developed by QW+ to apply the Evaluation Criteria to QW+'s unique operations and context.

Evaluation Matrix

Definition	OECD DAC Additional Notes	QW+ Framing Questions
<b>RELEVANCE: IS THE INTERVENTION DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?</b>		
<p>The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.</p>	<p><i>“Respond to” means that the objectives and design of the intervention are sensitive to the economic, environmental, equity, social, political economy, and capacity conditions in which it takes place. “Partner/institution” includes government (national, regional, local), civil society organisations, private entities and international bodies involved in funding, implementing and/or overseeing the intervention. Relevance assessment involves looking at differences and trade-offs between different priorities or needs. It requires analysing any changes in the context to assess the extent to which the intervention can be (or has been) adapted to remain relevant.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the gender gap a serious concern in South African media?</li> <li>• What are the social consequences of the gender gap in media?</li> <li>• Does the database/request system meet the needs of journalists?</li> <li>• Is the gender gap caused by a lack of access to women+ experts?</li> <li>• Is lack of capacity/training a significant barrier to the quoting of women+ in the media?</li> </ul>
<b>COHERENCE: HOW WELL DOES THE INTERVENTION FIT?</b>		
<p>The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.</p>	<p><i>The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa. Includes internal coherence and external coherence: Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors’ interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonisation and</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there other interventions in South Africa/other regions that aim to address a similar problem?</li> <li>• What are the key drivers of journalists not sourcing women+ – does it reflect institutional policies or other constraints?</li> <li>• Does QW+’s work align with international human rights principles and/or other driving narratives at a global and local level?</li> </ul>

	<i>coordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.</i>	
<b>EFFECTIVENESS: IS THE INTERVENTION ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES?</b>		
The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.	<i>Analysis of effectiveness involves taking account of the relative importance of the objectives or results.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the organisation met its stated targets for the year?</li> <li>• Are the stated objectives fit for purpose and relevant?</li> </ul>
<b>EFFICIENCY: HOW WELL ARE RESOURCES BEING USED?</b>		
The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	<i>“Economic” is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes, and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. “Timely” delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has QW+ met the timeframes for its defined objectives and targets?</li> <li>• How efficiently do resources appear to be used?</li> </ul>
<b>IMPACT: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE INTERVENTION MAKE?</b>		
The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.	<i>Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It seeks to identify social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. Beyond the immediate results, this criterion seeks to capture the indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention. It does so by examining the holistic and</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What impact does QW+ seek to achieve?</li> <li>• To what extent has change been observed in those elements in the past year (or longer)? Have systems, norms, or people’s well-being changed over time?</li> </ul>

	<i>enduring changes in systems or norms, and potential effects on people's well-being, human rights, gender equality, and the environment.</i>	
<b>SUSTAINABILITY: WILL THE BENEFITS LAST?</b>		
The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.	<i>Includes an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. Involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs. Depending on the timing of the evaluation, this may involve analysing the actual flow of net benefits or estimating the likelihood of net benefits continuing over the medium and long-term.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which impacts are projected to continue, and which are not?</li> <li>• What are some of the risks to impact continuing or deepening?</li> <li>• What steps does QW+ need to take to ensure that impact continues and deepens?</li> </ul>

Source: [\*OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria\*](#)

## *Data collection*

Data for the evaluation was collected from several sources, with the objective of maximising the insights that could be gleaned from existing sources and minimising the additional data collection required. This approach was used both for efficiency purposes, and to avoid ‘survey fatigue’ among QW+ stakeholders. QW+ has recently implemented a new M&E programme which has involved the recent collection of relatively extensive information from journalists, experts, and media training participants. The sampling procedure, therefore, sought to avoid survey fatigue while targeting a diversity of perspectives that may not have yet been captured through a loose adaptation of maximum variation purposeful sampling.

Given the organisation’s prior experiences engaging with both experts and journalists, we decided against the use of a large-scale email survey. This was primarily due to the risk of low response rates and of double sampling people who had recently provided feedback, and the fact that quantitative figures are unlikely to provide as much insight as qualitative interviews, which are better suited to inform strategic decisions at this stage of the organisation’s development.

Qualitative interviews were thus conducted through virtual meetings and telephone calls with three primary groups of stakeholders:

### i) Internal stakeholders

This included several current and former members of staff and board members: Kathy Magrobi, Jordan Magrobi, Lindiwe Mahlale, Renee Moodie, Lisa del Grande, and Donna Hornby. The purpose was to gather insights into the current M&E practices within the organisation including identifying existing data sources, understanding operational elements, and gauging the team’s views of areas of impact to date.

### ii) QW+ Experts

We sought out members of the QW+ expert database who had experienced varying levels of engagement from journalists. Sampling consisted firstly of identifying a group of experts who had been engaged multiple times by journalists and another group that appeared to have been engaged rarely and secondly screening out experts who had previously participated in the organisation’s internal 2022 survey of experts.

The purpose of these interviews was to understand the extent to which the experts are engaged by journalists, and their experiences in doing so, in order to tease out potential strands of impact and to understand any changes in their experiences as a result of QW+.

A total of eight interviews were held with experts targeted for their varying experiences.

### iii) Media practitioners

Once again, we sought out journalists who had varying experiences with QW+ and the database to gather a diversity of perspectives. Sampling consisted firstly of identifying a group of media practitioners who had engaged multiple times with experts on the database or with the QW+ team

to source experts, and another group of media practitioners that were on the QW+ team's radar but did not appear to be actively using experts through either of those routes. Secondly, we once again screened out those individuals who had participated in the 2022 reporters' survey. The purpose of these interviews was to understand how journalists currently use the database or interact with QW+, their experiences in reaching out to experts, and beginning to establish the changes in their behaviour and eco-system as a result of QW+'s efforts. A total of six interviews were held with journalists targeted for their varying experiences.

The above direct data collection was combined with existing data from the various efforts undertaken by the QW+ team this year, including the 2022 email surveys of media practitioners and experts and feedback provided on media trainings and events, as well as a thorough review of primary documentation supplied by the organisation. Interview guides are provided under Annexures 1 and 2 below and a full list of documents reviewed under Annexure 3. Please note that quotes have been paraphrased and do not reflect the exact wording used.

## **THEORY OF CHANGE**

In early 2022, QW+ initiated a new monitoring and evaluation programme to formalise its efforts to reflect on and monitor its impact. This involved hosting a team workshop to develop a Theory of Change and a logical framework (Logframe). The Theory of Change is a description of how and why the organisation expects change to occur as a result of its interventions. It sets out a chain of expected results logically linked to the activities to be undertaken. The Logframe identifies the organisation's primary objectives and develops cascading outcomes, outputs, and activities that logically feed upwards to those objectives. Importantly, it also identifies targets as well as specific data collection tools that will provide the necessary information to monitor progress made against those targets. It is notable that, because these tools were developed at different times and during a period of rapid growth and development for the new organisation, they do not currently perfectly align in terms of objectives and outcomes, although the differences are not significant.

QW+ also hired a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator in March 2022 and made progress throughout the year on implementing the M&E system by beginning data collection and integrating findings into the team's decision-making.

This has included instituting the following data collection methodologies:

- Pre- and post-evaluations of trainings;
- Tracking the number of people in the database and new sign-ups, as well as the areas of specialisation of experts;
- Monitoring journalists' requests for access to the database and direct queries to staff for experts;
- Monitoring journalist subscriptions to QW+ media updates and newsletter statistics including open rates; and
- Annual surveys of experts and reporters

## EVALUATION

Combining this existing data with the insights gleaned from qualitative interviews, the evaluation assesses QW+'s impact across the six criteria as determined in the Evaluation Matrix.

Given the nature of the data collection, the conclusions are indicative at this stage. A full quantitative evaluation may prove useful at a later stage of the organisation's development.

### 1. Relevance: how relevant is QW+ to the needs of journalists, experts and the public?

#### 1.1. A gender gap exists in South African news media

The literature has paid significant attention to gender representation within the media industry itself (i.e., amongst media practitioners and management in media organisations) but less so representation in media subject matter.

The [Global Media Monitoring Project](#) (GMMP) provides the most comprehensive global data on the gender gap in representation in the media. It found that women are more likely than men to be featured as victims in news stories and to be identified according to family status and are far less likely than men to be relied upon as 'spokespeople' or as 'experts.' In 2020, only 25% of subjects and sources in the media sample reviewed were women, a figure which had shifted up just one percentage point in five years. Africa was the region with the least progress in this regard with little improvement in the percentage of women subjects and sources since 1995.

Progress is more promising with regard to women's use as experts, which has improved globally in recent years. The authors attribute this development to the "numerous initiatives" that have sprung up to source women for expert opinion, such as QW+, as well as visible efforts from media organisations to diversify their expert pools. Nevertheless, the figure still stands at a disappointing 24% of expert voices globally. In Africa specifically, the figure is lower still and has been [corroborated](#) in other research.

Research in other regions also demonstrates the existence of the gender gap. The [Gender Gap Tracker](#) measures the ratio of women to men sources quoted in online news coverage in Canada and found that in 2022, women constituted only 29.3% of sources in the country. [Research](#) on news coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic found that women's voices were substantially muted across multiple elements of coverage: women's voices were quoted nearly five times less frequently than men's in South Africa and were rarely portrayed as authoritative experts or as empowered individuals. Only 17% of people quoted in COVID-19 news articles in South Africa were women and only 19% were in non-COVID-19-related stories.

These findings appear to demonstrate that the problem which QW+ seeks to tackle is very real, both in South Africa and globally, and that progress in tackling it has been slow in recent years.

## 1.2. The gender gap likely has serious social consequences

There is limited direct research on the real-world impacts of the gender gap in news media, but it is hard to ignore strong inferences about the importance of gender representation in media.<sup>2</sup> Failing to tap into women's voices makes news less relatable to half the population and makes for less creative and lower quality content. For example, research by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) reported that:

“Norwegian media company Amedia [found](#) that newspapers with more stories containing women sources had higher readership among women. At the Financial Times, a newsletter aimed at women achieved higher open rates on average than the publication's other newsletters. Bloomberg found that featuring more perspectives from women in its reporting gives it an edge over competitors.”

News media [influences](#) and frames how audiences understand stories and what matters are perceived to be more important than others. Representation of people and stories that are reflective of minority groups can have the effect of normalising those communities and their ideologies; conversely, underrepresentation can exacerbate social and political inequalities. In its 2022 [Impact Report](#), the BBC's 50:50 Project found that 80% of audience members aged 16-24 reported that they enjoyed the BBC's news content more because women were represented and that 68% of members of the audience aged 16-34 said that they engaged with the BBC website more than they had previously because of women being represented on the platforms.

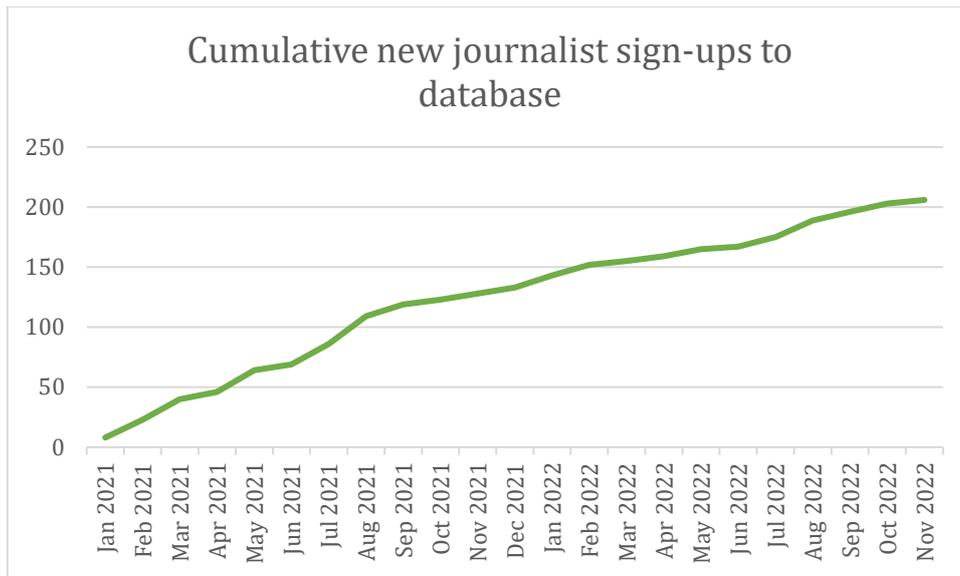
Lack of gender diversity also poses a brand risk for media organisations in a context in which audiences are increasingly aware of and more sensitive to the need for representation and the pervasiveness of sexism and stereotyping. Finally, representation is a matter of journalistic ethics and professionalism, being a factor in factual and accurate reporting.

## 1.3. QW+ meets the needs of journalists

It is clear that QW+'s intervention meets the needs of journalists. This is indicated by the steady and constant progression in sign-ups to the platform since its launch. Requests for access to the database have steadily grown over 2022 with little discernible drop-off from existing journalists on the database.

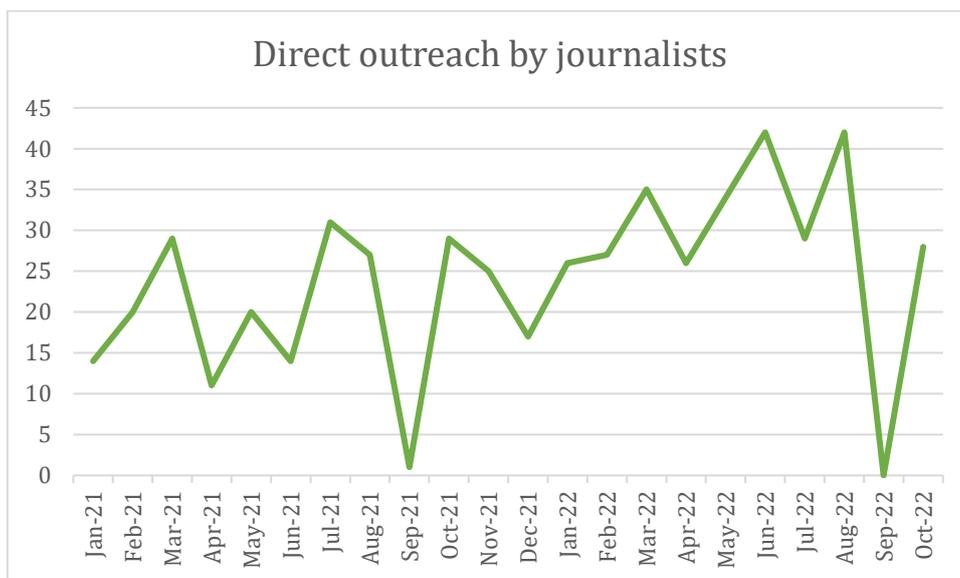
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<sup>2</sup> Direct research on the importance of diversity in the composition of the news media itself is, however, clear. For example, a 2019 [study](#) found that, drawing upon research from other industries, improving gender diversity in the news media industry can improve business performance in the United States by broadening the talent pool, increasing access to new markets, and potentially boosting financial returns, and can also increase trust in media.



*Note that the figure in January 2021 does not reflect the full number of journalists actively using the database at that time but merely when data started being consistently collected on new sign-ups.*

Direct outreach to the team by journalists has also continued at a steady pace from 2021 through 2022.



A slowdown on these two metrics may be expected in the coming months/years given the relatively small size of the South African media industry and applicable foreign press corps: QW+ will eventually reach a point where it has engaged with a large proportion of the sector and will encounter diminishing returns in efforts to bring on board new journalists. Nevertheless, the fact that journalists continue to sign up and use the database demonstrates it is fit for purpose and meets an existing need.

Journalists also continue to find value in QW+'s direct outreach to them. Recipients of the newsletter/media update increased from 377 in January 2022 to 426 in September 2022 with the open rate remaining constant at around 40-45%.

These numbers are supported by feedback received from journalists in both the journalist survey and the qualitative interviews, which demonstrated strong support from media practitioners for the intervention, indicating that QW+ is providing a useful service and filling a necessary gap. It is unusual to find such high levels of support for an initiative among one key stakeholder group. A majority of media practitioners also reported seeking regular communication from QW+ about experts in the database.

Both experts and journalists reported that there were some instances in which an engagement did not work out due to a mismatch in expertise or timing needs. To some extent, this is an inevitable result of the specificity of experts' areas of expertise and journalists' more general demands. This could be partly ameliorated by providing further nuance or specificity in information about an expert's areas of expertise listed on the database. However, in most cases, journalists reported finding what they needed, and experts were able to provide relevant inputs. Journalists who were frequent users appeared satisfied with the number of experts they needed to approach in order to successfully get the input they required.

**"95% of the time I get the input that I need."**

**- Journalist**

The feedback also indicated that although journalists report some level of awareness about the gender gap in media, QW+ has enabled them to take practical steps to address the problem where they struggled to do so before. This implies that a lack of access to women+ experts is at least a significant driver of the gap and QW+'s activities are appropriately tailored to address that driver.

**"The media is trying to be as representative as we can, but we do struggle to access women's voices for stories."**

**- Journalist**

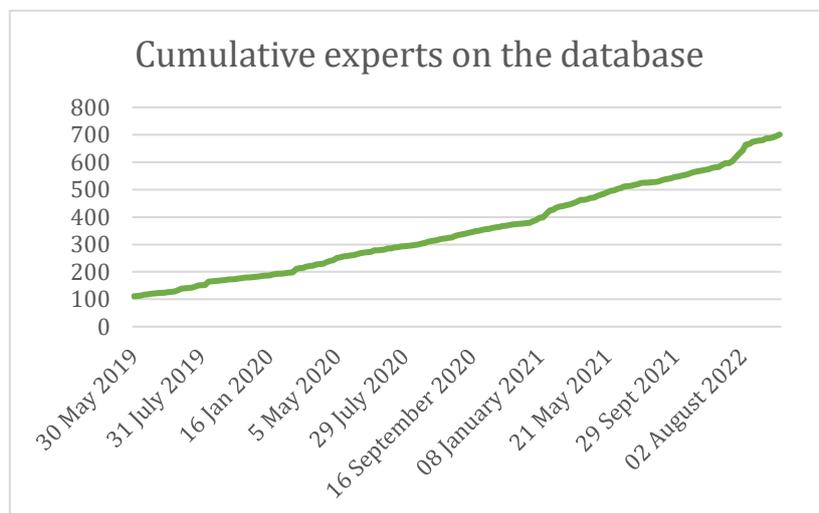
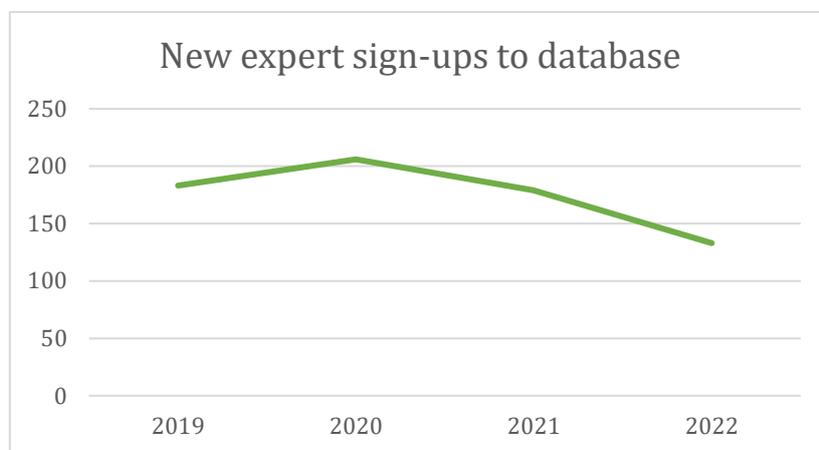
**"As a woman reporter, it's always something that you are aware of - that your gender isn't well represented in the media, especially in expert positions... It has made me aware of my inherent gender bias and made me acknowledge that we all fall into the trap of doing things the same way we have always done them. I always kept going back to the same, male experts, especially when I didn't have a lot of time to go search for new people. QW+ provides the solution to this and had helped me find fantastic experts in the country and their input has really enriched my work."**

**- Journalist**

#### 1.4. QW+ meets the needs of experts

Demonstrating that QW+ meets the need of experts is inherently harder to discern quantitatively because of the platform model. A range of factors are likely to inform whether journalists will seek to make contact with a particular expert, including news trends of the day and the existing public profile and perceived newsworthiness of the expert. As a result, a smaller proportion of experts on the platform will regularly be contacted by journalists. Nevertheless, the qualitative interviews and responses from the 2022 expert survey demonstrate widespread support for the initiative generally and an appreciation for QW+'s objectives.

In addition, the continued pace of sign-ups to the database bolsters this conclusion, as does the fact that 90% of experts surveyed in the annual survey said they would recommend joining the database to their women+ colleagues.



There was some desire expressed by experts for a greater sense of community among the expert pool on the database and enhanced two-way interactivity between journalists and experts and among experts themselves.

## 2. Coherence: how well does QW+ fit in the eco-system?

### 2.1. Other interventions seek to address a similar problem around the world, with no comparator in SA

Various other countries and regions have seen similar initiatives to QW+, indicating a global appetite to tackle what has been identified as a common problem. These include:

- [Les Expertes](#): a French database that profiles professionals, researchers, civil society and journalists. It has since expanded into Expertes Francophones, in partnership with the International Organisation of the Francophonie, across multiple francophone countries. In 2021, 13 media publishers provided funding for the initiative along with the Ministry of Culture.
- The [Gage](#) directory of women and gender minorities in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine, which serves as a resource not only to journalists but also to educators and policymakers seeking the expertise of women and gender-diverse STEM professionals.
- The Women's Media Center [SheSource](#), which connects women experts with journalists, bookers and producers.
- The Columbia Journalism Review [database](#) of women, nonbinary and POC media experts.
- The African Women in Media's [SourceHer](#) platform.<sup>3</sup>
- The [Informed Opinions](#) expert database, which provides women and gender-diverse sources for journalists, producers, conference planners, recruiters and research collaborators in Canada.
- [Expertalia](#), a database of men and women experts with diverse backgrounds in Belgium.
- The [Expert Database](#), which provides experts (of all genders) to journalists, podcast makers and conference organisers in Flanders, Belgium.
- The [Brussels Binder](#), which aims to provide gender-diverse experts for policy debates, primarily aimed at conference organisers.
- [Women+ SourceList](#), which is a database of qualified women and under-represented genders in technology that represent diverse backgrounds, made available to journalists, conference organisers and others.
- [According to Her](#) by Gender Media Connect, a directory of women expert news sources in Zimbabwe.

Various other different but related initiatives have also appeared in recent years. These include, for example, the [BBC 50:50 Project](#) which aims to measure and increase the representation of women, disabled and black, Asian and minority ethnic contributors in BBC content through the adoption of a self-monitoring system by BBC teams and partner organisations. The project has seen significant [results](#), with 61% of reported datasets featuring 50% women contributors, compared to 35% when monitoring started. This initiative demonstrates the potential impact of data in creating awareness among journalists and media producers and thereby stimulating behaviour change in which contributors they choose to seek out.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the African Women in Media platform did not appear functional at the time of this evaluation.

## 2.2. QW+ addresses one of the main drivers of a lack of representation

Most journalists reported that while they are acutely aware of the gender gap, they struggle to actively incorporate more diverse voices in their reporting as a result of time constraints and the general pressures of the job. In this regard, they praised QW+ for making it easier to do something they already clearly had the will to do but for which they lacked the means. This implies that a lack of ready access, combined with significant resource constraints on newsrooms, is one of the main drivers of the gender gap.

There is a lack of evidence that the gap is driven by institutional policies or other factors within the media. Indeed, QW+ appears to have at least equal success when engaging editors and news managers as opposed to individual journalists. If anything, media organisations appear open and willing to institute policies that support gender equality among sources.

There do not appear to be other major contextual or systemic factors standing in the way of QW+'s mission that would indicate a lack of coherence in its strategy.

## 2.3. QW+ aligns with international standards and trends

QW+'s activities and objectives are coherent with international and local developments seeking to address the lack of gender equality in society more broadly as well as the media specifically, across multiple dimensions (demographics of journalists, expert voices, etc). Significant literature exists on the importance of gender diversity in the media, particularly with regard to the makeup of media practitioners and to how gender roles are portrayed in the media.<sup>4</sup> The #MeToo movement has accelerated an existing trend towards improved gender-sensitive reporting and coverage of issues of importance to women.<sup>5</sup>

QW+'s work also aligns with international human rights standards that call for gender equity across all dimensions of society. For example, Aspiration 3 of [Agenda 2063](#) of the African Union highlights the importance of gender equality in advancing good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Africa. The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women ([CEDAW](#)) is one of the most broadly [endorsed](#) human rights treaties with 189 countries, [98%](#) of the UN membership, having either ratified or acceded to it.

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the Topic Guide on Gender produced by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre accessible [here](#), the 'Shattering the Glass Screen' report by McKinsey [here](#), and 'Gender and Media' by A.F.M. Krijnen [here](#).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example [this](#) analysis in the Harvard Business Review of the impact of the movement on women writers in the film industry and [this](#) report from the Women's Media Center.

### 3. Effectiveness: is QW+ achieving its objectives?

The extent to which objectives have been met is measured against the objectives identified in the OSF grant agreement for the 2022 year, per the table below.

Objectives	Achievements
<b>1. Maintain and curate a database of women+, and increase the visibility of the database</b>	
Develop and implement “Voices of the Year” campaign and increase database to 900 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current number of women+ in the database: 701</li> <li>• “Voices of the Year” campaign <b>conducted</b> with final activities ongoing.</li> </ul>
Develop campaign to lobby media to amplify women+’s voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Campaign</b> has been mostly completed with final activities ongoing.</li> </ul>
Conduct newsroom workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four newsroom workshops conducted with: Wits University journalism students (25 March); Fraycollege journalism students (11 August); the Citizen Newsroom (19 September); Wits Media Management students (28 October).</li> <li>• Gender audit implemented for Cape Talk.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Train the media on visibility of voices</b>	
Tailor training materials for targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed - training manual completed; Renee Moodie hired to assist with rewriting training materials and developing training courses to be used in a virtual setting (over multiple weeks) or an in-person setting (over 5 days).</li> </ul>
Conduct feminist-centric media training	<p>Two media trainings held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘How to sell your story to the media’ webinar - 9 Feb 2022.</li> <li>• Women in Health media training - 9 November 2022.</li> </ul>
Conduct storytelling and open discussion events	<p>Two storytelling events held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth Week story slam - 14 April 2022</li> <li>• Women in Health story slam - 16 November 2022</li> </ul>
<b>3. Strengthen the organisation</b>	
Source M&E expertise and develop monitoring systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M&amp;E Co-ordinator hired in March 2022.</li> <li>• M&amp;E Logframe developed in March 2022 and data collection systems implemented progressively throughout the year.</li> <li>• Team and board members demonstrate a nuanced understanding of M&amp;E initiatives and make regular contributions to monitoring and improving impact.</li> </ul>
Conduct year-end evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First annual evaluation conducted in October-December 2022.</li> </ul>
Consult tech experts on database systems aimed at improving online security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google News Innovation grant secured to rebuild website; rebuild started in late 2022.</li> </ul>
Diversify funding base through increased fundraising capacity and a financial audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crowdfunding campaign in March &amp; April raised over R5,900.</li> <li>• Corporate donation secured from Metropolitan Insurance in September 2022 - R10k.</li> <li>• Google News Innovation grant - R800k.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funds raised through grant applications and media training (from SANTHE, UJ and WGH) - R160k.</li> <li>• Sales training with MD of Memeburn.</li> <li>• Audit of 2022 annual financial statements in progress.</li> </ul>
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**3.1. Overall, it appears that QW+’s objectives have largely been met.**

**4. Efficiency: how well are resources being used?**

**4.1. Financial resources appear to be frugally used**

As noted by the OECD DAC, “resources” refers not only to financial resources but also to time, expertise and staff capacity. It is not within the scope of this evaluation to do a full analysis of the financial efficiency of the intervention, which would also be challenging at this early stage of the organisation’s development. However, it does appear that resources have been limited in the years since its establishment and that the small, mostly volunteer and part-time team have managed to implement most of the targeted activities within the specified timeframes despite this challenge.

Over the 2022 period, QW+ has spent the OSF funds in accordance with the budget with little to no variation. The use of funds appears efficient for the present purposes and is focused primarily on staff and consulting costs (which appear in line with market rates) and meetings and workshops (which are minimal).

**4.2. Staff time is under strain and there may be areas for savings**

In terms of the efficiency of other resources, perhaps most relevant for QW+ is an apparent strain on staff time. Anecdotally, it appears that some practices and activities are relatively heavy on staff time with uncertain returns. For example, the fact that many journalists report not knowing about the online database (5 out of 27 responses in the 2022 reporter survey – or 18,5%) leads to a high capacity draw on staff to deal with journalist requests directly. This is also evident in the fact that only 73 journalists requested access to the database in 2022, while 289 journalists reached out to QW+ directly during 2022. This is likely to remain a key feature of the offering to reporters in perpetuity because the human touch enables a level of nuance in finding the right expert (for example, finding someone who is an expert across multiple thematic areas, etc). However, the demand on the team can certainly be lessened by ensuring greater awareness among reporters about the database and how to use it, and improving the usability of the database to make it comparable to the ease and efficacy of phoning a member of staff.

The organisation's media trainings are another time-intensive activity which may warrant reflection. Past trainings appeared to garner relatively positive feedback. Qualitative interviews indicated that experts appreciate the value of trainings generally but, as discussed in further detail below, it is not clear that a large proportion of the experts personally want to participate in training themselves. Given that they constitute a significant drain on organisational resources, this is perhaps an area that warrants further research.

## 5. Impact: what difference does QW+ make in the world?

This section compares the impact we expect to see based on the Theory of Change, the Logframe, and a logical analysis of the organisation's activities and mission, with evidence of impact from pre-existing data and collected data. It also identifies missing data and areas for further exploration.

It is important to note that the real-world impact of QW+'s activities is circumscribed by the age of the organisation, the size of the team, and the limited period of the evaluation (one year).

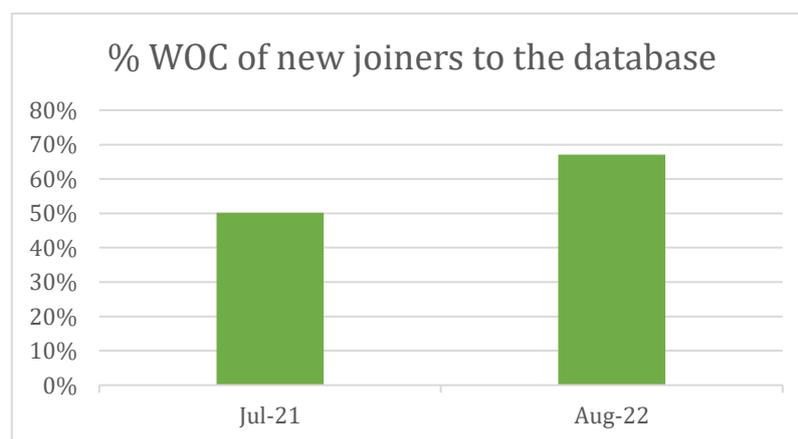
We have developed a set of three, broad impact areas that speak to the overall intended impact of the organisation and against which actual progress is measured. These impact areas speak to the higher philosophical good that the organisation is seeking to achieve through advancing gender representation in the media. Each objective is broken down into several sub-outcomes that seek to provide a logical connection between activities and the higher-level outcome.

### *OBJECTIVE 1: MORE WOMEN+ ARE REPRESENTED IN THE MEDIA*

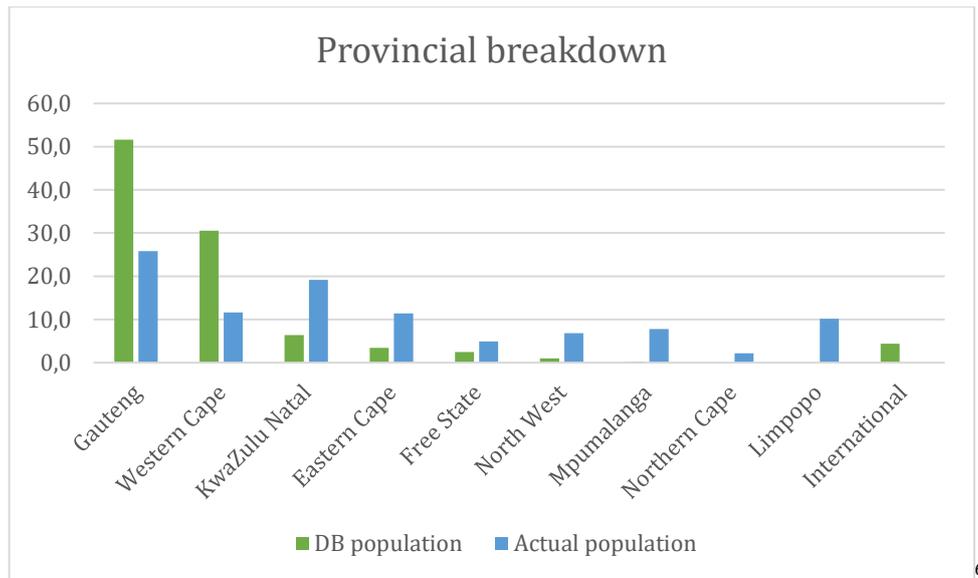
QW+ seeks improved gender representation in the media, as a materially and symbolically important outcome.

#### 5.1. More women+ and more diverse women+ are on the database

As discussed above, the number of women+ experts on the database has grown steadily over the time period, reaching 701 at the time of writing. The percentage of women+ of colour new joiners to the database was roughly 67% women+ of colour, an increase from 50% in June 2020.



Geographical representation on the database reflects typical patterns informed by access and inequality in the country, with the greatest representation from Gauteng and the Western Cape (as at December 2021).



Therefore, while progress has been in diversifying the racial make-up of experts on the database, increasing diversity remains a work in progress.

It should also be noted that, while increasing the number of experts on the platform is an admirable and necessary objective, scaling up the initiative also brings risks, including a lack of engagement. If those experts do not feel engaged or utilised through the platform, it presents a brand risk for the organisation and threatens the ability to onboard new experts in the future. In the 2022 experts survey, 27% of experts said they had never been contacted by a journalist.

Nevertheless, it is clear there is still a need to focus on growing the community of experts, particularly in specific sectors with the highest demand from journalists in order to add diversity to the voices available and ensure that the database continues to meet the needs of journalists.

## 5.2. It is unclear whether more women+ are quoted in the media

If QW+'s ultimate objective is to increase the representation of women+ experts in the media, determining how many women+ from the database are being quoted in news outputs as a result of their affiliation with QW+ is an invaluable impact metric. Unfortunately, several practical and systemic challenges make it difficult to determine quantitatively whether QW+'s work has led to better representation of women+ experts in the news media. We must therefore rely on qualitative information to form a general impression of QW+'s impact in this area. Media stakeholders report quoting more women+ in their stories as a direct result of QW+'s work. As detailed below, members of the QW+ community have reported varying levels of impact as a result of their affiliation with QW+; while some have not received any requests for media interviews, several women+ report that their inclusion in the QW+ expert database has greatly increased their public profile.

Measuring the overall representation of women+ in the media may be a more feasible proxy. Given the reported slow pace of progress in this regard around the world, any measurable

<sup>6</sup> Actual population figures are as at mid-2019 per StatsSA (available [here](#)).

changes in gender representation within QW+'s spheres of influence can at least partially be attributed to QW+'s dedicated interventions. Given evidence that QW+ has also helped to raise awareness of the importance of gender diversity among its media stakeholders, this approach would also account for any broader shifts in media coverage to which QW+ may have contributed (i.e., where journalists may be more mindful of the need to seek out diverse voices in their stories, even if they do not make direct use of the QW+ expert database). On the other hand, this approach would not take into account the use of sources for which journalists have little choice (i.e., direct witnesses or crucial stakeholders to a specific story). Nevertheless, it could provide an indicative measurement of the general trend. Unfortunately, this data is not currently available for news coverage in South Africa, suggesting the need for further research and monitoring of the sector.

### **5.3. Experts have widely varying experiences in being quoted**

The general impression from experts is that their experiences being on the database varies widely. This is to be expected among such a large sample. Some of the factors affecting these experiences are outside the organisation's control, such as the thematic area in which they work: some areas, such as politics, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other trending topics, generate high demand for experts while others do not.

However, it appears that there are other factors affecting their experiences as well, particularly how often they are contacted by reporters. This includes, for example, the ranking of experts on the search page. Stakeholder engagements identified an anecdotal perception that those ranked at the top appear to be more regularly contacted and therefore feel that the platform is having a greater effect for them. This dynamic seems to be alleviated for experts who have participated in media training hosted by QW+ as they are then better able to understand the news cycle and how to effectively define media tags.

### **5.4. Quoted experts value the symbolism of being represented**

The symbolic impacts of representation appear to be relatively significant for the experts that are regularly quoted, particularly those from marginalised groups/races.

**“My expert input adds value to the media landscape because lots of people are watching and get inspired when they see young black people expressing expert views in the media.”**

**- Expert**

### **5.5. Journalists generally know about the gender gap, but QW+ helps them keep it front of mind and to act**

It is unclear whether a lack of understanding about the gender gap is a significant issue within the journalism community in QW+'s sphere of influence and to what extent QW+ has had an impact in this regard. Anecdotal feedback suggests that journalists are generally aware of the issue, but lack the capacity and resources to take action on it. It is also likely that journalists who

are mindful of gender diversity are more predisposed to make use of QW+'s services in the first place. If this were the case, the fact that QW+'s work fits seamlessly into an existing need means that take-up is high regardless. Some journalists did report that engaging with QW+, whether directly or through the database, increased their understanding of the issue and prompted them to keep it front of mind in their daily work.

**“It has changed how I perceive and understand the stories. I feel that it has made me use more women because the database has made me aware of the gap in reporting women experts.”**

**- Journalist**

Feedback from media workshops held with journalism students indicates that QW+ is relatively effective in shaping perceptions of the gender gap at this formative stage of their careers, with 75% reporting that the workshop was valuable for their learning about the gender gap in media. Further, the results of the gender audit conducted with Cape Talk show that direct engagement with newsrooms can have a significant effect both on their understanding of the specific gender gap in their own work as well as sparking action to address it. For example, Cape Talk has [committed](#) to inviting QW+ back next year to report on its progress in implementing the recommendations made in the audit and advancing its representation of women.

#### **5.6. Journalists' use of QW+'s services is robust**

Take-up among the surveyed journalists appears to be relatively high, although a quantitative comparison of all journalists that QW+ has attempted to engage is not possible.

Journalists who were frequent users of the database reported that they successfully obtained what they were looking for a high percentage of the time. When they did not, it was usually a result of experts' failing to respond in time for a deadline or, less often, a mismatch between the skills sought and held.

As discussed above under *1: Relevance* above, figures on the take-up by journalists of access to the database, direct requests to QW+ staff, and subscriptions to media updates indicate a strong preference among journalists to make use of the services QW+ makes available. These additional services, on top of the basic database, are intentionally designed as the unique selling point of QW+ and appear to be key in making the link between merely providing information and the effective take-up and use of that information in a way that ultimately changes behaviour and social practices.

#### **OBJECTIVE 2: NARRATIVES IN THE MEDIA BETTER REFLECT THE PERSPECTIVES AND DEMANDS OF WOMEN+**

This objective speaks to QW+'s impact in changing dominant public narratives to reflect the issues that resonate with or affect women+ and in making those narratives more nuanced and reflective of women+'s perspectives. In theory, this is important because it helps ensure that the needs and

perspectives of women+ are amplified, acknowledged, and addressed in all aspects of public life, including social discourse, policy development, and decision-making fora.

### 5.7. Experts and journalists believe the inputs have shifted narratives

Experts reported a general impression that their contributions on specific issues have changed the narratives being portrayed by journalists in the media to reflect their particular expertise and perspectives.

**“I noticed a shift in regard to the narrative around e-tolls and the journalists who reported my input, which was that there still needs to be a funding mechanism for improving roads and the scrapping of e-tolls is not the solution. I believe this has had an impact on the way people understand the issue of e-tolls.”**

*- Expert*

Journalists supported this interpretation, noting several examples when experts provided unique inputs that changed their perception of stories.

**“The policy recommendations I raise are not very popular - it strikes a lot of conversation and has generated wide-ranging responses on the topic as these are not one-dimensional discussions.”**

*- Expert*

However, some experts felt that the general noise and complexity of the media environment made it hard to tell whether narratives were shifting, and even harder to tell whether their participation had any impact in that regard.

### *OBJECTIVE 3: WOMEN+ BECOME MORE PROMINENT AND THEIR CAREERS ARE ADVANCED*

Ultimately, this objective seeks to ensure that women+ are more readily recognised as experts and in a wider range of fields. This is not possible to easily measure, particularly at this early stage of the organisation’s development. However, we can glean some insights by examining individual-level career progression among women+ on the database and personal feelings of empowerment and capacity to engage with the media.

### 5.8. Women+ report career progression

Experts who had been frequently engaged by journalists reported that their careers had been tangibly improved by the media coverage. This also reflected on the institutions and organisations they worked for, which many felt they represented in their engagements. This has the additional effect of amplifying the experts’ prominence and position within their institutions.

**“As an individual, my profile has been enhanced. But I also speak on behalf of [institution] and so it is not just me in isolation that is made prominent in the media, but it also exposes the institution beyond the individual. It is the expertise of the institution with a woman figurehead being given a voice in public debate. This also has an impact on institutional reform: QTW helps us to be seen as public experts within our institutions.”**

*- Expert*

#### **5.9. It is unclear whether women+ feel more empowered and willing to engage with the media**

QW+ has held two media trainings for experts in 2022, as well as two storytelling events. Experts mostly reported that they valued the trainings offered, but many of those interviewed appear to either have existing access to other media training opportunities or feel they already have the necessary skills. Most experts responded in general terms about the value of training for other, younger professionals, rather than for themselves.

**“I have had media training and am confident, but I’d love to refer young women to journalists; women who would benefit from the exposure and mentored exposure.”**

*- Expert*

**“Training can be useful, especially for interviews. Speaking in the media and public platforms is challenging and requires skill especially if public speaking is not part of your daily work. The nerves still get to me, and the COVID-19 shift from in-person to online interviews has made conducting interviews more challenging. People would benefit from guidance on how to set up their space for a remote interview so that they are visible and audible: I’ve learned this by trial and error. People should be trained on how to conduct interviews on different platforms.”**

*- Expert*

**“I have done training at Wits on media, especially within the political environment spaces where journalists tend to push the envelope and throw in unexpected questions. Providing training on how to respond to journalists asking unexpected questions that fall outside of the scope of one’s expertise may avoid placing experts in uncomfortable interviews, especially when on live television.”**

*- Expert*

However, the sampling of experts here may be relevant. Those that provided responses to this question were more likely to be those that are already actively engaged by journalists and are therefore more experienced. Further, QW+ is in the process of intentionally expanding its expert pool to include women+ who are less likely to have had access to media training in the past or experience with the media. This means that these services are likely to become increasingly important to the expert pool as it diversifies and expands. In theory, providing training is likely to play a key role in facilitating the transformation of the media to using less commonly-quoted experts. This hypothesis is something that should be further tested as the model evolves and further information becomes available.

Media skills specifically sought out include how to respond to questions outside one's areas of expertise and specific examples of "holding statements" to be used when an expert is unable to answer a particular question.

## **6. Sustainability: will the benefits last?**

### **6.1. Impacts appear likely to continue and to scale, provided certain risks are addressed**

There is little indication that the growth in usage over the preceding year is likely to slow in the future. The organisation's progression hinges heavily on staff capacity and, therefore, funding availability. It is projected that with additional funding and capacity the organisation will be able to institutionalise its operations, scale its outreach, and improve its ability to monitor its impact.

Several potential risks to sustainability bear mention. First, it is critical to ensure that the database is maintained, and expert information is kept up to date. This has been flagged by media practitioners as a central reason for their lack of use of other expert databases, and data quality will only become a more significant factor over time as the database grows and evolves. Inaccuracies in how experts' expertise (and contact details) are listed on the site create friction costs in the model that would make it less impactful over time. It is expected that this may, in large part, be ameliorated by the new database build, assuming that it provides for a more nuanced listing of expertise and the ability of experts to update their information and profiles themselves.

Second, as QW+ grows, its influence in platforming or de-platforming certain individuals is likely to become more prominent and potentially more contentious. Particularly if the organisation plays a role in screening experts for their "intellectual integrity" and commitment to "democratic values,"<sup>7</sup> it is likely to attract some attention for doing so. It will need to develop a robust and transparent framework, aligned with international human rights law, that determines how this screening is done to protect against future critiques of political or other bias.

Third, some experts reported having negative experiences with certain journalists, such as patriarchal/misogynistic/racist lines of questioning, and general unprofessional treatment. While QW+ is not responsible for these experiences, there is a risk that sustained negative experiences of media engagements will undermine the organisation's relationship with its

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<sup>7</sup> Page 13 of QW+'s proposal to OSF.

stakeholders. As the platform grows, QW+ is recommended to consider a mechanism for direct and/or anonymous feedback from experts about their media engagements with journalists using the platform to ensure it remains a safe and healthy space. Putting in place the necessary reporting mechanisms will be an important part of maintaining a healthy community as the organisation grows over time. Such systems should be designed to be streamlined and efficient.

Finally, there is a risk of disillusionment among experts who are not contacted by journalists, which poses a (minor) brand risk for the future and that would affect impact and the ability to onboard new experts. To a large extent, this is part of the model and not something to be unnecessarily concerned about. However, it may be useful to consider ways to manage experts' expectations in the context of future growth, particularly the planned growth of the expert database.

**“I haven’t referred friends and colleagues to the platform because I forgot about it; because it isn’t active [in communicating with me], I don’t remember to refer people.”**

**- Expert**

It is also worth comparing the ratio of experts to journalists on the QW+ database to other comparators. For example, the Informed Opinions [database](#) had 2,192 sources to 1,681 journalist subscribers in 2021, a ratio of 1.3: 1. Comparatively, QW+ currently has a ratio of roughly 701 sources to 331 journalists actively using the database or 2.1:1. However, a much larger number of journalists, over 1,000, are signed up to receive media alerts from QW+ which profile and recommend experts on the database. It is important to better understand how active journalists on the news alert service are to interpret the general size of the journalist pool, which can indicate whether a lack of experts is indeed a concern for the organisation. Feedback from journalists can also assist in determining whether the demand for experts is being met but must be balanced against the experiences of experts on the database (i.e., if they are rarely or never contacted, it may undermine their willingness to remain on the database or to engage with QW+). Comparisons to other databases can assist in making this determination, although it also depends heavily on context as well as the overall make-up of the expert pool which, if it lacks sufficient diversity, should be prioritised. This may also depend on the particular model pursued: a large number of diverse experts versus a smaller number of primed and experienced experts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Monitoring & Evaluation*

The organisation has made significant progress in 2022 not only in developing and implementing M&E systems to better understand its impact but also in inculcating a culture of learning and reflection within the team. This is to be commended and should continue to be encouraged.

Several recommendations are provided that could augment and bolster the organisation's capacity in this regard.

First, it is proposed that the Theory of Change, along with the Logframe, be reconsidered to ensure it remains relevant to the organisation's goals. This process should be conducted at least every two years, preferably at the start of the year and in line with strategy reviews, including setting targets and evaluating progress against previous years' targets. The Theory of Change should also include assumptions that link the outputs to the outcomes and organisational goals.

Second, there is an urgent need to consolidate and rationalise the datasets in use by the organisation for M&E purposes. There should be a 'single source of truth' for all major indicators, as evaluated in this report, which must have clear and transparent processes for being updated and maintained. At present, multiple spreadsheets appear to be in use to track some of the same indicators and maintenance is somewhat ad hoc, making it difficult to robustly analyse the wealth of data that the organisation does already collect.

Third, it is well noted that the team is acutely aware of the need for more extended analytics on the database and that this is currently in progress through the new development enabled by the Google grant. In this regard, several specific recommendations/suggestions may assist:

- A more nuanced breakdown of the skills of experts would facilitate better matching;
- The ability to bridge different skillsets for searching by multiple areas of expertise;
- Both the above will also enable more nuanced ordering so that the order in which experts are presented is not alphabetical but rather the best match;
- Enable experts to have greater control over their visibility by directly controlling the level of information they provide and the ability to update their information (this will also alleviate the burden on the QW+ to manually update information);
- Consider mechanisms to give experts greater control over how their information is used and to whom it is provided, such as consent to networking through the site, the ability to choose whether to add a phone number, etc;
- Consider a direct communication mechanism through the platform (i.e.; direct messages) between journalists and experts, which may alleviate the issue of phone numbers, even if just partially. Although there appears to be a slight general preference for using phone calls, mostly because of time constraints, some journalists report preferring to contact experts by email because it provides them space to provide greater context/detail and to enable the expert to process the request before following up by phone, particularly for niche or technical areas of reporting. Some reported better response rates over email as well. While

this may not be true for everyone, it may help to minimise the need for sharing phone numbers if messages can be sent through the platform (directly to an expert's email inbox).

- It is noted that there has been discussion around the ability for experts to be able to view every other expert on the database. On the one hand, this would be necessary for building a greater sense of community and networking among experts. On the other, removing this visibility might make it easier to vet new experts because the incentive to abuse the system (for example, by public relations practitioners) is lessened. This may be an area in which different levels of consent could ease the process by minimising the due diligence that needs to occur for new sign-ups only to those that sign up for full access.
- Consider capturing and reflecting demographic variables such as race, sexual orientation, or disability status (even if collected and stored anonymously on sign-up) in order to be able to measure how representation on the database stacks up against national statistics.
- The ability to track log-ins (by both journalists and experts) will enable a more nuanced understanding of how the database is used. In addition, tracking metrics for journalists' search terms and the experts they view could enable the matching of search terms with Google alerts to monitor whether those experts are ultimately quoted in the media. However, this process should ideally be automated to minimise the manual effort involved in generating such data.
- Consider the feasibility of an automatic pop-up window on log-in - for both experts and reporters - that asks how many times they have used an expert or been quoted by a reporter in a certain time frame. This could assist with providing a rough sense of actual success in planting women+ in the media;
- Future impact evaluations should dig deeper into the question of the return on effort provided by media trainings for experts.

More generally, M&E within the organisation could be augmented by:

- Sending out post-event surveys within one week of completing a training to take advantage of participants' interest in the session, to improve response rates, and to ensure they remember it accurately;
- Conducting a single, short annual survey of experts and journalists based on a carefully defined small set of indicators that are necessary to provide quantitative information for the organisation's strategy moving forward;
- Despite the above, being careful not to over-survey stakeholders; this requires keeping track of who has been surveyed/interviewed over time to avoid fatigue and improve response rates.
- Consider partnering with existing media research organisations to conduct further analysis and monitoring of gender representation within the South African news media.<sup>8</sup>
- Explore the feasibility of a mechanism to automate collecting data on the proportion of women+ on the database who are quoted in online media by using Google media alerts (or a similar system).

As the organisation grows, it may wish to consider greater investment in M&E capacity and more rigorous evaluations to better understand its impact in the future. This could include, for example,

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<sup>8</sup> The Dexter project, a media analysis tool developed by Open Cities Lab and Media Monitoring Africa, is an apt example.

implementing more rigorous pre- and post-surveys for events and media trainings to compare results or other methods of counterfactual impact evaluation, such as using a control to understand where QW+ is directly responsible for changes. This could involve identifying a group of women+ who are quoted infrequently in the media and are not on the QW+ database and also identifying a set of women+ on the database who are quoted at the same rate as the first set. One could then track the number of times they are quoted in the (for example, through media alerts) for a defined set of time, and then do the same again 6-12 months later to see if there is a difference in the trend between these two groups. Alternatively, one could identify a random sample of QW+ experts and compare Google search results on their names for the period before they joined the database and since then.

Similarly, QW+ could consider identifying and tracking a sample of journalists to analyse any changes in their reporting behaviour before and after engaging with the organisation.

### *Data security*

The team has flagged a particular concern of data security. This speaks to a need to strengthen security in the database to better protect the information of experts and journalists on the platform. The reputational harm and other damage posed by a data breach could undermine the organisation's work and limit its future impact. It is noted that the new database rebuild is likely to ameliorate many of these concerns. However, it is strongly recommended that the organisation consider undertaking a full POPIA compliance process to better understand how to optimally protect the sensitive information in its care.

### *Strategic considerations*

Several strategic suggestions arose during the evaluation, which are raised here for the purpose of stimulating ideation and innovation. It is noted that some of these already appear to be under consideration by the team.

- There appears to be appetite among some experts to actively build a sense of community and interaction among the expert pool. This would enable them to gain more from membership in the database, particularly for those who are rarely engaged by journalists and would build their buy-in for the tool/brand, contributing to referrals and future growth.
- There may be room for greater strategic prioritisation among various potential new initiatives by reflecting on their contribution to the organisation's overall objectives in the context of its limited capacity. For example, should QW+ prioritise getting more experts on the database, or getting reporters to better engage the ones that are already there? This is not a direct trade-off, but strategically the organisation would benefit from having a rough prioritisation between these types of decisions so that it can determine relevant activities and meet those priorities.
- QW+ may wish to consider taking steps to increase its own earned revenue to minimise dependence on grant funding. This could take many forms, such as gender audits and

gender consulting for media organisations and other related entities, such as PR firms, or monetising the value of the database to public relations (PR) practitioners or corporates.<sup>9</sup>

### *Next steps*

In addition to the M&E-specific recommendations made above, QW+ might consider the following areas for future study which were beyond the scope of the evaluation:

- How can usage of the database be increased among reporters who rarely or irregularly access the database? What the factors are that limit their engagement with the database?
- How do other source databases measure their impact, and what impact have they documented to date?
- How can QW+ collaborate with or complement the efforts of these other databases?
- What other initiatives are attempting to directly move the needle on women's representation in the media, and how can QW+'s impact be disentangled from theirs?
- How do journalists' needs/demands map to the expertise provided on the database and in society more generally? Is there a role for QW+ to play in raising awareness among journalists about the potential to make more informed decisions about the experts they use to address societal and historical divides (for example, by making more regular use of rural experts or those with lived experience)?
- How can narrative change be measured?<sup>10</sup> What is feasible and relevant for QW+ to do in this regard?

## **CONCLUSION**

This evaluation has attempted to analyse Quote This Woman+'s impact to date by reviewing its activity over the 2022 period and identifying pathways of influence to inform future strategic decision-making.

It has found that Quote This Woman+ demonstrates significant influence in opening up more meaningful pathways for women+ experts to be featured more widely in the media, especially given its size and relative nascence. While the tangible impact to date is hard to quantify, it appears that both sets of key stakeholders – journalists and women+ experts – place significant value on the service the organisation provides, make use of these services, and believe that this use has a real-world change in women+'s representation in the media.

The report finds that the organisation's interventions are relevant to the needs of its stakeholders, coherent within the broader environment, resource-efficient and likely to be sustainable, provided certain longer-term risks are addressed. It identifies several recommendations for improving monitoring and evaluation systems within the organisation, as well as key strategic questions for which clear answers can inform enhanced future impact.

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<sup>9</sup> By way of example to stimulate ideation, the organisation could consider adding an additional tier of membership on the database through which corporates or PR practitioners are given access for a fee to only the experts who consent to this, or charging corporates and PR representatives for adding their executives/clients onto the database.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the work of [Africa No Filter](#) in measuring media biases and stereotypes, as well as [Pop Culture Collaborative](#) in the US.

## **ANNEXURE 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE: EXPERTS**

### **I. Highly engaged experts**

1. Have you been contacted by journalists?
2. Does this accord with how often you expected to be contacted?
  - a. If have been contacted:
    - i. Do you feel like, relative to other experts in your field, you gave a unique narrative or perspective on that issue that someone else might've been unlikely to give?
    - ii. If so, how?
  - b. If have been contacted/quoted a lot:
    - i. Did you notice any big-picture changes in how the issue or narrative was presented as a result of your being quoted or having spoken to the journalist?
    - ii. Do you feel like there has been any tangible change in your image/prominence in your field as a result of being quoted?
    - iii. Do you feel like you're more prominent in the media now/quoted more often than you would've been if QW+ didn't exist? How much of becoming more prominent is as a result of being on the QW+ database?
3. Have you ever turned a journalist down, and if so, what was the reason?
- 4.
5. Do you feel like you'd really value support or training on how to engage with the media to be better prepared and empowered to answer the requests that come? How important is this to your ability to respond to requests?
  - a. If very important:
    - i. What training specifically, or what are your specific questions/gaps you'd like assistance with?
6. Do you have any recommendations for how the platform could work more effectively?

### **II. Less-engaged experts**

1. Have you been contacted by journalists?
2. Does this accord with how often you expected to be contacted?
3. Would the fact that you haven't been contacted much affect your willingness to recommend to friends or colleagues that they join the database?
4. Do you feel like you'd really value support or training on how to engage with the media to be better prepared and empowered to answer the requests that come? How important is this to your ability to respond to requests?
  - a. If very important:

- i. What training specifically, or what are your specific questions/gaps you'd like assistance with?
5. Do you understand who has access to your information that you've given for the platform and are you comfortable with that? Do you have any particular concerns about that?
6. Do you have any recommendations for how the platform could work more effectively?

## **ANNEXURE 2: JOURNALIST INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **I. Highly engaged journalists**

1. How much have you used the database? Do you consider it a key tool in your toolbox or is it more ad hoc?
  - a. Do you feel like the input you received from experts off the database changed your perspective on an issue or affected the narrative at all? If so, how?
  - b. Do you feel like the database is making you use women+ experts more than you otherwise might?
2. How many experts do you typically need to reach out to before you get what you're looking for?
  - a. What are the most common reasons experts turn you down?
  - b. Do you generally end up with the kind of input you're looking for?
3. Do you prefer to contact experts by phone or by email?
  - a. Does this make a big difference to you?
4. How much did you know about the gender gap in representation in the media before you started engaging with QW+?
  - a. How much has your engagement with QW+ changed that? What was the thing that was most effective in changing that?
5. Is there anything about the database or about how QW+ works that might make you more likely to use it or make it more effective in helping your work?

### **II. Less-engaged journalists**

1. How much have you used the database?
2. Is there anything about the database or about how QW+ works that might make you more likely to use it?
3. Do you prefer to contact experts by phone or by email?
  - a. Does this make a big difference to you?
4. How much do you know about the gender gap in representation in the media or how much did you know before you started engaging with QW+?
  - a. Has being made aware of QW+ changed that at all? If so, how?

### **ANNEXURE 3: INTERNAL RESOURCES REVIEWED**

- OSF Funding Proposal 2pager
- 2022 Marketing Plan
- Survey results and analysis report for expert survey 2022
- Survey results and analysis report for journalist survey 2022
- Results of Cape Talk Gender Audit
- Database user journeys – for database rebuild
- Sign-ups for expert database
- Journalist requests for access to the database
- Direct requests from journalists
- Analysis reports from media training and storytelling events
- List of media who use QW+
- Logframe
- M&E activities document – preparation for expert survey
- Media update tracking
- Newsroom workshop analysis report
- Progress against OSF objectives
- Board strategy (updated March 2021)
- QW+ dashboard
- QW+ strategy document for OSF funding 2022
- QW+ Theory of Change (partial and full)
- Scope for Year
- Stakeholder lists – journalists (2020-2022)
- Storytelling event participants
- Training event participants
- OSFSA Budget and Financial Report at 15 November 2022

## ANNEXURE 4: IMPACT AREAS

The evaluation identified the following Impact Areas which are summarised and reproduced here for clarity.

<b>OBJECTIVE 1: MORE WOMEN+ ARE REPRESENTED IN THE MEDIA</b>
More women+ and more diverse women+ are on the database
More women+ are quoted in the media
Media practitioners understand the gender gap and the need for greater diversity
Journalists and newsrooms take steps to improve their gender representation
Reporters make use of the database and quote the experts on it
New reporters sign up for QW+ services
<b>OBJECTIVE 2: NARRATIVES IN THE MEDIA BETTER REFLECT THE PERSPECTIVES AND DEMANDS OF WOMEN+</b>
Narratives are demonstrably changed
Journalists change their perceptions
<b>OBJECTIVE 3: WOMEN+ BECOME MORE PROMINENT AND THEIR CAREERS ARE ADVANCED</b>
Women+ progress in their careers
Women+ are more empowered and willing to engage with the media
As a demographic, women+ are recognised as experts in more diverse fields