

CAPE TOWN

SHE SAYS

# GENDER REPRESENTATION SURVEY

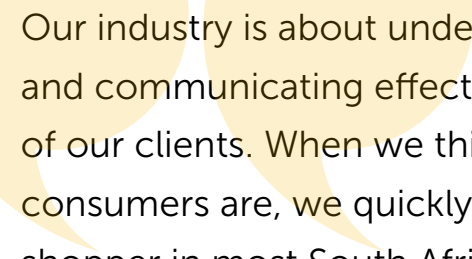
OF SA ADLAND

## 2020 RESULTS

CREATIVE • CLIENT SERVICE • STRATEGY • PRODUCTION  
SOCIAL • DIGITAL • TECHNOLOGY • MEDIA • SUPPORT

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

**KANTAR**



Our industry is about understanding consumers and communicating effectively with them on behalf of our clients. When we think about who these consumers are, we quickly realise that the main shopper in most South African homes is a woman. In most of those cases, a black woman. How can we say we truly understand that consumer if there is no one like her sitting at the decision-making table? It is more effective and in turn more lucrative for our industry to be as diverse and inclusive as possible. We cannot do brilliant, insightful work that moves people's hearts and businesses' bottom lines if we are represented by a homogenous minority. It pays to have diverse decision-makers.

**NKGABISENG MOTAU**  
*Founding Partner, Think Creative Africa*

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LETTER FROM SHESAYS CT

# Welcome.

SheSays is the biggest global network for women in creative industries, with a presence in 50 cities around the world and an estimated 70 000 members. SheSays may be a relative newcomer in Africa, but has been a pioneer in the female empowerment space since it was first founded in London in 2007.

From day one, SheSays made a commitment to be an authentic voice for women with a focus on career advancement and righting gender imbalances in the workplace. We've done this through panel discussions, meetups, conferences, awards, film screenings and more. We facilitate a free mentorship scheme called 'Who's Your Momma' in selected cities and co-create activism for gender parity with our members.

Since we started the Cape Town chapter two years ago, it has been a dream to base our activism on true data – not anecdotal evidence. And while we have hosted frank panel discussions, touched on important topics and forged invaluable partnerships, we felt that a movement can't be based on conversations alone. We needed to know what the state of affairs was in the advertising industry to see where the gaps are (and why) in order to delve deeper into the biases and barriers at play.

Thus, the first-ever survey on gender representation in South Africa, proudly brought to you by SheSays Cape Town.

Beyond that, the time has come for all voices to be heard. Gender equality is not for women to correct. We have always made a point of involving forward-thinking men and women in the industry and have been overwhelmed by the support and contributions to this report from influential industry leaders. The time for women to have conversations amongst themselves is over. SA adland has truly rallied behind us, and that means the world.

We are proud of the great benchmark of figures we have now, from where we can continue on our journey. There are numbers to celebrate, but also some concerns. For example, right in the heart of where societal views are formed, the creative departments, female leaders are still in the minority. We also have some way to go advancing women in digital and technology positions – where the future of marketing lies.

In the communications world, no marketing message goes without a call to action. So with these results and this report, we launch a call to arms. To go beyond the numbers,

to look within and to start doing the work if you haven't yet done so. As many of our contributors remarked, gender representation is more than who sits in which department or who leads at the top.

Achieving diversity is not easy. It's not ticking boxes. It's not just one thing. To quote the World Federation of Advertisers, "It's not just about gender, race or ethnicity. It's about all of them and more." Age, ability and sexual identity. These are all the considerations for an inclusivity agenda. We pledge to widen our focus on inclusivity further, as we've been doing globally for years.

We want to thank all the agencies that participated and hope we can count on more leaders to take part in the 2021 report.

The goal is for it to become a resource and reference point for the industry. You can rely on SheSays to be your unbiased partner in this process. We have a wide network of influencers and changemakers who are passionate about making change happen.

Perhaps subsequent surveys should delve deeper into leadership positions, board level and pay levels. Perhaps you were surprised by the statistics or feel they are incorrect? Play your part in widening the net in 2021.

We welcome your suggestions and input at [capetown@weareshesays.com](mailto:capetown@weareshesays.com).

**Anelde Greeff, Johannie van As & Pride Maunatlala**  
Directors, SheSays Cape Town



PHOTO: Estee de Villiers

# SheSays around the world



**Europe**

- Amsterdam
- Berlin
- Birmingham
- Bournemouth
- Brighton
- Copenhagen
- Gothenburg
- Helsinki
- London
- Manchester
- Milan
- Munich
- Norway

**US**

- Atlanta
- Austin
- Boston
- Boulder
- Chicago
- Dallas
- DC
- Denver
- Detroit

**Africa**

- Cape Town

- Scotland
- Stockholm
- Tirol
- Harrisburg,
- Lancaster & Philly
- Las Vegas
- Los Angeles
- Miami
- Minneapolis
- New York
- San Francisco
- Seattle

**Asia**

- Kuala Lumpur
- Manila
- Singapore

**Australia**

- Melbourne
- Sydney

**Canada**

- Halifax
- Toronto
- Vancouver

**Middle East**

- Abu Dhabi
- Dubai

**South America**

- Buenos Aires
- Montevideo
- Sao Paulo

## A global first for SheSays

As an organisation focused on the advancement of women in creative industries, we were incredibly excited about the establishment of a benchmark in South Africa – not to mention the fact that such a survey was a first for SheSays across the globe. Personally, I was always interested in understanding the dynamics of the creative industries in Africa. This study reveals that women represent the majority of the work-force but as ‘worker bees’. They are represented in many disciplines but rarely as directors or part of the C-suite. The lack of female perspective in leadership is deadly for agencies. We believe that having more women leaders is the secret sauce for positive economic impact. It can even increase the GDP of a country.

**ALESSANDRA LARIU**  
*Founder, SheSays*

### STAY IN TOUCH

 [capetown@weareshesays.com](mailto:capetown@weareshesays.com)

 SheSaysCT  @SheSaysCapeTown  @shesaysct  SheSays Cape Town

*Our role is to create and mirror culture in the real world in the service of building our clients' brands. The 'real world' is the key phrase here. The world is changing faster than we are. Meaning that we are not accurately creating or mirroring culture, which is leading to less effective communications. The faster we can get to quality proportional representation in our industry, the better the thinking will be, the more innovative the ideas will be, and the more effectively we will drive profitability for our clients.*

**MATT ROSS**  
Group ECD, King James Group SA

*Gender representation is not a number, it's an attitude. And although we strive for equal "numbers", until we are given the space to speak up in a volume we as women are comfortable with, and in a manner that we are not made to feel weaker and actually listened to, gender representation will remain something unachievable."*

**JACQUIE MULLANY**  
Executive Creative Director, VMLY&R

*Gender representation is critical in advertising. It just makes the work better. In fact, the more diversity and inclusion strides that the advertising industry can make, the better. In a world where an astounding amount of purchase decisions are made by women, we need to make sure that we have the insights and understanding around making great creative work that understands and unlocks this buying power.*

**VICKY BUYS**  
Managing Director, Ogilvy

*Diversity is the cornerstone of creativity and is the foundation on which we are building our agency. We are living in a fast changing world where it has become imperative to remove our unconscious biases, and I am committed to daily work on my own preconceived judgements, towards a world of true equality.*

**PEPE MARAIS**  
Group Chief Creative Officer, Joe Public United

# THE CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE INDUSTRY SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON DIVERSITY AND GENDER REPRESENTATION IN MARKETING AND ADVERTISING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

*Diversity is the life blood of the ideas industry. Empowering smart and diverse groups of people delivers the best ideas and grows your bottom line.*

**DAWN ROWLANDS**  
CEO, Dentsu Aegis Sub-Saharan Africa

*Without equal gender representation, any work coming out of the advertising and marketing sector will be skewed towards men. This means that our industry, which has a powerful influence on the way people think, will continue to entrench patriarchy, even if only unconsciously, rather than to erode it, which is what should happen. All people should be seen and treated as equals – and we have a long way to go in our industry before this happens. Embracing diversity will always build a better company and ultimately a better world.*

**TARA TURKINGTON**  
CEO, FLOW Communications



*It is ignorant to expect that an industry that essentially plays back to society what it is and at times, drives the aspiration agenda for a whole society, will do this successfully without taking into account the other half's (female) point of view. The sooner this is realised and is actioned upon with seriousness, the sooner our industry will progress.*

**MASEGO MOTSOGI**  
*Managing Director, TBWA*

*Women understand exclusion from experience and these efforts must ensure both men and women have an equal shot at growth. There can't be a fast-track for men and mommy-track for women. Implementation of organisational policies that reflect gender parity are also important and will ultimately drive equal pay across genders.*

**DEVASHNIE SINGH**  
*Chief People Officer, Grey*

*Without reflective gender representation, many inaccuracies will occur in how we communicate to the very people whom we are advertising to. If you do not speak to consumers in the language they understand then you will lose them. And this is what reflective gender representation is all about. For us, representation should reflect who the biggest purchasers are in society.*

**SIMONE BOSMAN & SUHANA GORDHAN**  
*Open Chair*

*Agencies will say, let's welcome diversity. In reality it really does not translate to the true definition thereof. When women bring their full womanhood of being outspoken, questioning the status quo, their curious minds and their assertiveness it is deemed as disrespectful, unpredictable and bossy by their more masculine counterparts. Diversity thus remains a critical factor in unlocking the full potential of the workplace and its culture where women can stand tall in their truth.*

**FIRDOUS OSMAN**  
*Managing Partner, Saatchi & Saatchi*

*Womxn contribute with different qualities, skills and viewpoints and thus the output is bound to be better if there is a better balance. But of course not only gender counts here.*

**ANINE DE WET**  
*Co-founder & Managing Director, 2AM Agency*

*To create work that fully resonates and grows our clients' brands, there can be no excuse for not having diversity within the people that create the communication.*

**XOLISA DYESHANA**  
*Chief Creative Officer, Joe Public*

*I don't think we should simplify it to meeting targets or setting percentages of women in our industry. We are not numbers and it becomes redundant. Rather we need to look how a business, client account or the way we work can be bettered by having more women play key roles, as an instinctive way of building teams. And I truthfully believe that when we build businesses that are not driven by archaic ideals created from toxic masculinity, we all benefit, not just women.*

**EMMA KING**  
*Founder & Managing Director, The Friday Street Club*

# THE CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE INDUSTRY SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON DIVERSITY AND GENDER REPRESENTATION IN MARKETING AND ADVERTISING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

## From our research partner

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Kantar is passionate about inclusion and diversity, so it made perfect business sense to plug the gap in sponsoring the first-ever SheSays survey on gender representation in the South African creative industry.

With the anonymous agency-wide survey wrapping up just before the world went into lockdown, it's only fitting to reveal the results in Women's Month. Having delved into the true gender split across departments, leadership and positions in ad agencies across the land, some of the findings are surprising, some are not.

Now, as advertising is increasingly becoming tech- and data-led and not only about the creative, we're keen to ensure better gender representativity across all marketing and media roles. It's the only way we can ensure a future where womxn in tech and data change the world for the better, to become more representative and inclusive across the board in this new era of progressive marketing.

We need to ensure diversity of thinking in the team behind the scenes, and collaborate rather than compete in joining the dots, as this

is not a space for ownership. Instead, brands need to bravely invest in firsts like this, based on their future potential.

But this is not just a conversation for Women's Month, as 6.5 million people (and counting) have already supported the #challengeaccepted trend, going beyond the surface-level selfie to promote global tolerance and inclusion. To ensure the inclusion conversation is 'always on', we're now going full steam ahead with sponsoring next year's survey.

We would love to see greater uptake, with more experiences and insights shared, so as to take this important topic forward and have it top of mind more than just one month a year.

To quote my colleague Ivan Moroke, CEO of Kantar South Africa, *"Here's to strong women. May we know them, may we be them, may we raise them."*

### **KARIN DU CHENNE**

*Chief Growth Officer: Africa & Middle East,  
Kantar*



*An incredible achievement by SheSays CT, and all survey participants, to set the benchmark for our current understanding of our industry's representation across multiple roles and areas of access and expertise. This is our starting point for progress and a call to action for full industry participation.*

**PAULA HULLEY,**  
*CEO, IAB SA*

## From the IAB SA & ACA

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It can be argued that our industry is often best described as a cacophony of debates. We're a creative industry, and it stands to reason then that we'll question everything, attempting to reinterpret what something means or should mean, or possibly looking at something through a lens that perhaps no-one even knew existed.

Looking at something differently in order to drive a culture change - and in so doing,

deliver to customers - is what we tell clients we do best. Yet at times it would appear that if we were to define our industry as 'an audience', we're one tough nut to crack.

One of the debates that rages on and on regards female representation in the industry, not only in the local context, but globally too. We find ourselves questioning, year after year, whether women are fairly represented in our industry. This is why a report, such as the

SheSays CT gender representation initiative, is so important.

With results in hand, we can focus on a culture of progress, and while there are many female leaders that occupy the highest positions possible within an organisation, there is no doubt that ultimately, this truth falls short at the C-Suite level and other specialist roles. Fair access and representation is the Grand Prix Prize. This is what we should be aiming for. If traditional business practice and related legacy structures have played their part in creating gaps in these areas, it is at this time of crisis and disruption, where new ways of working can drive a culture of progress and access. Some due to necessity, like working from home and flexible working hours, others due to innovation over time.

We can benchmark and set targets. We can postulate and deliberate. The reality is that

*What you measure,  
improves.*

**MPUME NGOBESE**  
Managing Director, Joe Public Connect

there is a desire to move forward, to create change, to drive the industry forward on a level playing field.

As industry bodies, we're proud of our endorsement in this industry and to have our members represented in this critical research study. We look forward to establishing this benchmark and to making progress together. As we progress together, let's consider the African proverb which states that a tree is straightened while it is still young. We're here to guide and lead by example and together we can all alter the outcome. It may take some time, but we're straightening the path ahead, we're making progress.

**MATHE OKABA, CEO, ACA &  
PAULA HULLEY, CEO, IAB SA**

## From our report sponsor

*The results of the SheSays Gender Representation Survey and the much-needed conversation around diversity and inclusivity in the workplace comes at an important time in our country. We can't ignore the increase in gender-based violence taking place throughout society; and all industries, ours included, need to play their part. We need to not only look internally to ensure real gender representation and respect across the spectrum is being addressed in the workplace, but we also need to look externally at the messages being sent, whether through the work we do or by what we say, to ensure that diversity, and gender representation, isn't just a tick box exercise on an inclusivity agenda, but rather is the foundation of all inclusive and fair future business growth.*

**MIKE ABEL**  
CEO, M&C Saatchi Abel

*It's initiatives like the SheSays Gender Representation Survey that keep us as an industry accountable and ensure we continue to have the real – and difficult – conversations. While the results show that we are on the right track – M&C Saatchi Group South Africa for instance is made up of over 60% women – the results also show that there is a lot of work still to be done, work that I know will also be pivotal to my agenda as the chairperson of the Creative Circle.*

**NEO MASHIGO**  
Chief Creative Officer, M&C Saatchi Group SA



## From the AMF

The AMF is proud to have been part of this first-ever survey into the state of gender representation in South Africa's advertising and marketing agencies. Not only has it given us a starting point to have important future conversations, but it will also shed light on the efforts necessary to work towards a more balanced leadership split – such as mentoring.

As a female CEO and the current chair of the AMF Board, I am extremely passionate about and an advocate for mentorship as I believe we as leaders need to create opportunities and strive to create the best environment for everyone to succeed and leave their own individual legacy. In today's competitive environment, mentorship is even more critical to ensure that men and women in leadership roles continue to inspire others, give constructive feedback, introduce them to the powerful world of networking as well as to provide support in a mentee's professional and personal life.

"One of the greatest values of mentors is the ability to see ahead what others cannot see and help them navigate a course to their destination." - John C Maxwell

Personally, I have had many mentors over the years who all played a different part in the

growth of my career whether it be guiding me to make well informed decisions, giving advice, increasing my confidence and motivation, assisting me in developing leadership and management qualities as well as providing me with an opportunity to learn. Mentorship has assisted me to thrive in my career and achieve my goals.

Looking back on my career, one of the biggest barriers to my success as well as achieving my goals has always been self-confidence and the guilt that comes with being a working woman, a wife, and a mother. One of my mentors gave me precious advice that has always stuck with me throughout my career when trying to find 'that balance', "Treat your career like a rubber ball, if it falls it will always bounce back. Treat your family and loved ones like a crystal ball, if it falls, it will shatter, making it very difficult to put back together"

Currently, I mentor five women as I believe women are so underrepresented in senior positions and more of them should be seated around the boardroom table. My philosophy has always been that, "success is one aspect and significance is of utmost importance".

### KOO GOVENDER

*Chairperson, AMF Board*

## Our industry.

**61%**  
female

**39%**  
male

### About the survey

The aim of the first-ever survey on gender representation in the South African advertising and marketing industry was to engage local agencies, media houses, digital agencies and related companies to get a reading on the state of gender representation. SheSays worked with the IAB, ACA and AMF to distribute the survey to their member agencies.

One representative from each agency completed the survey and the results were aggregated to keep participants anonymous.

A core group of 35 agencies participated in this inaugural survey, with M&C Saatchi Abel, Grey and Joe Public amongst those who got involved and showed their support for the initiative. This is by no means a definitive measure, but it is a benchmark from where we can track and report in future.

The survey represented 72 agency roles. Despite including the opportunity to include non-traditional gender identification within each field, we saw no data provided for these individuals.

THE  
**SHE SAYS**   
SURVEY **ON GENDER REPRESENTATION**

# Creative.

**61%**  
male

Chief Creative Officer • Executive Creative Director • Creative director • Creative head

**54%**  
female

Copywriter • Content writer

**57%**  
male

Art director

**79%**  
male

DTP

*Great work comes from great diversity and inclusivity – multiple perspectives in one room, rather than a single or common voice. Inclusion is key to team performance and diversity is a key ingredient for better decision-making among teams. Teams that include different viewpoints or thinking styles solve problems faster and produce more and higher-quality intellectual property.*

**NINO NAIDOO**  
*Operations Director, Duke*

*My own art class at university had more women than men. We have great minds here in SA and many have left our shores to head up creative departments internationally. Things may be moving in the right direction, but we have to ask ourselves why these numbers look this way. Are women leaving the industry? If so, why? Why has so much great talent gone freelance? Do women feel they need to travel to be recognised? We shouldn't still be having this conversation, but clearly we need to. We have to continue to nurture, acknowledge and retain women in the communication world to make the industry and our agencies better.*

**KIRK GAINSFORD**  
*Chief Creative Officer, MullenLowe SA*

*At its most basic, we know women in SA hold the majority of spending power. Nielsen reported in 2019 that of SA's 18 million female consumers, 71% are responsible for grocery shopping, while 60% are the primary purchaser within the household. How can we still have predominantly male marketing or creative teams delivering solutions for lifestyles or cultures they may not understand? Without women playing pivotal roles in our industry, we are missing the opportunity to provide more thoughtful, innovative marketing efforts that speak to the subtle nuances or unique characteristics of our primary consumer base.*

**ROBYN CAMPBELL**  
*Managing Director, Publicis Machine*

*Great creative solutions come from the mix of brilliant minds looking at a problem from different angles and sparking off one another. People bring themselves to their work – their beliefs, their background, their challenges and their desires. If you can harness these and get them to build off one another in a positive way, magic can happen. Magic is unlikely to happen when you get too much of the "same" working together. Sameness creates comfort not magic.*

**SARAH DEXTER**  
*Chief Executive Officer, MullenLowe SA*

*Aiming for 50:50 gender representation is setting an extremely low benchmark. Women have been systematically excluded from leadership roles in the industry for ages, especially when it comes to creative. I cannot name more than a handful of female ECDs and CCOs. We need to be aiming for a disproportionately higher percentage. That way, if we fail, we fail at 50:50.*

**TSELISO RANGAKA**  
*Group Chief Creative Officer, FCB + HelloComputer*

*I think most of our best female creative talent never really get the opportunity to make it to the highest levels of our business. There may be many factors for this, including leaving the workforce to start a family and then never really catching up once they return. I also think that too few women are promoted to first management levels – this 'broken rung' results in a disproportionately smaller management talent pool, preventing women from reaching executive leadership positions. If the talent pipeline is not diverse, top leadership will never be.*

**PAUL JACKSON**  
*Chief Executive Officer, Grey*

# Client service.

**64%**  
female

Managing director

**68%**  
female

Business unit director

**67%**  
female

Group account director

**81%**  
female

Account director

**60%**  
male

Account manager

**78%**  
female

Account executive

*Empathy. Never before has the role of Account Manager called for this as much as it does today. The complexity of the role is well beyond that which it was just 15 short years ago. The proverbial ham in the sandwich is now the ham between each slice in a sandwich stacked a loaf high. And at the risk of annoying my Y chromosome tribe, this is has never been a particular strength of many of us who are more broadsword than rapier. Dealing with the modern palette of challenges that confront the average Account Manager daily requires strength, poise, complex problem-solving skills, very little ego, strong organisational skills, and a healthy dollop of creativity. And yes, empathy. Empathy for stressed clients and colleagues and empathy for the human condition. I don't believe it's by design that we find Account Management departments overwhelmingly filled with females, it's by evolution. And as Darwin once penned: "It's not the strongest of the species that survives, but those most adaptable to change". Welcome to that change.*

**LUCA GALLARELLI**  
Group CEO, TBWA



# Data & Strategy.

**53%**  
male

Strategic director

**61%**  
female

Strategist

**91%**  
female

Research •  
Other strategy

**77%**  
male

Business analyst •  
Data analytics

*Similar people think similar thoughts. That's why we believe Diversity of Thought is a creativity necessity. This isn't just a hiring policy conversation, or a staff ratio conversation, it's also importantly about orientating around what value your agency actually brings. So in this sense diversity isn't the end point. It's the starting point.*

**ROBERT GRACE**

*Founding Partner & Head of Strategy, M&C Saatchi Group SA*

# Production.

**56%**  
female

Head of Production • Scrum  
master • Project director

**86%**  
female

Project manager

**97%**  
female

Traffic manager • Other  
production

*Gender representation is important in every industry and not just ours. Our industry has a legacy of being perceived as attracting "softer skills" which could mean a greater representation of women at most levels within an organisation. My concern, however, is the general lack of representation of women in the C-suite of many agencies. I believe it's incumbent on all leaders, both male and female, to mentor, train and develop women in business and promote equality and diversity at all levels in a way that is reflective of our society. Women hold up half the sky!*

**LANI CARSTENS**

*Group Managing & Executive Director, John Brown Media*

# Social.

**82%**  
female

Social creative director • Content director

**76%**  
female

Social media writer

**71%**  
female

Social media strategist

**67%**  
female

Social media manager

**63%**  
female

Community manager

*Diversity across the board in advertising should be table stakes. Without a mix of races, backgrounds, cultures and perspectives, there's no way to keep driving the work forward in interesting, standout and relevant ways. That applies just as much to gender representation.*

**TARYN WALKER**  
Managing Director, King James Cape Town

*Sure, the industry has worked hard to balance the male to female ratio. But what has the industry done to provide a safe space for women to thrive? Are they providing the right workshopping, coaching and training to empower women in all areas of advertising and marketing? And are they giving women the support they need to develop their own leadership styles? In short, a lot has been done to close the pay gap, but how are we preparing women and businesses so that it is sustainable?"*

**CAMILLA CLERKE**  
Executive Creative Director, HelloFCB+

# Digital.

**73%**  
male

Digital design director

**73%**  
male

UX designer

**69%**  
male

Visual designer

**64%**  
male

Multimedia designer

**78%**  
male

Business designer • UX architect •  
Interaction designer

After 21 years in digital agencies, it's disappointing to see that gender inequality in digital roles is still deeply entrenched and persistent two decades after industry maturity. Despite advances in STEM education in promoting alternative career options for young women, it's clear this has yet to translate into significant changes in local agencies. To get to 50/50, an organic approach or 'letting it happen naturally' has never worked. Systemic issues hampering gender equality include:

1. A belief that there simply isn't digital female talent 'out there' so we stop looking for it and keep hiring more men into UX, UI, business design and leadership roles
2. Pervasive societal and cultural thinking that influences the self-limiting beliefs, impostor syndrome and self-doubt that women experience when considering digital or technical roles
3. The lack of visible role models covered in the media that widely promotes the voices of men in leadership, means that our daughters never dream or even consider being the CEO, MD or Creative Director
4. Unconscious bias that favours the hiring, promotion and mentoring of digital talent that is of similar background, experience and characteristics
5. Benevolent sexism whilst often well-meaning, enforces gender stereotypes and the status quo

To combat these perceptions and to grow the ranks of female talent in all roles and all levels requires business intent. This must be part of the agency business strategy and backed by measurable targets in fixed time periods. Most importantly, let's shout about our achievements when we get to equal, team by team, agency by agency, holding company by holding company.

**EMMA CARPENTER**  
Group Design Director, Fjord - Accenture Interactive SA

# Technology.

**100%** Chief Technology Officer •  
Technical Director  
male

**82%** Front-end developer  
male

**100%** Back-end developer  
male

**100%** Software engineer  
male

**100%** App developer  
male

**75%** Quality • Product manager •  
Other tech  
male

*The figures indicate that advertising faces the same representation issues other industries face, with more technical roles being skewed towards men and roles requiring interpersonal skills being more skewed towards women. However, the difference in total employee representation versus C-Suite representation is more stark. They do not match and this is our challenge as an industry – why are so many women dropping off before they reach the highest level? Only once we study the reasons for that will we be able to address it.*

**AMANDA ALVES**  
*Head of Digital, Publicis Machine*



# WHERE ARE THE WOMEN CODERS?

**EMMA DICKS**  
Director, CodeSpace

**Read, write, count, code.** Coding has emerged as a new and powerful literacy. The ability to code is the ability to speak the languages of computers; the ability to harness computing power; and create new technologies.

Those most literate in code are men. Twice as many men report that they are able to write a computer programme, compared to women (7,8% vs 3,5%).

It follows that the people employed as "Coders" are also majority men. Men hold 7 out of 10 (73%) jobs in the IT industry worldwide. Zooming in on South Africa's advertising industry: only 1 in 5 (18%) of the people employed as front-end developers are women, and there are absolutely no female back-end developers.

Are there more male coders because men are inherently better suited to coding? Research suggests not. When analysing code written by men vs code written by women, it was found

that women were even more competent than men. According to *The Guardian*, "when researchers looked at approximately 3 million pull requests submitted on GitHub, they found that code written by women was approved at a higher rate (79%) than code written by men (75%) - but only if their gender was concealed".

Given that women can be equally good at coding as men, I think the questions we need to be asking ourselves as we consider how we can see more women learn coding skills are:

- How can we help girls feel confident to enrol in IT-related studies?
- Does the Computer Science and IT curriculum include a broad variety of projects and examples that will nurture interest across genders?
- Does the way we assess Computer Science and IT curriculum allow girls and boys to excel equally?

Study choices are related to career choices. When we choose a career path we consider our strengths, and weigh up how we can use our strengths to do work we're good at; to contribute to a field that interests us; to earn a living. We hope that our contributions will leave a lasting impression in our chosen field. Simply put, people want to do meaningful work that is fairly appreciated and remunerated.

I believe the lack of female representation in the tech industry is not because women don't have the will or ability to contribute; but because women's contributions are undervalued at multiple levels.

Women are asked to do more unpaid work than their male counterparts in the home and workplace. The value of women's work is cast with unfair doubt (the study that found women to write code of a comparable quality to men also found that women's code was only accepted by their peers if their gender was concealed). People with character traits such as dominance and aggression are promoted at higher rates than people who are collaborative

and agreeable. These are all examples of ways in which the playing field tilts towards men's success.

I believe the industry needs to ask the right questions about what needs to change to attract female talent:

- How can we give women the agency and authority they merit?
- Would ambitious women aspire to work here?
- How can we be more inclined to promote people with feminine leadership qualities alongside those with masculine leadership qualities?
- What unpaid work do we unconsciously let women take on and how can we share this equally across genders?

As the tech industry invites women in, this creates a virtuous cycle of incentivising more women to enter technical studies.

We can all help reimagine what places of work and study look like so that men and women are afforded equal opportunities to contribute to the tech industry.

*We have to have gender representation correctly in place in both the agencies who create the work aiming to steer purchasing decisions, and within brands where marketers are responsible for creating and optimising products that deliver on consumer needs. Without having the correct level of diverse thinking we will continue to miss insights and create less effective work.*

**ROBYN CAMPBELL**  
Managing Director, Publicis Machine

# Media.

**60%**  
female

Head of Media

**68%**  
female

Media strategy • Planner

**81%**  
female

Media buyer

*The advertising industry has historically been very male dominated, so the fact that more and more women are taking the reins of leading agencies and creative teams is really inspiring. We believe there needs to be a good mix of diversity, especially in advertising. How can we sell brands if we only have insights from one side – be it age, race or gender?*

**CATHERINE MAYROCOLEAS & KATHERINE FREEMANTLE**  
*Managing Partners, Elevator*

*Representation is important in most industries as you need to speak to all customers, whether non-binary, transgender, male, female. Even if a product or service is directed towards only one target market, there are still friends and family who might purchase on someone else's behalf. Diversity of voice and view creates strength when generating campaigns to reach and touch people.*

**LAUREN SHANTALL**  
*Director, Scout PR & Social Media*

*Women have the skill and drive which contributes to the very fabric and success of our industry. If dedication, talent and ability was used as criteria, then determining a ratio of women to men would not be in question*

**ZUMURRUD RINQUEST**  
*Managing Director, Curious & Creative*

# Support.

**60%**  
male

Finance Director

**81%**  
female

Finance team

**86%**  
female

HR Director

**65%**  
female

HR team

**100%** IT Director  
male

**85%** Other support  
female

*The strength that lies in the feminine spirit has yet to be explored. The apparent imbalance on all fronts in society which therefore permeates our businesses is largely due to a reluctance to embrace a different way to that of males. Understanding and embracing a different energy will bring forth a realisation on the importance of gender representation in our industry. It is vital to have that balance. Enough research has been done to qualify the benefits of female leadership in countries and in businesses globally, very often with results far exceeding expectation.*

**LEBO MASILELA**  
*Human Capital Executive, The Brave Group*

## We're not progressive or purposeful – our house is not in order

In the present heightened tensions around race it is easy to forget that the most oppressed group on earth are not people of colour, but women. That takes nothing away from the struggles that black people face – and black women most of all – but it is a helpful reality check.

I know that I will have lost some readers right there in paragraph one. They will say: But women can vote; women have a voice. MeToo has brought to the fore issues as diverse as pay inequality and sexual abuse. Powerful women are everywhere: whether it's Angela Merkel or Nancy Pelosi; Beyonce or Caster Semenya. Brands are awake to women's issues. Agencies are fast-tracking female creatives and awards shows are upweighting their percentage on juries. All, surely, is well?

And feminists (a group I happily call home) are full of shit and will never be happy.

This is the paragraph with the sobering stats, then. In South Africa 56% of women murdered are killed by an intimate partner. 25-40% of SA women have been victims of gender-based violence in their lifetime, with 12-28% having been raped (these figures demonstrate how hard collecting accurate data is). The gender

pay gap remains, globally, in the 30% range. And that's without factoring in the uneven burden women carry for childcare that often removes them from the workplace entirely.

Whether you find these stats shocking or not – we are all inured to scary numbers by now – there can be no denying that much of the battle lies ahead. We stand on the shoulders of great feminist leaders from Mary Wollstonecroft to Simone de Beauvoir to Winnie Mandela – but with an injunction to remember that the fight goes on. Those who seek to slow it down with bullying or demeaning rhetoric are familiar phantoms. We need to keep our eye on the prize.

The ad industry is, sadly, just a statistical norm within this broader context. If we want to be hailed as progressive and purposeful, we have to put our own house in order first. That's the task bequeathed to us by an industry renowned – as many are – for sexism in our ranks and in our work.

I stand – and VMLY&R globally stands – ready. We are far from perfect, but we are, at least, orientated in the right direction.

**BY JARRED CINMAN, CEO, VMLY&R SA**

## Are we thanking fish for swimming?

When I was a young'un my colleagues would ask me to request a team lunch from our boss whenever we felt like we'd worked hard enough to justify asking. I was always the one going in to ask because "She likes you." I knew

it was because I'm a loud mouth and I knew the drill so well.

She'd ask, "Why exactly do you guys feel like you deserve a team lunch?" and I'd

respond, "These past few weeks have been really hectic." To which she'd say, "You're basically asking me to thank fish for swimming."

There would be a loaded silence coupled with a sardonic smile from her. The team PA would duly make reservations at a spot of our choosing. Even though our hard work had "earned" this "reward", we knew to bring our laptops to keep working – as this would help for our next ask.

This is my longwinded way of illustrating my view of the advertising industry and inclusivity; the industry really, really wants to be thanked for being fish that swim.

"We're 100% about transformation, we've just appointed a black XYZ or we're now BBE level X" or "Look! A woman is the head of XYZ at our agency". Really? The entire industry – which has been 'frozen by privileged blinders' – now needs applause for "letting in" 5 people every 12-18 months?

## Letting creativity thrive

I was lucky to have grown up in a family without the notion that I am inferior as a woman. My brother had as many house chores as I did. I had an equal opportunity to education, and my father pushed me to strive for more.

It wasn't until I started working I realised that I was disadvantaged as a woman, that I have to work harder and have more to prove. Just because I am a woman.

I have been in the industry for over 20 years, in Singapore and South Africa. Most creative directors I have worked with are men. Most CEOs (agency and client side) I have worked

So, what should an inclusivity agenda look like? It looks like inclusivity being a strategic matter for all, backed by actions. It looks like people of colour and women being hired, not just for optics, in the right positions and at every level and being mentored into leadership roles.

It looks like agencies need to start evaluating their cultures to establish if they are ready for the shift required for diversity to thrive. Fix it if it isn't. Ask if you're unsure.

It is no longer good enough to simply swim, we need industry leaders to swim a little upstream so that we can start seeing real and believable changes in our industry, for the betterment of our industry.

**BY MANDISA NCUBANE, Group Account Director, Think Creative Africa**

with are men. Most CMOs I have worked with are men.

On the other hand, half of the consumers we are conversing with are women. More than half of our household shoppers are women. More than half of our purchasing decisions for the home are made by women. I think it is time for women to ask for more from men.

Women shouldn't just be represented by numbers in the businesses. We need equal representation at the leadership table. We need equal compensation policies. We need HR policies that do not put women at a disadvantage when they have children. We



need men to step up to share household responsibilities equally at home.

Creativity thrives when there are different opinions and healthy debates. When conventional thinking is being challenged. This can only happen when there is enough representation of women (and other minority

groups) at the leadership table, driving decisions and policies that are not one-sided, but inclusive and representative of our societies.

**BY MICHELLE BEH, Managing & Strategic Director, The Jupiter Drawing Room**

## It all starts with data

Advocating for gender equality in our local creative industry and having meaningful conversations about how to address it starts with access to data. With the first SheSays gender survey, we can finally see key trends and begin to understand the commercial impact inequality is having on our businesses, clients, their customers and crucially our emerging talent of all genders. Creating a culture of equality, accelerating and leading change from within, is not a nice-to-have, it's an essential strategy for all agencies to stay in business.

Our creative workforce is one that expects a commitment to:

- **Bold leadership:** A diverse leadership team that sets, shares and measures

equality targets openly.

- **Comprehensive action:** Policies and practices that are family-friendly, support both genders and are bias-free in attracting and retaining people.
- **An empowering environment:** One that trusts employees, respects individuals and offers freedom to be creative and to train and work flexibly.

Creating a diverse and equal team means they are six times more likely to have an innovative mindset and less afraid to fail in the pursuit of new ideas. Everything we want our creative talent to be, so what are we waiting for?"

**BY EMMA CARPENTER, Group Design Director Fjord, Accenture Interactive SA**

## The case for inclusive perspectives

The role of an agency is to bring to life the brand's value proposition, in a way that resonates with the target market. Given that women dominate consumer goods purchasing decisions and buying, given that women run by far the majority of households in our country, it's fair to say that the majority of briefs in any agency would aim at, or include,

women. Even for traditionally male-oriented categories such as cars, banking & travel.

And yet there is still a massive imbalance towards men in the Creative C-Suite and departments, and in particular in agency leadership. It's not to say you have to be who you are talking to. But, the voice of the

consumer, the insights into their world, have to be heard in the creative development process.

The divide between creative and account management (one traditionally more male, and the other traditionally more female) exacerbates the lack of this inclusive perspective.

The other big question to ask is why women are not staying in the industry. An unknown and as yet unanswered factor is the "boy's club", the sexual advances or worse, the drinking and male sport-oriented bonding, the long hours (made almost impossible for women when kids come along).

Overall, the industry needs to treat all of its people with more respect. Let them go home at a reasonable hour. Defend their time from clients with unreasonable demands. Support your staff with any and all means to live a balanced and fulfilled life. Change the way

and where they work so it suits them. Get them coaching, get them counselling if they're struggling. Build their professional skills. Let them watch their kids' plays or sports matches. Celebrate family, instead of treating it like a hindrance. They are not separate beings at work and at home. "Family" is another core target market, by the way.

In terms of inclusivity, look at the brands in your stable. Find people that resonate with your brands' target audiences, who can identify with their worlds and their struggles. You are not always going to find those people in ad schools, or from referrals from other people like you. Look harder, look deeper.

And then – nurture, train, listen. Build your people into more than the sum of your parts.

**BY GILLIAN RIGHTFORD, Founder & Managing Director, AdTherapy**

## Encouraging results – and a call to arms

South Africa's gender breakdown according to Stats SA is 49% male – 51% female, almost an equal split. The SheSays Kantar study revealed that within the South African advertising context however, the split is much more female skewed than the national percentile at 61% female, 39% male.

South Africa's Constitution sets out gender equality as a founding principle, and the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill in particular calls for 50% representation in decision-making positions. Although South Africa has made great strides, gender representation is still below the 50% mark for positions that come with influence. A 2019 report by PricewaterhouseCoopers revealed that only 3.31% of chief executives of JSE-listed companies are women. The advertising

industry is definitely much more progressive than many other corporates, but women are still relatively underrepresented in executive positions.

The results of the SheSays Kantar Gender representation in advertising survey is very encouraging. The data shows that certain disciplines are skewed towards specific genders. Disciplines that are male dominated include digital, multimedia, UX and tech. There is a clear need to either attract or upskill women in the digital design domain as well as in tech. Female-skewed disciplines include data & strategy, social, production, media and client service. However, even within the disciplines that are female dominated, the general trend tends to be that the heads of departments are skewed towards

males. This once again emphasises the underrepresentation of women in positions of decision-making and authority.

Not disregarding the critical additional disciplines without which the industry could not function, it is very encouraging to see gender equality within the creative discipline. It is critical for the industry (as a whole, but especially within the creative departments) to be representative, in order to create work that can speak to the hearts and minds of all South Africans. In saying this, it is also critical that the next round of the study includes race, as equality does not only imply gender, but also racial representation.

The goal for the advertising industry should be to work towards equality (gender and racial) across all disciplines and designations. Females

of colour in executive positions are also a critical milestone for the industry to strive towards.

Thank you to SheSays and Kantar for embarking on this journey towards gaining a better understanding of what is happening in the industry. I would encourage all agencies to partake in this study in future in order to understand what our strengths and shortcomings are when it comes to building an equal and representative industry. Only once we've established an industry that truly reflects our nation can we represent the people of our nation more accurately through the brands we represent, build and grow.

**BY MIA CRONJE, Head of Strategy,  
Saatchi & Saatchi**

## Diversity as a client-agency agenda

The client-agency relationship has always been celebrated as a collaborative intention to bring meaningful work into the world. The important message of this decade is towards inclusivity in all spaces. Brands are pouring out campaign after campaign to show consumers their support for the marginalised groups in society. These messages are relevant to the moment, however, run the risk of being inauthentic if not followed by realism and action. There is a reason that despite the influx of campaigns, groups historically excluded in communication still feel unseen and unheard. The act of inclusivity cannot be in words alone but has to be in action. That action has to be seen beyond the campaign itself.

As brand custodians, we need to shift our focus from only emphasising what work we put out, to revealing how the work was

produced and by whom. This is the same shift products have made creating transparency around their production practices and efforts towards sustainability are accounted for. But before we bring this transparency to consumers, we need to ask questions to check ourselves as campaign collaborators first.

As brand custodians, there are many examples of the precautions we take to grow and protect our brands. We are uncomfortable not working with the best talent. We have processes to mitigate any potential reputational risks when producing campaigns. We have to then ask ourselves why we would be so comfortable producing messages promoting inclusivity with partners who do not represent inclusivity?

I have to acknowledge that one of the reasons may be that perhaps we do not know what diversity should look like. Even so, we know what the absence of diversity looks like and we should start there with calling out those obvious opportunities for change. When it comes to gender diversity, let's normalise asking each other the right questions.

Ask your agency partners where are the women in their teams when none are present. Ask your client why their female voices are not heard in meetings when their contribution is

not acknowledged. When providing for new business, create criteria for gender inclusivity in teams as part of the pitch process.

The intention is to bring 'walking the talk' to the partnership. Brands and agencies must want to win awards together, and change the industry for good in the process.

**BY PRIDE MAUNATLALA, Marketing  
Executive, The Foschini Group**

*The world in general is failing at creating spaces where female talent can grow into top positions, because the world and our industry does not take gender diversity seriously. Most organisations talk about it, but there is no strategy or commitment from senior or executive leadership on this, even though research shows that companies with a greater share of women on their boards of directors and executive committees tend to perform better financially. In addition to this, the ideas around what people consider to be good, or rather necessary, leadership skills need to change. There is still a significant amount of unlearning that needs to happen with regards to what qualifies as leadership.*

**THITHI NTETA  
Deputy Managing Director, FCB Joburg**

# Think. Say. Do.

**Thoughts, words and actions matter.** Here are some thought starters.

## Think

**Hold yourself accountable for your prejudices.** Everyone has them. When you have a biased thought, ask yourself the uncomfortable questions to understand what forces are at play to make you think this way. Then do the internal work to combat them.

**Check yourself.** Ask whether you need to present an opinion or answer a question. Whose viewpoint is not usually heard? Is there a team member you can give a voice to?

**Listen more.** Be aware of how much space you're taking up. Are you talking over anyone? Have you asked for women's opinions? Make sure you're not centring yourself in the work.

**Intersectionality.** Not every woman's experience is the same. Address other dimensions of identity: race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical activity, class, education and many other factors affect a person's experience in the world and at work.

**Don't reinforce stereotypes.** When conceptualising or reviewing work, ask yourself who benefits from the way this story is being told, over and above your clients? What message are you sending out into the world? Then make sure your work isn't reinforcing negative stereotypes.

## Say

**Normalise inclusive language.** We're all in the business of communication and we know how important words are. Say "parental leave" instead of "maternity leave". Don't use loaded terms, like calling women "bossy", "sassy" or "emotional".

**Reinforce contributions from women and people of colour.** If someone makes a point that's being ignored or someone else has tried to take credit for, speak up. Use their name and highlight the point that they made. It doesn't have to derail a conversation; it can be

as simple as using their name and reiterating the point, or including them on an email thread.

**Ask team members** if they're able to fully express themselves at work, and if not, suggest ways you could help and check if your team member is comfortable with it. These conversations can be scary and

uncomfortable, but they're necessary.

**Question the service providers we support.**

Not just hiring models and directors, think about choosing a place to go for a team event or a company to print your t-shirt. Is there a way to give someone newer to the industry a chance? The more you ask, the more those around you will begin to ask too.

## Do

**Set an agenda with measurable goals and a time frame.** Then make sure it's executed meaningfully. It's not there to tick boxes or make your company look good. It's the right people being hired for the right position at every level. It's meaningful opportunities and mentorship for women and people of colour.

**Hire for 'culture add' instead of 'culture fit'.** The current culture is the problem, so we need to change it from within.

**Allow everyone to benefit.** For example, if your business allows moms to work flexible hours to accommodate childcare, make sure everyone has those opportunities. Normalise the dads in your team taking parental leave, and respect that child-free women also have responsibilities or could benefit from flexible hours in some other way.

*Transformation in our industry has moved beyond just talking about it, we have moved to a new era of accountability and action. Just like how racially transforming our industry is not the responsibility of a particular race, equally gender transformation is the responsibility of all, males and females, who care about the sustainability and growth of our industry. It's our collective responsibility to correct the injustices and inequality experienced daily by the black majority – especially women – in our industry.*

**VELI NGUBANE**  
**Founding Partner & Chief Creative Officer, Avatar**



# SHE SAYS

Who's Your Momma is the free one-on-one mentorship scheme by SheSays available in London, NY, Chicago, Singapore, LA, Sydney and Cape Town. Run by volunteers of SheSays Cape Town, our mission is to develop talent and further the careers of dynamic, ambitious and driven women in our industry by pairing them up with equally dynamic veterans with years of experience and in positions of leadership.

## WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

A mentor is someone who listens to your ideas, asks insightful questions, helps you develop your future career path and shares their own advice and experiences, all to focus your future career and develop the skills that will help you get there. They're an objective sense-check when you need a second opinion and your cheerleader when you need some support.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Fill out our information form and indicate whether you would be interested in being a mentee or a mentor. Our team will then pair you up based on your specific career path, experience and goals. Finding the right

mentor and mentee match may take a bit of time, so have patience – the perfect match is worth the wait!

Once we've introduced you two, it's up to you to make contact and set goals and objectives you want to achieve over the next six months. While it's up to the mentor to lead the discussion and guide the mentee, it's up to the mentee to organise each meeting and make sure they come to the session prepared. Our team is always available to answer questions, help you with any challenges you face and support you in building a power relationship with your mentor or mentee. We'll be sharing helpful tips and information along the way.

Any questions, please get in touch at [capetown@weareshesays.com](mailto:capetown@weareshesays.com)



# Agency gender equality & inclusivity programmes

Many agencies and networks have formalised their focus on driving gender quality, diversity and inclusion with a specific roadmap or programme, or regular events. Here are just a few examples we salute.

## TBWA: Take the Lead & Circle of Women

**Take the Lead:** Programme focused on advancing gender equality within the collective, which has evolved to focus on diversity, equality and inclusion.

**Circle of Women:** Programme of training and coaching for women on the cusp of leadership.

## Havas Academy

Professional development institution empowering black women keen on entering the marketing and communications sector.

## Machine\_Diversity & Inclusion Roadmap

Driven by an internal committee, it focuses on raising the consciousness, representation, inclusion as well as the upward mobility of

diverse talent within the agency and fostering an environment of open, honest dialogue, where every voice is heard.

## WPP Stella

An international leadership and networking group for female senior leaders across the global WPP network, focussing on empowering female senior executives and enhancing their potential.

## Accenture (to name but a few)

**Accenture Women's Forum:** Open to all women with a focus on achieving a 50/50 gender balanced workforce by 2025.

**Insight Programme:** Executive leadership training for female Senior Managers

**Voices of Change:** Event partnership to drive discussion on gender parity.

## M&C Saatchi Group SA D&I

A D&I committee mandated with eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal opportunity & instilling Diversity of Thought.



# Don't talk about change. Change

DANI HYNES | *Free the Work Ambassador for SA & Co-Founder of Made Films*

Under-representation, across all genders and race groups, is something that we all need to address. Actively and urgently. We don't need a reason beyond "we all exist". Every one of us has an obligation to reach out to anyone who didn't get a seat at the table. We all need to make space, take up space and leave no room for exclusion. It is everyone's job to rewrite the current narrative. Whether we believe we have been guilty of something or not. This is a human rights issue. It seems to be one that companies and industries can no longer afford to ignore, nor should they want to. Short-term discomfort is no longer an acceptable argument for continuing an outdated MO.

We can't keep pay gaps open - so close them. We can't expect more from people who had fewer chances to begin with - so adjust your expectations, focus on teaching and growth. Just start. Don't wait for a perfect plan. Start now. With the people you have. Learn as you go. Don't worry only about percentages. Don't talk about change. Change. Find ways to let people in and give them the chance to be who they are without fear of reproach. It's not perfect. But without a plan to try, fail, try harder and fail harder - you'll never know better. If you don't know better, you'll never get to do better. So now you know. From today, just learn how to do better.

*Communication that breaks through is communication that is relevant to people and speaks to their lives and their reality. So the communication industry needs to be made up of people who reflect the diverse makeup of our society.*

**FRAN LUCKIN**  
*Chief Creative Officer, Grey*

# THANK YOU!

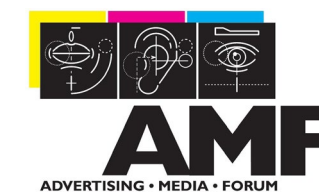
This survey and report would not have been possible without the invaluable support of these organisations.

**KANTAR**

**M&CSAATCHI  
GROUP SOUTH AFRICA**



association for  
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# GET INVOLVED

If you would like to support, contribute to or partner with SheSays Cape Town on the 2021 survey, please contact us at [capetown@wearesheays.com](mailto:capetown@wearesheays.com) to share your thoughts or suggestions.

THE  
**SHE SAYS**   
SURVEY **ON GENDER REPRESENTATION**