

# WEPs COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE TOOLKIT

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A Resource for WEPs Signee Companies

In support of

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**WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT  
PRINCIPLES**

Established by UN Women and the  
UN Global Compact Office

Sign the Principles. Share your Success.



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

This publication was prepared by UN Women consultant Ketevan Maminaishvili within the framework of the project "A Joint Action for Women's Economic Empowerment in Georgia" supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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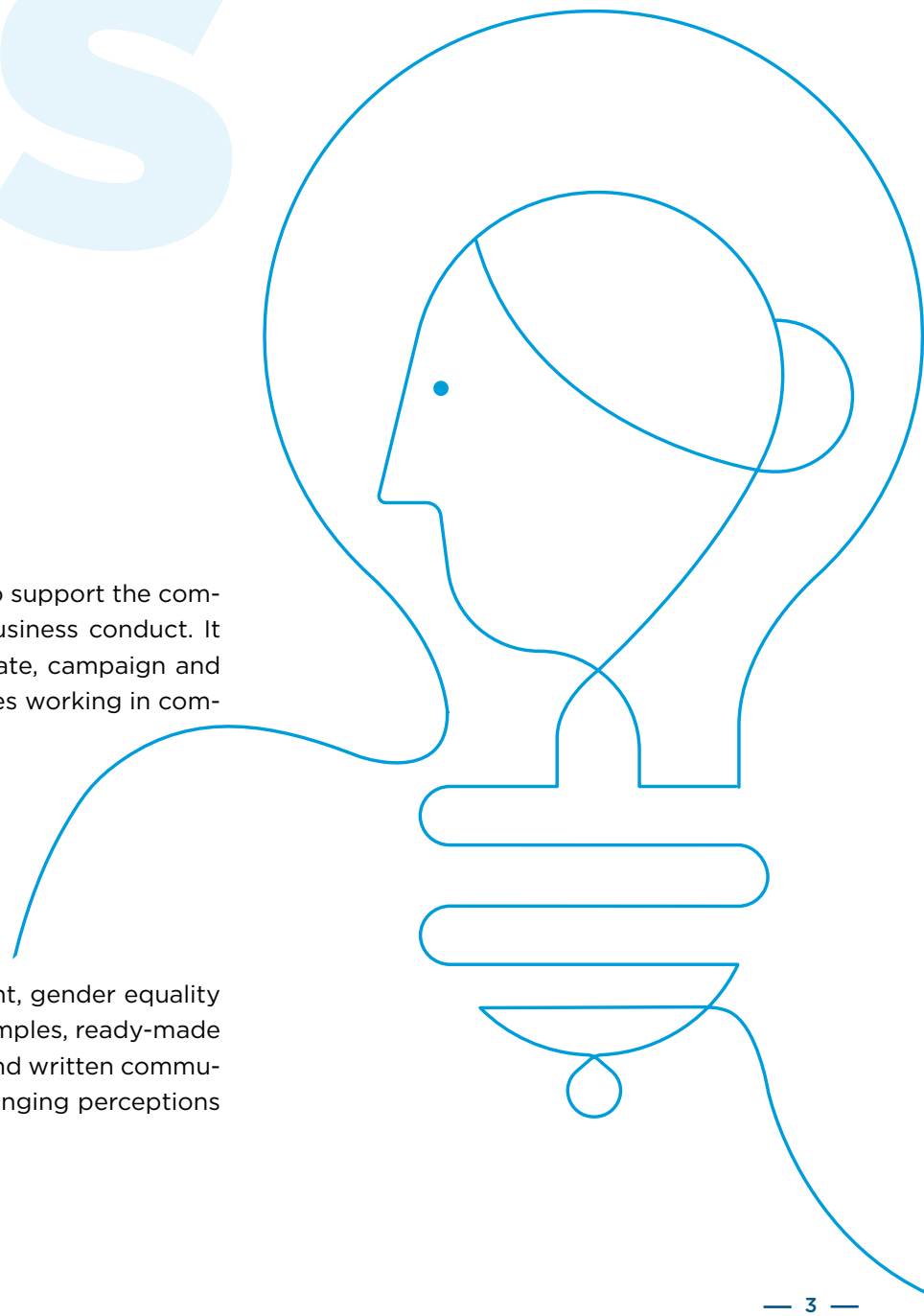
# WEPS

## WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

Women's Empowerment Principles Communications Guidance Toolkit is intended to support the companies that signed WEPs in promoting gender equality and gender responsive business conduct. It aims at building the capacity of WEPs signee companies to inclusively communicate, campaign and report in a way that further stimulates WEPs work. Toolkit can be used by colleagues working in communications and knowledge management, including gender/WEPs focal points.

## WHAT IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

This Toolkit is a hands-on guide on how to communicate on women's empowerment, gender equality and how to integrate gender equality into campaigns. It also suggests concrete examples, ready-made messages that will practically serve companies in using inclusive language for oral and written communications, visual and audio materials, embedding gender equality perspectives, changing perceptions and stereotypes, as well as driving and accelerating impact.



# About WEPs

The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of Principles offering guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Established by UN Global Compact and UN Women, the WEPs are informed by international labor and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for gender equality and women's empowerment.

By joining the WEPs community, companies signal commitment to foster business practices that empower women. They also have an important role to play in promoting gender equality among the private sector by sharing information about their WEPs commitment and encouraging others to join.



# The seven WEPs:

- PRINCIPLE 1:** Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality  

- PRINCIPLE 2:** Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and non-discrimination  

- PRINCIPLE 3:** Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers  

- PRINCIPLE 4:** Promote education, training and professional development for women  

- PRINCIPLE 5:** Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women  

- PRINCIPLE 6:** Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy  

- PRINCIPLE 7:** Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality  

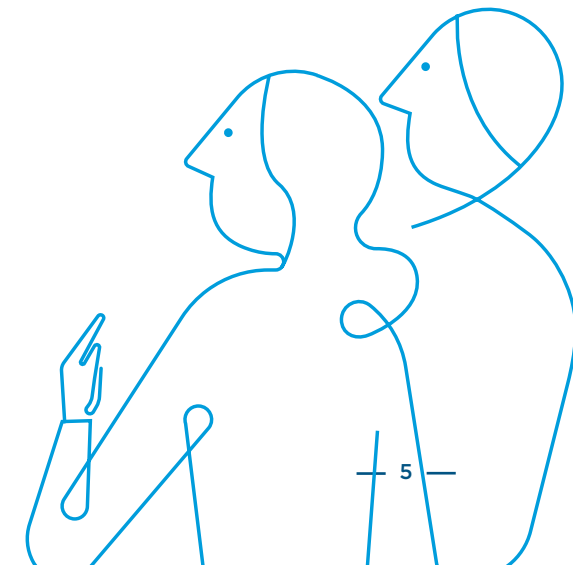

## Examples of activities to promote the WEPs:

In this brochure we are trying to provide ideas for communicating on actions that support positive gender norms in the workplace, marketplace and community.

- ▶ Share a [statement of support](#) for the WEPs from the CEO/C-suite of your company;
- ▶ Share the ready-made messages available below on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Tweeter, etc.) and using the hashtags: #WEPs and/or #EqualityMeansBusiness and/or #We-Empower with your strongest policy and workplace policies; tag @UN Women Georgia;
- ▶ Create your [company profile](#) on weps.org;
- ▶ Create your CEO Quote card;
- ▶ Let your company staff know that you committed to WEPs by sending an [internal communication template](#);
- ▶ Send out an [external communication template](#) out to let stakeholders know about your commitment to the WEPs;
- ▶ Organize a presentation or webinar on WEPs to your organization/group, led by a member of the WEPs Secretariat at UN Women;
- ▶ Host an event to showcase your best practices and policies for women's empowerment in the workplace and encourage stakeholders to join in;
- ▶ Create a podcast, blog or video and sharing it with stakeholders to let them know how your company promotes the women's economic empowerment.
- ▶ Learn more about general rules on the gender-sensitive communications below.
- ▶ Include text and logo below on your organization's website and other materials in line with the [WEPs logo policy](#)
- ▶ Check the news and updates on [www.weps.org](http://www.weps.org).

## LOGO:

The “In Support of” logo may be used by the WEPs signatories for promotional activities aimed at increasing awareness of the WEPs and provided that it aligns with the [WEPs logo policy](#) and that you have completed the [logo use agreement](#).



Download printable banners, postcards, posters, evergreen cards, quote cards, stickers and other promotional materials: For English: [www.trello.com/b/c3bOtDjQ/weps-welcome-package](http://www.trello.com/b/c3bOtDjQ/weps-welcome-package); For Georgian: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xG8frLjIUCPq8qK--JR-pSdj9z-ANg6/view?usp=sharing>

Communicate your commitment. Download and edit the commitment card template, then print and display this in your offices.



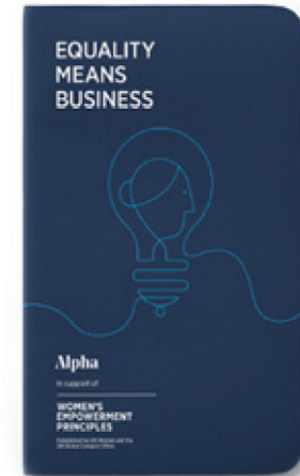
Download and personalize the social media card template and share on all your platforms. Be sure to tag @UN Women Georgia and use the hashtags: #WEPs, #EqualityMeansBusiness, #WeEmpower.



Download and use the evergreen cards for any occasion, then share on your social media platforms. Be sure to tag @UN Women Georgia and use the hashtags: #WEPs, #EqualityMeansBusiness, #WeEmpower



Make your commitment and actions visible. Display them in your office, at your desks, during events and conferences, everywhere!



When displaying banners, please always use the black banner with all seven Principles to show your commitment to implementing the entire WEPs Framework. If your activity focuses on a particular Principle, you can also display that Principle banner along with the black banner.



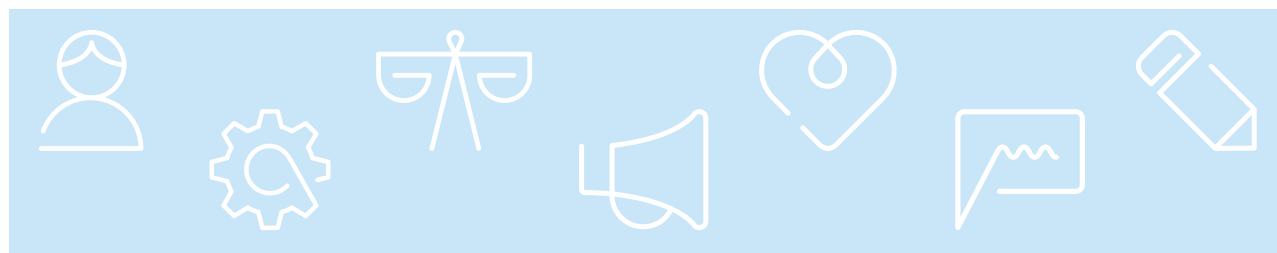
## Gender Sensitive Communications and the Role that WEPs Companies can Play

Companies that signed Women's Empowerment Principles undertook particular responsibility to carry out meaningful and responsible communication. Wide outreach allows WEPs companies to play an important role in advocating for gender equality, challenging stereotypes, changing attitudes and beliefs through communicating on WEPs work and changing the whole narrative on women.

Why should companies care about gender-sensitive communications?

- ⇒ Contributing to social transformation by bringing the gender equality filter to communications
- ⇒ Breaking gender stereotypes through mass communications
- ⇒ Being pioneers in the business world through their sphere of influence
- ⇒ Extending the value-based reputation management approach to all business areas
- ⇒ Increasing the brands' values by acting with social sensitivity.

Companies are not only strongly encouraged to communicate on WEPs and gender equality but also to effectively campaign for women's and girl's rights. Whether companies may integrate gender considerations into the communications or plan/implement campaign actions for gender equality they may consider using a gender equality and women's rights lens at every stage of planning and implementation.



## Suggested social media messages

Here, we suggest some messages about WEPs membership and WEPs commitments that can be used for broader communication. Companies may consider the following sample texts and example:



### SIGNING THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

*Our company is a proud signatory of the Women's Empowerment Principles, global initiative developed by UN Women and UN Global Compact. We encourage also other companies to join and commit to gender equality! #EqualityMeansBusiness #UN Women Georgia*

*(Tag your company) we're so excited about our progress towards #genderequality. Take it a step further and sign the @WEPs at <https://www.weps.org/join>!*

*By implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles and joining the 3500+ other signatories, our company got a framework to help guide us in promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment. It is good for business, good for women, good for society and good for the economy. We encourage other companies to join us on the road to equality! #EqualityMeansBusiness*

*We're serious about our commitment to gender equality because everyone benefits from it. We signed the #WEPs! What about you? @UN Women Georgia #EqualityMeansBusiness*

*Our company is a proud signatory of the Women's Empowerment Principles. Make your commitment to gender equality public - Join us by signing the #WEPs TODAY! #WeEmpower*



### SHARING BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES & WORKPLACE STORIES

*(Tag your company) we are proud to (insert achievement/ proud moment i.e. offer parental leave top-up to both fathers and mothers in our office). We are excited about our progress and cannot wait to do more! #EqualityMeansBusiness @UN Women Georgia*

*Today we (insert achievement/proud moment)!!! We are one-step closer to gender equality in our workplace. #WeEmpower*

*GOAL ACHIEVED (share achievement of objective/ goal RE diversity & inclusion/ gender equality) If we can do it so can you! #WeEmpower*

*We're proud to share that we (insert achievement/ proud moment) to promote gender equality in our workplace! We're calling on YOU to share your initiatives towards a more equal <https://www.weps.org/join> @UN Women Georgia*



### CAMPAIGN LAUNCH & PARTICIPATION ANNOUNCEMENT

*Everyone benefits from gender equality and we are celebrating our achievements during #GenderEqualityWeek. We joined #WEPs. Sign the #WEPs and share stories of your achievements today! @UN Women Georgia*

*Gender diverse boards are more likely to allocate effort into corporate monitoring and increase participation in decision-making! #WEPs #UN Women Georgia*

*Women can positively influence board's strategic decisions and tasks! Sign the WEPs here: <https://www.weps.org/join>*

*Women directors improve firms' ability to navigate complex strategic issues and increase participation in decision-making! Longitudinal studies found a correlation between promoting women to executive positions and high profitability over 20+ years! Join us by signing the #WEPs @UN Women Georgia*

*#EqualityMeansBusiness We are proud to step up as a responsible business that ensures diversity in supply chains, including discovering women-owned businesses and supporting them by sourcing their products and service #WeEmpower*





*We are expanding and we are hiring new employees. Our company doesn't discriminate upon gender, age and other characteristics during the selection of the candidates. Diverse hiring practices increase the recruiting pool and is a more effective use of talent and leadership! ! #WeEmpower @UN Women Georgia*

*Our company is looking for IT professionals and web developers. The sphere of technologies is mostly male dominated and our company is not an exception. We are looking forward to diversifying our workforce and bringing more women into the industry. Therefore, we strongly encourage women and girls to apply to this vacancy. By bringing more women we are giving access to more talent.*

*Women entrepreneurs enhance household living standards, contributing to the development of the country and the whole economy! Empowering women is part of our social responsibility, and we*

*are delighted to support women entrepreneurs in reaching this goal. #WeEmpower @UN Women Georgia*

*Our company declares zero tolerance to gender-based violence. Violence against women is a crime and will be punished by law #genderequality #WeEmpower #EqualityMeansBusiness @UN Women Georgia*

*In order for change to occur, a paradigm shift is needed where organizations' leadership values diversity, recognizes the challenge of expressing diverse opinions, and aims to support the professional development of all employees #WeEmpower #WeEmpower #EqualityMeansBusiness @UN Women Georgia*

*#WeEmpower We are proud of our company's advancements for Women's Economic Empowerment and would like to share our story...*



## General Rules on Gender-Sensitive Communication (Written, Oral and Visual)

Here are some general rules how you to ensure equal representation of men and women and challenge gender perceptions and stereotypes through communications:

### **RULE 1:**

Ensure equal representation of men and women

Women and men, both should be seen, heard, and treated equally in corporate media products and messages. It is important to ensure that quotes from both men and women are included in press releases, stories and other communications. Additionally, presenting female voices in traditionally male roles and vice versa contributes to deconstructing stereotypes and gender norms. Such messages, including visuals and written messages can have a positive impact on people's attitudes over time. When preparing press releases, stories and other materials it is important to plan ahead and clarify how women's and men's voices can be captured.

### **RULE 2:**

Avoid gendered pronouns (he or she) when the person's gender is unknown

Instead you should use gender-neutral language.

A common way to do this is to use the plural 'they'. This is becoming more and more common in standard English.

### *Examples*

- × Every nurse should take care of her own uniform and cover the expense herself.
- √ Every nurse should take care of his or her own uniform and cover the expense themselves.
- × Summit attendees and their wives are invited.
- √ Summit attendees and their partners are invited.

### **RULE 3:**

Avoid irrelevant information about gender

When you are speaking or writing about occupations, do not provide irrelevant information about people's gender. Instead you should simply use the occupation title with no gender description.

Another common way that gender is included in writing about people when it is not relevant is through using gendered nouns (e.g. policeman and policewoman). Instead you should use something gender-neutral (e.g. police officer).

### *Example*

- × This team works closely with the chairman of the social action committee to plan events.
- √ This team works closely with the chair/chairperson of the social action committee to plan events.

*Few more examples:*

Gender-discriminatory language	Gender-neutral language
Businessman or businesswoman	Business executive
Repairman	Repairer, technician
Steward or Stewardess	Flight attendant
Salesman	Salesperson, sales clerk

### **RULE 4:**

Avoid gendered stereotypes as descriptive terms

Avoid using words which imply a gender connotation to describe an aspect of a person or object. These expressions normally paint the feminine as the negative. Describing something as feminine is used as an insult, often to mean weak or ineffective.

### *Examples*

- × Paul's ladylike handshake didn't impress his new boss, who believes salespeople need a firm handshake.
- √ Paul's weak handshake didn't impress his new boss, who believes salespeople need a firm handshake.
- × You throw like a girl.
- √ You do not throw well.

## RULE 5:

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Avoid gendering inanimate objects

Word choices often reflect unconscious assumptions about values, gender roles and the abilities of women and men. For example, the term man is used to describe the experience of all human beings: “fatherland”, “mankind”, “spokesman”, etc. This should be avoided and replaced by neutral language that could contribute to gender equality and minimize the unconscious acceptance of gender-inequality (for example, “homeland”, “humankind”, “spokesperson”).

### *Examples*

Delegates are free to make presentation in their mother tongues.

Delegates are free to make presentation in their native languages.

## RULE 6:

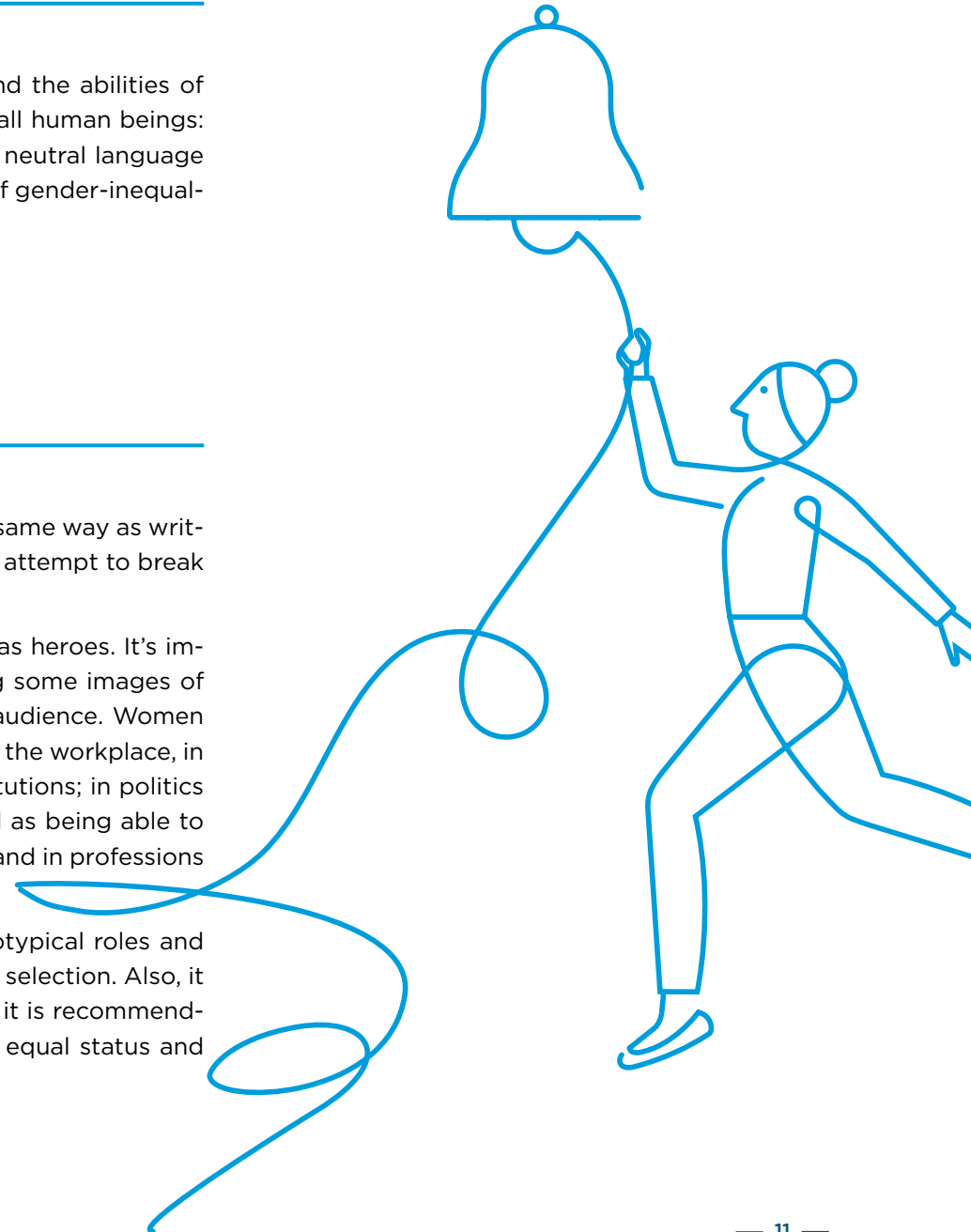
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Avoid using stereotypical images

Ideas are communicated not only through language, but also through images. In the same way as written materials, the depiction of women and men in the visual communications should attempt to break with notions of gender roles that perpetuate gender inequalities.

In terms of images, women are too often pitied as victims or alternatively idealized as heroes. It's important to present a more honest and rounded picture and be creative while trying some images of women and men in non-traditional roles that might be found inspirational to your audience. Women and men should be portrayed as equals and active participants in all aspects of life: in the workplace, in manual labor positions and in white-collar professions; at home; at educational institutions; in politics and in civil society; in public life and in the community. Women should be depicted as being able to leverage opportunities or as having equal opportunities; being in positions of power and in professions that are not usually linked to women such as professors, doctors or head of states.

In addition to choosing images that show women in non-traditional and non-stereotypical roles and professions, it is important to ensure equal numbers of women and men in the image selection. Also, it is essential to be mindful of subliminal messages about gender norms. For example, it is recommended to choose images in which postures, expressions, gestures and clothing convey equal status and authority.





# World of Emojis

Many people use emojis (or emoticons) to express themselves when communicating electronically. Many of these emoji sets repeat stereotypes by putting men in active roles (sports people, or professionals) and only including women in stereotypical pursuits (cutting hair or dancing), or not including women at all. Some providers now include more options so that you can make more inclusive and gender-sensitive choices. When you use emojis remember these are also a way to make your communication supportive of gender equality.

## Remember:

It is very important to use images of both men and women in non-traditional roles that may be found inspirational to the audience. The aim of including non-stereotypical images is to break down gender stereotypes and to avoid limiting the portrayal of women, men, boys and girls in certain roles.

### RULE 7:

Avoid using stereotypical colors

Colors are often arbitrarily connected to one gender, such as pink for women and blue for men. When designing communication materials, check the colors you have used and don't use color as a shorthand for gender. A simple modification of using more gender-neutral colors like greens, yellow or orange can make a change.

### RULE 8:

Avoid using 'he' to refer to unknown people

Do not use 'man' as the neutral term. Avoid using 'he' when referring to the generic experience of all people as this removes women from the common experience.

#### Example

- × Each applicant must submit his resumé.
- √ Each applicant must submit his or her resumé.

### RULE 9:

Avoid using wrong naming conventions

Traditional titles for women, Mrs (married) or Miss (single), used to refer to their marital status, whereas the term for men, Mr, was neutral in this regard (either married or single). This naming convention signals a woman's relationship to a man within her name, inviting the hearer to consider this as part of who she is, rather than presenting her as an individual. The term Ms avoids this, which, like Mr, does not denote marital status.

### RULE 10:

Avoid making assumptions about gender roles and responsibilities

When covering any topic, it is important to consider the position given to men and women in qualitative terms and not to represent certain roles as only held by women or men. Additionally, articles or stories should highlight examples of both women and men breaking down gender-stereotypes and/or how they might be contributing to gender equality or empowerment.

Try to ensure that the individuals in examples show a mix of genders in different roles. I.e. ensure that men are not always in positions of power in a given scenario. Presenting female voices in traditionally male roles and vice versa contributes to deconstructing stereotypes and gender norms, therefore having impact on people's attitude over time. When preparing press releases, stories and other materials it is important to clarify how women's and men's voices can be captured.

#### Example

- × John and Mary both have full time jobs; he helps her with the housework.
- √ John and Mary both have full time jobs; they share the housework

Remember: To think that gender is only about women is already a stereotype

### **RULE 11:**

Avoid using stereotypical titles, labels, and names

Titles for people and occupations often reflect inequitable assumptions about males and females; gender-sensitive language promotes more inclusive and equitable representations for both females and males.

Additionally, feminine suffixes such as *-ess* or *-ette* can also reinforce the notion that women are subordinate, or doing a different job to men.

#### *Examples*

- × Mary is a real career woman.
- √ Mary is a real professional.
- × My sister is a stewardess with a charter airline.
- √ My sister is a flight attendant with a charter airline.
- × She is my favorite actress.
- √ She is my favorite actor.

### **RULE 12:**

Avoid using stereotypical quotes

Using stereotypical quotes and sexist proverbs such as “Behind every great man is a great woman,” and “Although she kneads dough for bread, she insists on interfering in man’s affairs” reinforces gender inequality.

### **RULE 13:**

Avoid using phrases that stereotype behaviors

One should avoid using phrases that stereotype women’s or men’s behavior or thought processes. For example, gender stereotypes are deployed when describing men as aggressive or violent, and when describing women as emotional, shrill, or passive.

### **RULE 14:**

Avoid using word phrase hierarchy

Word order can often give the assumption that one sex is superior to the other, or that the latter sex is an afterthought. For example, using the phrases *men and women*, or *ladies and gentlemen*, may give this impression. Instead, it is better to address groups of people with generic terms. For example, addressing a group as *colleagues* or *members of the delegation* avoids using any gender bias.

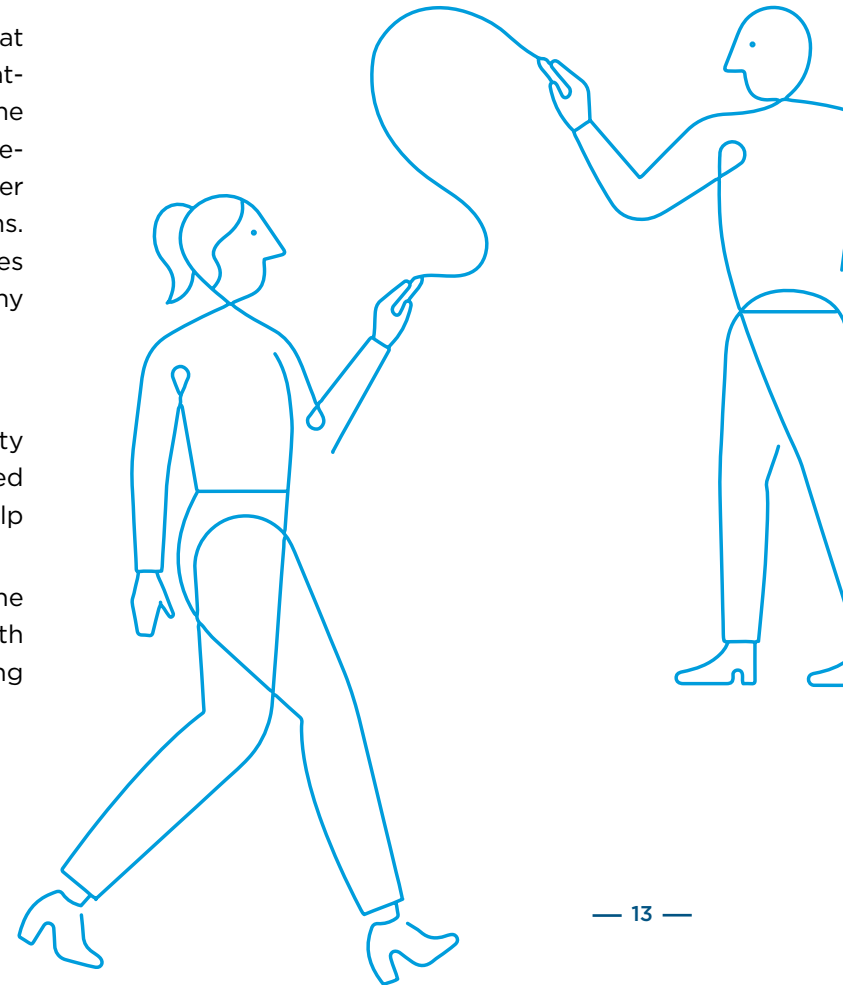
#### *Example*

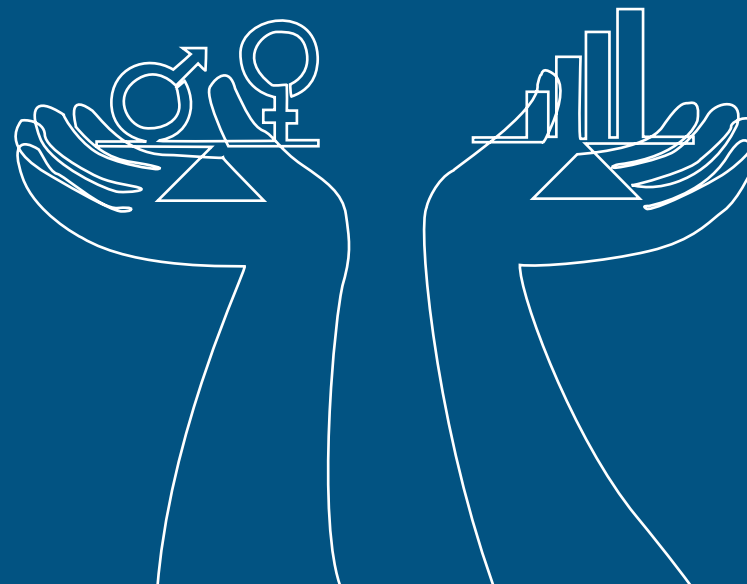
- × Husband and wife team established the charity themselves. The man and woman, both affected by the issue, decided to do something to help others.
- √ The wife and husband team established the charity themselves. The man and woman, both affected by the issue, decided to do something to help others.

## **Tip!**

### **WHEN IN DOUBT APPLY A GENDER LENS**

It can be difficult to use the correct terminology all the time, so when unsure about which terms to use, it is best to opt for gender neutrality. This can be done by either omitting gender altogether or using inclusive terms.





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