



# Organize a workshop for staff

The structure of this workshop is based on the [Barbershop sessions Tool # 3](#) designed by HeForShe. The proposal below has been adapted to suit the topic and the audience of the project “Supporting gender equality in multilingual contexts”.

This document includes:

1. Guidelines for organizers of the session
2. Guidelines for facilitators of the session
3. Materials for the participants in the session

## Guidelines for organizers

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### **Workshop Objective:**

The goal of this workshop is to raise awareness on the topic and show participants how to apply the [Guidelines for gender-inclusive language](#) to any communication (oral or written, formal or informal) to make it more gender-inclusive as a way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias. The Guidelines are available in the six official languages and have been tailored to each language.

### **To organize a workshop for staff:**

- Consider your target group’s previous knowledge of and experience in the subject and their expectations of the workshop. Use a pre-training survey to gather this information.
- Find an expert- a colleague familiar with the topic or an external consultant- to be the main facilitator.
- Choose the right location and make sure you have all the required resources. If you are using technology, arrive early to test the equipment and troubleshoot.
- Have a follow-up plan. Create a short feedback questionnaire and send an e-mail with the main outcomes from the workshop. Keep participants informed about what’s next.



## Guidelines for facilitators

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### Workshop Objective:

The goal of this workshop is to raise awareness on the topic and show participants how to apply the [Guidelines for gender-inclusive language](#) to any communication (oral or written, formal or informal) to make it more gender-inclusive as a way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias. The Guidelines are available in the six official languages and have been tailored to each language.

### INTRODUCTION

1. If appropriate for your audience, start with a warm-up activity (see proposals in the [Warm-up](#) section) to break the ice and transition to the topic. Then clarify the terms and concepts involved in “gender-inclusive language” so that participants understand and use them in the same way:  
*e.g., “Using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and that does not perpetuate gender stereotypes.”*
2. Next, explain how the session will be organized: part plenary and part small group discussions. Each group will have a discussion leader who will ask questions and manage the time.



## PLENARY DISCUSSION

3. Briefly explain the benefits of gender-inclusive language: “Given the key role of language in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias.”

4. Write on the board or flip chart, “Gender-biased expressions or expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes” and ask participants to think of examples in their languages.

Some examples in English: *In a manly way. She talks like a woman. That’s women’s work. Men just don’t understand. Delegates are cordially invited to attend with their wives. Men cannot do two things at the same time.*

5. Now write “Gender-inclusive language” and ask them what techniques they could use to make oral or written communication more inclusive.

Some examples in English: Using masculine and feminine pronouns (for example: *When a staff member accepts an offer of employment, he or she must be able to assume that the offer is duly authorized*) . Using plural pronouns (for example: *Before submitting your document, send it to the focal points for their review. Delegates and their partners are invited to the event*).

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. Split the participants into groups. Make the groups diverse (different backgrounds, departments, job functions and grades) so participants will be exposed to different perspectives. Using the [Questions for discussion](#) below, the group leader should facilitate a discussion on what gender-inclusive language is. Each group should appoint a representative to present the key points of their discussion to the entire team in the next plenary.
2. Suggest typical workplace situations so participants can contextualize the Guidelines. E.g. “*What are common problems encountered when using gender-inclusive language on the job, for example, when attending a team meeting or when writing an email, etc.?*”



### **WRAP-UP and CLOSING REMARKS**

1. One representative per group will share the main ideas of his/her group. Allocate time for the entire group to discuss these ideas and list the most noteworthy.
2. Use the “[Closing remarks](#)” (last page of this document) to close the session. Tailor these remarks as needed to suit the development of the conversations and the outcome(s) of this workshop.
3. End by showing the participants the Gender-inclusive language website, the proposed guidelines in the six languages and the toolbox with further activities and resources on how to apply the recommendations.

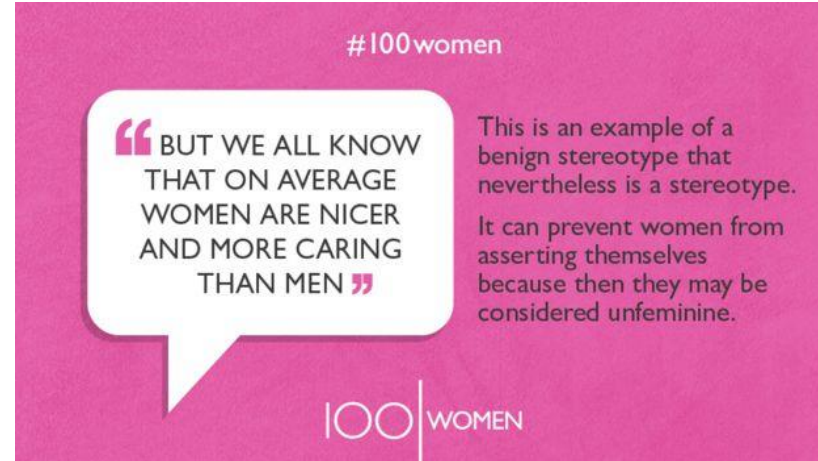
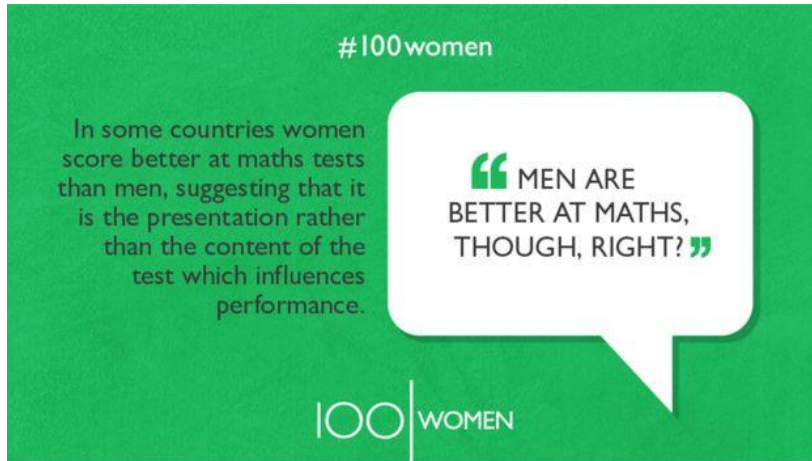
### **END OF SESSION FEEDBACK**

The interagency working group responsible for the Guidelines and the Toolbox would appreciate any feedback from organizers and facilitators to improve the proposed workshop. Please share any examples of communication or actions proposed by the participants to help build a bank of ideas and resources for future sessions. Please contact us through the gender-inclusive website’s “Contact and feedback” page.



## Warm-up

If appropriate for your audience, start with a warm-up activity. When talking about “gender-inclusive language”, it’s important that all participants feel comfortable and engaged. You can find relevant resources here: <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-34910954>.



## Questions for discussion (version for the facilitator)

Share the following questions with the participants:

- Would you like to share any personal examples regarding communications at the workplace that involved the inclusion or exclusion of a gender?
- Can you share any initiatives your manager has taken to create an enabling work environment for all staff, regardless of their gender?
- Have you ever noticed yourself using non-inclusive language regarding gender? Can you give any examples?
- How can using gender-inclusive language have a positive impact in the work environment?



**Guidelines for gender-inclusive communication in English\_Toolbox/ *Organize a workshop for staff***

- Can you recall a time when you were writing and had a question related to gender-inclusive language? What was the question? What did you do?
- How can you know if you are using discriminatory language? *Reverse the gender: Would reversing the designation or the term from masculine to feminine or vice versa change the meaning or emphasis of the sentence? Would it make the sentence sound odd?*
  - Example:
    - “Women should not seek out leadership positions.”
    - “Men cannot do two things at the same time.”
- How do you address a person in an email if you don’t know the gender of the person? *Use forms of address that are consistent with the person’s gender identity. You can check the staff directory for UN staff members. If needed, you can use the person’s full name. If you are speaking with the person, you can ask which form of address they prefer.*
- Can you use “they” to refer a singular subject when the gender is unknown? *If the subject is plural, then you can use it to refer to a general group. If the subject is singular, then the use of “one” is preferred.*
- You have a colleague who could benefit from training in gender-inclusive language: how do you approach him/her? What resources do you provide?
- Should you ever correct other people’s language with respect to gender? How can you handle a situation in which someone is using gender-discriminatory language?
- What is the relationship between the grammatical structures of a given language and social issues of gender? Should you modify the grammar/the underlying structure of the language to be more sensitive to issues of gender equality?
- Do different languages treat gender differently? In what ways? Can you give examples from your language(s)?
- When do you think it would be relevant to make the gender visible? *For example, when discussing a specific instance of the achievements of the peacekeeping staff, should we mention how many women or which women were involved? Or maybe not. It depends on the context. It would be a very good example to discuss.*
- In which cases is it better to make the gender not visible? *For example, are “chairman”, “mankind” or “manmade” appropriate words in any context? What recommendations from the Guidelines can we adopt to change these words?*
- In your language, what strategies can you use to make a particular gender more visible, if the context requires it?
- How do you refer to someone’s partner when you don’t know the gender?
- What happens if the strategies in the Guidelines don’t conform with the usage in your office?



## Workshop for staff: *What is gender-inclusive language?* (participants)

### Goal

This 1h workshop is designed for all staff in the UN system. The goal is to raise awareness on the topic and show participants how to apply the [Guidelines for gender-inclusive language](#) in any communication (oral, written, formal, informal) to make it more gender-inclusive. The guidelines are available in the six UN official languages.

After this workshop, participants should understand what gender-inclusive language means and what the difference is between “making gender visible” in a communication and “keeping it gender-neutral”.

### Time frame

1h

### What’s next?

After organizing/attending this workshop, the next steps could be:

- to organize follow-up meetings to discuss ways to integrate the recommendations proposed [in the Guidelines](#) and/or the outcomes of the group discussions
- to motivate colleagues to learn about and apply the guidelines through the tools available in the [toolbox](#).
- to encourage leadership and communication teams to increase their commitment to gender-inclusive language in their communications



## Questions for discussion (version for participants)

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- Would you like to share any personal examples regarding communications at the workplace that involved the inclusion or exclusion of a gender?
- Can you share any initiatives your manager has taken to create an enabling work environment for all staff, regardless of their gender?
- Have you ever noticed yourself using non-inclusive language regarding gender? Can you give any examples?
- How can using gender-inclusive language have a positive impact in the work environment?
- Can you recall a time when you were writing and had a question related to gender-inclusive language? What was the question? What did you do?
- How can you know if you are using discriminatory language?
- How do you address a person in an email if you don't know the gender of the person?
- Can you use "they" to refer a singular subject when the gender is unknown?
- You have a colleague who could benefit from training in gender-inclusive language: how do you approach him/her? What resources do you provide?
- Should you ever correct other people's language with respect to gender? How can you handle a situation in which someone is using gender-discriminatory language?
- What is the relationship between the grammatical structures of a given language and social issues of gender? Should you modify the grammar/the underlying structure of the language to be more sensitive to issues of gender equality?
- Do different languages treat gender differently? In what ways? Can you give examples from your language(s)?
- When do you think it would be relevant to make the gender visible?
- In which cases is it better to make the gender not visible?
- In your language, what strategies can you use to make a particular gender more visible, if the context requires it?
- How do you refer to someone's partner when you don't know the gender?
- What happens if the strategies in the Guidelines don't conform with the usage in your office?





## Closing remarks

Using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Given the key role of language in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias.

In English, there is a difference between "grammatical gender", "gender as a social construct", which refers to the roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society at a certain time considers appropriate for men or women, and "sex" as a biological characteristic of living beings.

A challenge for gender-inclusive communication in English is the use of the masculine form by default. For example, "Every Permanent Representative *has to submit his credentials to Protocol.*" Some possible alternatives would be: "Every Permanent Representative has to submit **his/her** credentials to Protocol" or "All Permanent Representatives have to submit **their** credentials to Protocol".

**A number of strategies can be applied, when speaking or writing in English, to be more gender-inclusive:**

- Use non-discriminatory language.
- Make gender visible only when it is relevant for communication.
- Do not make gender visible when it is not relevant for communication.

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