



GUIDE 2023-3-DE04-KA210-YOU-000175960

GUIDEANCE

Workbook to Gender Equality and Diversity by the Use of Gender-Sensitive Language

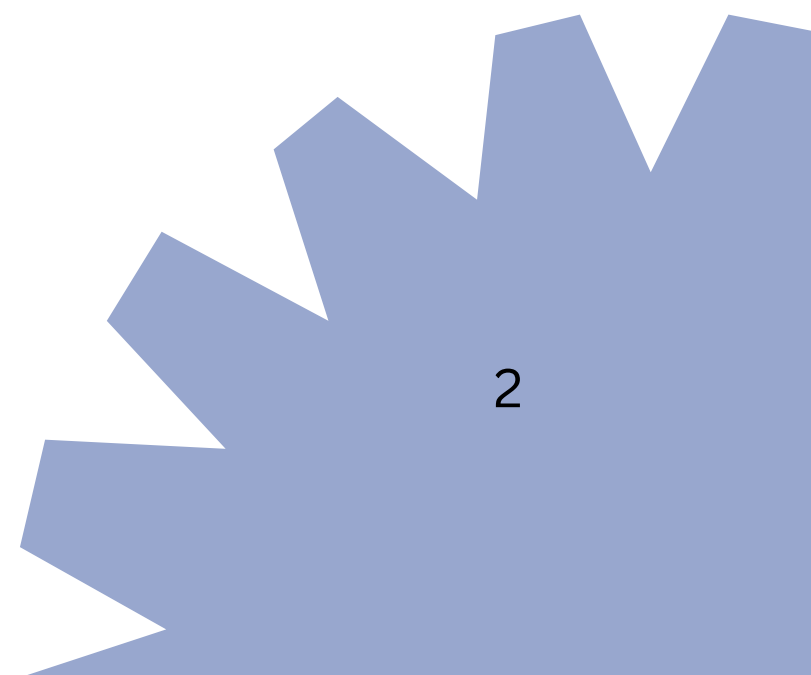


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Project Overview

GUIDE - Promoting gender equality and diversity in international youth work through the use of gender-sensitive language.

Project Partner:

- iKoBi e.V. from Germany
- Verein InterAktion from Austria
- Mobilizing Expertise from Sweden

Duration: 01.08.2024 - 30.11.2025

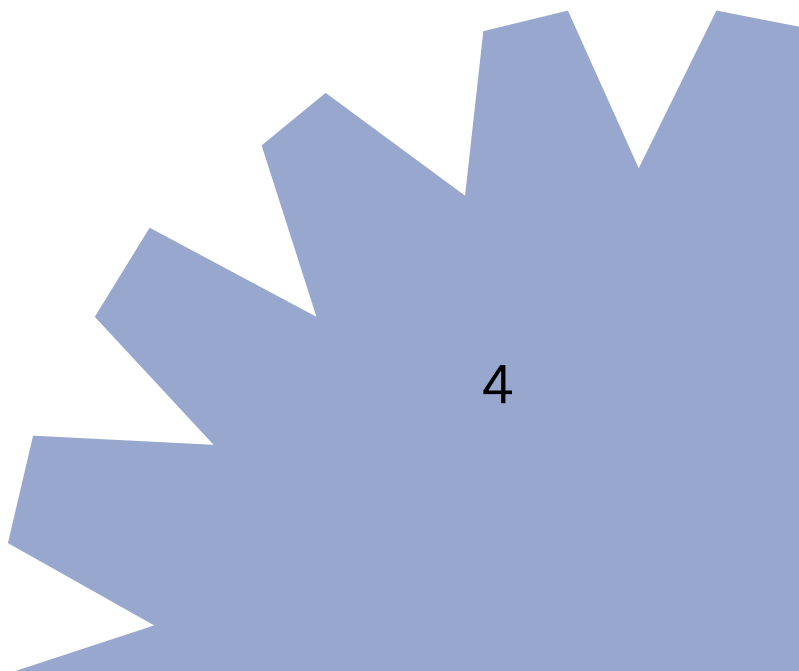
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Content

Introduction: What is GUIDE project all about?	5
Chapter 1: Pronoun Use and Its Effects in Language	8
Chapter 2: Gender-Sensitive Communication	20
Chapter 3: Prevention of Gender Discriminatory Structures in Youth Exchanges	29
Sources	41
Annex: Gender-Neutral Pronoun Guide	44



Introduction

GUIDE is an internationally oriented project funded under the Erasmus+ programme. The aim of the project is to promote the use of gender-sensitive language in youth work, thereby contributing to the creation of an inclusive and diverse environment.

We pursue this by raising awareness of the importance and impact of gender-sensitive and gender-neutral language - both at the organisational level and in direct work with young people - and by strengthening awareness and professional knowledge around gender equality and diversity.

This workbook, “GUIDEance”, is intended for youth workers, educators, and volunteers.

It encourages critical reflection on one's own use of language and provides essential information on pronouns, gender-neutral terms, and country-specific perspectives.

Challenging stereotypes, developing gender-sensitive activities, and promoting equal opportunities are at the heart of this approach. “GUIDEance” offers practical methods and tools that can be applied in contemporary youth work.

The aim of the workbook is to empower professionals to:

- recognise the importance of language for creating inclusive and appreciative environments,
- understand the basic principles of gender-sensitive communication and its social relevance and impact,
- apply gender-sensitive approaches in everyday communication and in the planning and implementation of activities in a practical way,
- act as a role model for diversity and inclusion and thereby provide impetus for equitable and non-discriminatory structures

The recommendations and practices in this workbook are grounded in country-specific research and collaboration with focus groups from Austria, Germany, and Sweden.

These insights ensure that the content is adaptable to different cultural and linguistic contexts while remaining practical and impactful.

Another key result of the GUIDE project is the awareness-raising workshop 'Let's be inclusive'. This offers professionals and educational institutions a practice-orientated toolkit for promoting awareness of gender equality and diversity. The workshop can be used flexibly - both in the school environment and in international youth projects - and supports the creation of inclusive educational spaces.

The Importance of Gender-Sensitive Language in Youth Work

In English-speaking contexts, language has traditionally relied on masculine generics or defaulting to job titles like fireman or policeman. While these terms were historically meant to include everyone, they often fail to reflect the diverse identities of today's young people and can make some feel invisible or excluded.

In youth work, the way we use language plays a crucial role in shaping inclusive environments. Relying solely on male-centered language can unintentionally reinforce outdated gender norms and send the message that certain roles or opportunities are primarily meant for boys or young men.

By choosing gender-inclusive terms—such as firefighter or police officer, or using “they” as a singular pronoun—we send a clear signal of respect, belonging, and openness.

The use of gender-sensitive language:

- helps to make the diversity of gender identities visible and to create spaces in which all people feel recognised, valued and included.
- challenges traditional gender stereotypes - such as the categorisation of certain professions as belonging to a particular gender - and can therefore make an important contribution to cultural change and greater social equality.

By adopting gender-neutral terms and inclusive pronouns, youth workers set a standard of respect and equality, ensuring that their programs and interactions reflect the diversity of their participants.

CHAPTER 1

Pronoun Use and Its Effects in Language

'THIS CHAPTER EXAMINES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE USE OF PRONOUNS IN YOUTH WORK, THEIR ROLE IN IDENTITY FORMATION AND THE PROMOTION OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY.'

1. Pronoun Use and Its Effects in Language

Pronouns are a fundamental aspect of language, directly tied to individual identity and social dynamics. Their correct use is crucial in affirming a person's gender and fostering inclusive interactions. Understanding pronouns and their role in gender identity involves recognizing that pronouns like "he," "she," OR "they" are more than linguistic tools - they are affirmations of one's existence and identity. For youth workers, this understanding is essential for creating spaces where young people feel acknowledged.

Traditional pronouns like "he" and "she" can inadvertently exclude non-binary and gender-nonconforming individuals. Gender-neutral and inclusive pronouns, such as "they/them" in English or "hen" in Swedish, address the needs of non-binary and gender-nonconforming individuals by avoiding assumptions about gender. For instance, "they/them" can be used when a person's gender is unknown or irrelevant, simplifying communication and enhancing inclusivity.

For youth workers, using correct pronouns is essential for creating environments where young people feel respected. This simple yet powerful act affirms identity, reduces the risk of marginalization, and fosters trust between youth and workers.

Pronoun use has profound implications for language and interpersonal communication. When pronouns align with a person's identity, they foster empathy, improve relationships, and enhance dialogue. Misgendering, on the other hand, can lead to feelings of exclusion and distrust.

Practicing pronoun usage regularly ensures that youth workers are prepared to engage with diverse identities. Using inclusive pronouns challenges traditional gender norms, empowering marginalized groups and promoting equality.

For example, by using "they/them" pronouns when referring to a participant who identifies outside the gender binary, youth workers actively challenge the expectation that everyone must fit into the rigid categories of "male" or "female." This not only affirms the participant's identity but also educates the group about the fluidity of gender.

1.1 Gender-Neutral Terminology in Youth Work

Gender-neutral language refers to the use of words and expressions that avoid specifying a particular gender, thereby making the language more inclusive of all gender identities. Instead of using gender-specific terms like “boys” and “girls” use neutral terms like “students” or “partner” instead of “boyfriend” or “girlfriend”.

As youth workers, we have a responsibility to create environments where all young people feel seen, heard, and valued. This is especially true for those who may not fit into traditional gender categories. By using gender-neutral/ gender-sensitive language, we can help to create spaces where every young person can express their identity without fear of judgement or exclusion.

Gender-neutral terminology avoids assumptions about a person's gender, ensuring inclusivity across identities. For example, instead of addressing a group with "Good morning boys and girls," opting for "Good morning, everyone" demonstrates a thoughtful approach to inclusive communication. In the context of sports clubs a coach might replace "Alright, guys, great teamwork!" with "Great teamwork, everyone!" to acknowledge and validate all participants. These adjustments create a welcoming environment that values all participants equally.

Examples in Youth Work:

- **Greeting:** Use 'participants', 'students', 'team' or "members" instead of 'boys and girls'.
- **Group division:** Replace 'Divide into boys' and girls' teams' with 'form two groups of your choice.'
- **Giving feedback:** Say 'each participant shares his/her opinion' instead of 'each boy or girl shares his/her opinion.'
- **Encouragement:** Replace 'Well done, young man!' with 'great job!' or 'well done!'
- **Seating arrangements:** Say 'sit where you feel comfortable' instead of 'boys on one side, girls on the other'
- **Individual feedback:** Ask open questions such as 'What inspired you today during the activity?' instead of specific questions based on gender.
- **Sport:** Say 'Everyone can take part in this activity' instead of saying that certain activities are only suitable for certain genders.

Adopting gender-neutral language dismantles stereotypes and creates opportunities for dialogue about identity and diversity. For example, a 2020 study in Social Psychological and Personality Science showed that using gender-neutral job titles e.g. police officer (instead of policeman) led to a more balanced view of traditionally male dominated professions, encouraging more women to consider these roles. [1]

Youth workers play a critical role in modeling these practices, inspiring participants to embrace inclusivity in their own lives.

1.2 Country-Specific Approaches in Germany, Sweden, and Austria

Germany

In Germany the discussion around gender-neutral and gender-sensitive language has gained momentum, since the traditional structure of the German language is heavily gendered and presents unique challenges and opportunities.

Gendered terms like “Lehrer” (teacher) and “Schüler” (student) are inherently gendered, necessitating alternatives such as the gender asterisk (“Lehrer*innen”), colon (“Lehrer:innen”), or gender gap (“Lehrer_innen”). Germany’s typographic innovations provide a visual solution to gender inclusivity, particularly in written communication.

While these tools have gained popularity, societal debates persist, with resistance stemming from concerns about tradition and linguistic complexity. Some argue that these forms complicate the language. Others resist these changes on the grounds of tradition.

A survey on gender-neutral language conducted by YouGov in 2021 found out that about 62 % of respondents stated that they do not use gender-neutral language and do not believe it is necessary. However, among those aged 18-29, approx. 42 % was in favor of its use. [2]

Furthermore, a study by “Kantar Public” in 2022 found that about 45 % of people aged 16 – 29 believe that gender-neutral language is important for promoting equality. This reflects a generational shift, with younger people being more open to inclusive language practices. [3]

Sweden

In Sweden, the national language is Swedish, which has traditionally used the pronouns *han* (he) and *hon* (she) for male and female individuals, respectively. However, Sweden stands out as a pioneer in gender equality, with its adoption of the gender-neutral pronoun “*hen*” alongside “*han*” (he) and “*hon*” (she). The word *hen* was first introduced in the early 2000s by feminist and LGBTQAI+ activists to offer an alternative to gender-specific pronouns, particularly in cases where gender is unknown, irrelevant, or when referring to non-binary individuals. It gained widespread attention after being included in the Swedish Academy Glossary (*Svenska Akademiens ordlista*) in 2015, marking its official acceptance into mainstream Swedish language. [4]

Today, *hen* is used not only in legal, academic, and governmental contexts but also in everyday conversation, media, and education, making it a significant component of Sweden's language landscape.

In progressive and inclusive organizations, such as universities and NGOs, *hen* is actively integrated into official documents and internal communications, promoting respect for all gender identities. This shift towards gender-neutral language is particularly notable in public institutions and companies that are consciously working towards creating inclusive environments. In such settings, employees are often encouraged to share their pronouns (whether *han*, *hon*, or *hen*) to foster inclusivity. Organizations with a focus on gender equality or human rights, such as Rättviseförmedlingen (The Equalizer), are known to encourage gender-neutral language as a way of breaking down gender norms and challenging traditional perceptions of gender identity.

Gender-sensitive language has been increasingly incorporated into the Swedish media landscape, advertising, and entertainment. Many Swedish news outlets, such as Dagens Nyheter and Sveriges Television (SVT), have adopted editorial policies that promote the use of gender-neutral language.

For example, these outlets often employ *hen* in cases where the gender of the subject is unknown or not relevant to the story, especially in pieces discussing gender identity, non-binary issues, or progressive social movements. Such practices help normalize the use of gender-sensitive language in the public sphere. [5]

Austria

Austria balances traditional language with inclusive practices. Like Germany, it employs tools like the **gender gap** (“_”), **gender asterisk** (“Lehrer*innen”) or **colon** (“Lehrer:innen”). The different forms of gender-neutral terms have been increasingly used in media and official documents. However, their usage is not yet standardized, and different media outlets adopt different practices.

According to a survey only four percent always use gender-inclusive language, while nearly a third have never heard of gender-neutral language. 65 % of respondents believe that gender-inclusive language has no significance for strengthening all gender groups in our society. In general, women and those with higher education value it slightly more than men and people with lower formal education.

Some arguments in favor of the use of gender-neutral language in Austria are that girls and women do not feel addressed or represented when consuming media that fails to include them linguistically. [6]

The Austrian focus group identified various factors as obstacles to the use of gender-neutral language:

- 1) cultural resistance
- 2) no obligatory specifications.

Although Austria has laws promoting gender equality, these laws do not specifically mandate the use of gender-sensitive language in all communications.

Commonalities and Trends

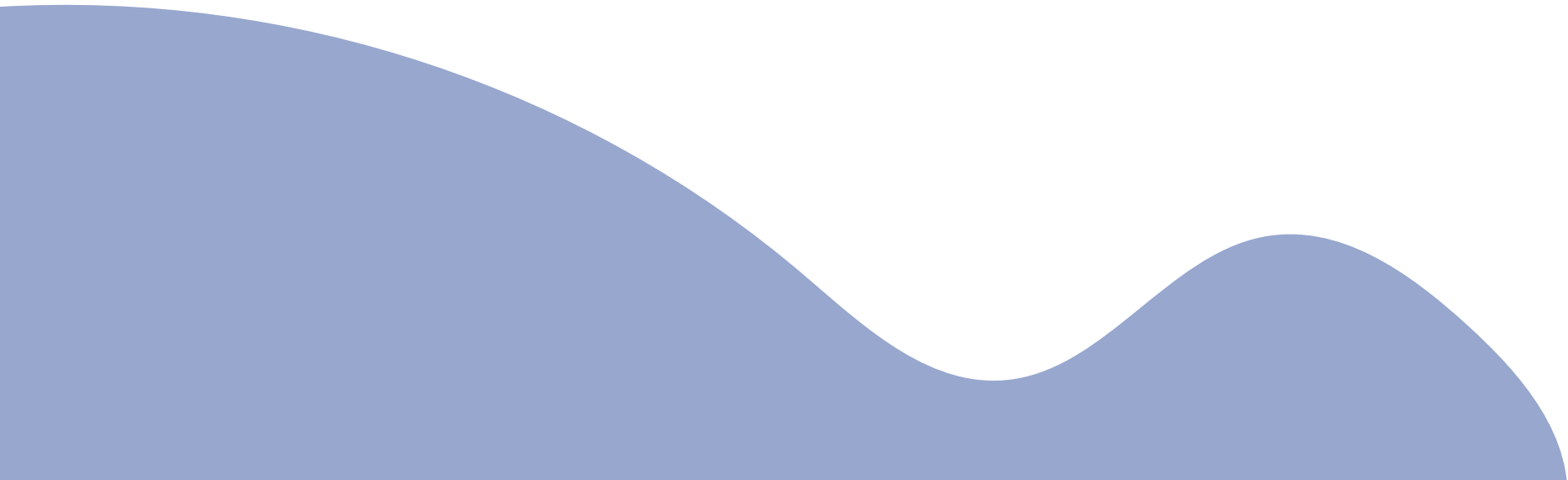
All three countries strive to promote inclusivity through language. While Germany and Austria face greater societal resistance, younger generations are leading the charge for broader acceptance. Sweden's success highlights the value of cultural readiness and institutional support in normalizing gender-sensitive language.

Self-Practice Exercise Chapter 1: Practicing the use of pronouns

Instructions	Let's go
Objective	Enhance comfort and fluency with inclusive language by practicing gender-neutral pronouns in youth work scenarios.
Duration	20-25 minutes
Materials	Brief guide on gender-neutral pronouns (see Annex)
Reflection	1. Think about why using correct pronouns is important for creating a welcoming environment. Consider past situations where pronoun usage was relevant. 2. Revisit gender-neutral pronouns like they/them or ze/zir. If you're unsure, consult the guide provided or look for additional resources. For example: <i>"I gave feedback to them."</i> 3. Think of 2–3 situations you might encounter in your work. Examples: • A young person introduces themselves with they/them pronouns. • You need to give feedback to someone who uses they/them • A participant is misgendered, and you need to correct it respectfully.



Application	Imagine these scenarios. Use gender-neutral pronouns in your spoken or written responses. Focus on how you would naturally use them.
Evaluation	Ask yourself: • What felt comfortable? • What was challenging? • Did it feel natural, or did you have to pause to remember? • How can you bring this into real-life interactions?
Learnings	Write down 1–2 insights or lessons learned from this exercise to help you better support youth who use gender-neutral pronouns. Remember: Practice leads to confidence. By incorporating gender-neutral pronouns into your daily language, you’re creating a more inclusive space for all youth.



CHAPTER 2

GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION

‘IN THIS CHAPTER, YOU WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION.’

2. Gender-Sensitive Communication

In the context of youth work, gender-sensitive communication ensures that young people of all genders feel represented, respected, and safe in their interactions with youth workers. This approach promotes an inclusive environment where diverse gender identities are acknowledged, empowering young people to engage fully without fear of discrimination or bias. [7]

Gender-sensitive communication is essential in youth work as it ensures that interactions and messages are inclusive, respectful, and equitable. In an increasingly diverse world, youth workers must recognize how gender biases can shape communication and, consequently, the experiences of young people. When communication is gender-sensitive, it avoids reinforcing stereotypes and promotes equality, which is critical for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all youth. [8]

In today's digital age, youth work is no longer confined to in-person settings. Much of the communication with young people occurs online, through social media, emails, and virtual platforms. Gender-sensitive communication needs to extend beyond face-to-face interactions to ensure that online content—whether in text, visuals, or videos—remains inclusive. As youth increasingly engage with content on multiple digital platforms, it is crucial that these spaces reflect the same sensitivity and inclusiveness to avoid alienating or misrepresenting any gender identity. [9]

Online communication offers unique opportunities but also poses challenges in maintaining this inclusivity, making it even more critical for youth workers to adapt their strategies across mediums

2.1 Use of Gender-Neutral Visuals on Websites/ Publications

When selecting and using images and graphics, it is essential to prioritise diversity and representation – while consciously avoiding gender stereotypes.

Choose images, illustrations, and symbols that depict diverse individuals in non-stereotypical roles, and avoid visual codes such as specific colours, styles of clothing, or activities that are traditionally associated with a particular gender.

2.2 Gender-sensitive language in digital communication

In this chapter, we will cover strategies to make email, digital, and social communication more inclusive. We'll also discuss how organizations can adapt their practices for digital platforms like WhatsApp, where many young people engage.

In the post-COVID world, digital communication has become central to youth organizations' engagement strategies. Many young people expect virtual spaces to be inclusive and safe environments, making it essential for organizations to adapt and refine their communication styles.

Strategies for Using Gender-Sensitive Language in Email Communication

a. Use Neutral Terms for Referring to Individuals

Using gender-neutral terms avoids the assumption that all individuals fit into traditional gender categories. Avoiding gendered titles and phrases is a straightforward yet powerful way to signal inclusivity.

How to implement:

- **Avoid Gendered Titles:** Instead of “Mr.” or “Ms.,” use first and last names only, or consider a gender-neutral title like “Mx.” if applicable.
- **Inclusive Greetings:** Begin emails with “Dear Team” or “Hello everyone,” rather than “Ladies and gentlemen.”

Examples:

- Instead of "Each team member should give his or her input," say "Each team member should share their input."

b. Encourage Pronoun Introductions and Avoid Assumptions

Encouraging pronoun sharing and avoiding assumptions about someone’s gender is respectful and promotes inclusivity. Pronoun sharing has become more common in professional communication, helping people feel seen and understood.

How to implement:

- **Use “They” as a Singular Pronoun:** Use “they” when referring to someone whose gender is unknown, instead of “he/she.”
- **Respect Pronoun Choices:** Once someone shares their pronouns, make a point to use them in all future communications.

c. Creating Visibility in Email Signatures

Adding pronouns to email signatures can increase awareness and make pronoun usage visible. This is a straightforward way to introduce the concept of gender identity to those who may not be familiar with it, creating an inclusive professional environment.

How to implement:

- **Add Pronouns in Your Signature:** For example, “she/her,” “he/him,” or “they/them” in your email signature.

Example Signature:

Casey Thomas (they/them)
Youth Program Manager

- **Use an invitation below your signature:** An invitation can also be included under the signature to encourage people to state *their pronouns*

Example Invitaton: “*You are welcome to tell me how I should address you*” or “*My pronouns are [...]* You are welcome to tell me your pronouns.”

d. Applying Gender-Sensitive Language Across Digital Communication

Using inclusive language in emails and on platforms like WhatsApp ensures that messages are accessible and welcoming. For youth-focused communication, consider language that respects all genders and invites open participation.

How to Implement

- Use Gender-Neutral Group Terms like “everyone,” “team,” or “participants” instead of “guys” or “ladies.”
- Practice Inclusive Call-to-Action Phrases. For emails or group messages, replace “he/she” with “they” and practice making group-wide messages more inclusive

e. Creating Inclusive WhatsApp Groups and Digital Spaces

Below is how to ensure these spaces remain inclusive.

- Establish Group Norms Around Pronouns: When forming a new group, encourage members to introduce themselves with their pronouns to set an inclusive tone.
- Create Space for Feedback: Occasionally, ask group members if there are ways to make communication more inclusive.

Message Example: *“Welcome to the team! We encourage everyone to share pronouns if they’re comfortable to help us communicate respectfully.”*

f. Designing Inclusive Application Forms and Registration Processes

For digital forms and applications, inclusivity can be as simple as offering gender-diverse options and removing unnecessary questions.

How to implement:

- Expand Gender Options in Forms.
- Avoid Asking Gender if Unnecessary:

Example of a Gender-Inclusive Form::

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Other: [Please specify]

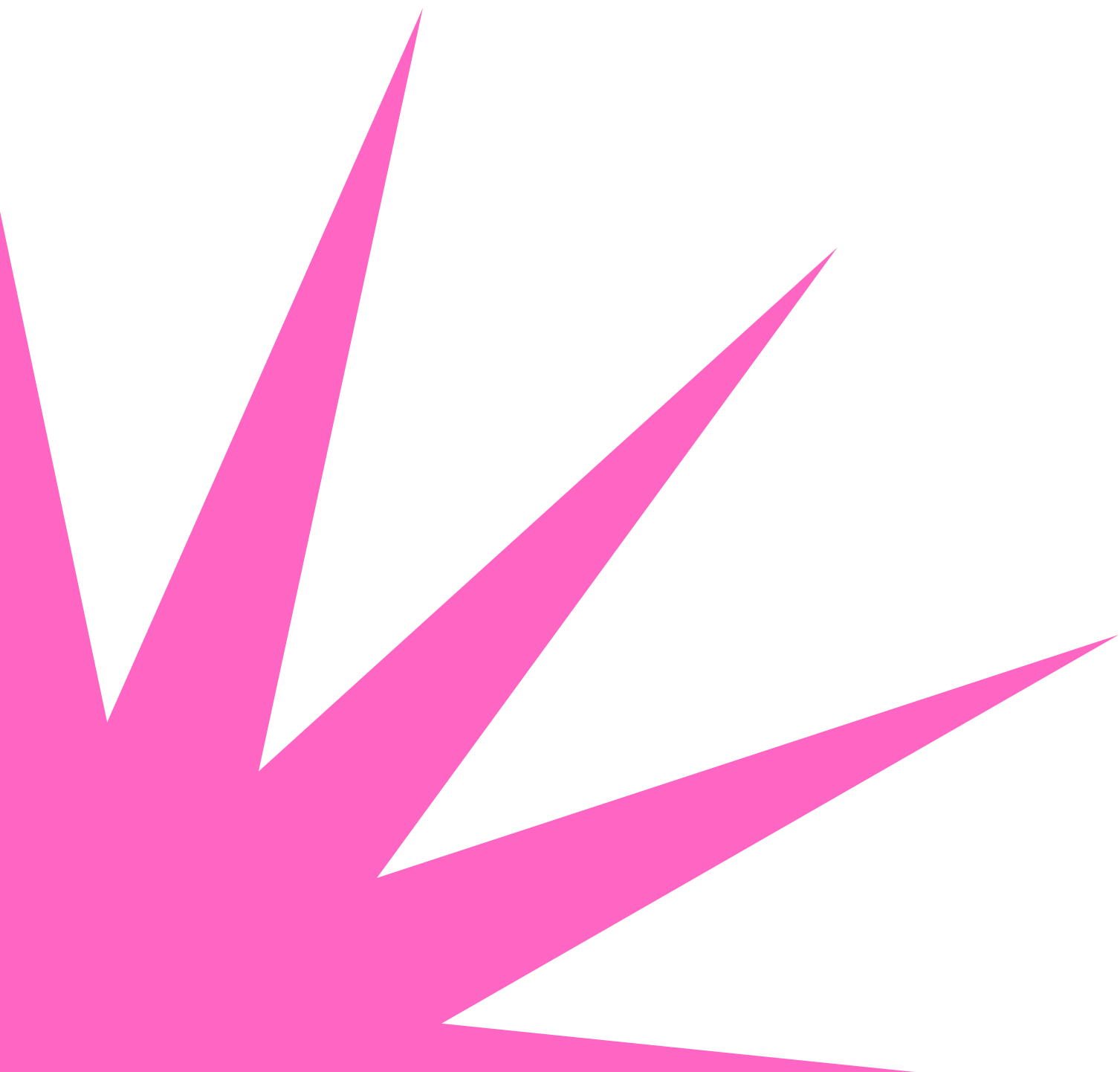
Organizations can effectively promote diversity by using gender-sensitive language in emails, websites, and digital platforms. Whether via online forms, WhatsApp messages, or emails, these methods foster a friendly atmosphere that embodies the ideals of a more accepting and caring society.

Self-Practice Exercise Chapter 2: Gender-Sensitive Communication Challenge

What?	Instruction's
Objective	Improving digital communication
Check-In	• Review your last five messages or posts (email, WhatsApp, social media, or website updates). • Identify any gendered language (e.g., “guys,” “ladies and gentlemen,” “he/she”) and think of a more inclusive alternative.
Scan your website/Material	• Visit your organization’s website or recent publications. • Check for gendered terms (e.g., “chairman,” “mankind”) and replace them with neutral terms like “chairperson” or “humanity.” • Make a note of areas where language could be more inclusive. • Consider including pronouns on staff member profiles to promote gender diversity and approachability.



Evaluation	After completing the activity, reflect on these questions: • How easy or difficult was it to make these changes? • Did you notice any common patterns of gendered language in your communication? • What’s one change you will continue practicing in your digital communication?
Bonus Task	If you found areas that need improvement, suggest one small update for your organization’s website, email templates, or WhatsApp group guidelines to make them more inclusive!



CHAPTER 3

PREVENTION OF GENDER DISCRIMINATORY STRUCTURES IN YOUTH EXCHANGES

'THIS CHAPTER WILL SUPPORT YOU IN DESIGNING
ACTIVITIES THAT RESPECT AND EMPOWER GENDER
IDENTITIES.'

3. Prevention of Gender Discriminatory Structures in Youth Exchanges

Gender-discriminatory structures can hinder inclusivity and equality in international youth work, creating barriers to meaningful participation. Addressing these structures is essential for fostering an environment where every participant feels valued and empowered. This chapter focuses on proactive strategies for preventing gender discrimination and promoting inclusivity in youth activities. It combines theoretical insights with practical exercises to build the skills necessary for gender-sensitive facilitation.

3.1. Geschlechtsdiskriminierende Strukturen

Gender-discriminatory structures refer to the systemic practices and cultural norms that reinforce stereotypes and unequal treatment based on gender, including both binary and non-binary identities (Shelton, Mallon 2022). These structures often result in exclusionary environments and can manifest in various ways:

Task Assignments: Leadership roles are predominantly assigned to males, reinforcing the stereotype of males as natural leaders. Caregiving or support tasks, such as administrative duties or emotional labor, are often disproportionately assigned to females, perpetuating the belief that women are inherently more nurturing or supportive.

Non-binary individuals may face exclusion altogether, with their contributions dismissed or their identities invalidated in task allocation. Additionally, their skill sets may be overlooked due to unconscious biases or a lack of understanding about non-binary identities.

Participation Dynamics: Males often dominate discussions or decision-making processes, especially in formal or professional settings, leading to unequal opportunities for other voices to be heard. Females may be sidelined in traditionally "male-dominated" activities, such as technical fields, sports, or high-stakes negotiations, resulting in reduced visibility and influence.

Non-binary individuals frequently encounter systemic barriers to participation, including being ignored, misgendered, or deliberately excluded from discussions due to the lack of inclusive practices.

Stereotypical Expectations: Assumptions about abilities or roles based on traditional gender norms persist, such as the belief that men are naturally better at math or engineering, while women excel in caregiving or creative fields. These expectations can extend to non-binary individuals, where their existence is invalidated by assuming that only binary genders exist.

Non-binary individuals often face misgendering through the use of incorrect pronouns or the refusal to use their chosen pronouns, further alienating them. Such stereotyping creates an environment where individuals feel pressured to conform to gender norms, limiting their full potential and self-expression.

Research on the ERASMUS+ program has shown that there is still a structural gender bias visible in participation across subject areas. While women are often overrepresented in activities relating to humanities, they are still underrepresented in STEM-related activities, thus reinforcing stereotypes about gender roles in the professional world. [10]

Practical Examples:

- A male participant is often assigned technical tasks while a female participant is asked to manage social aspects, regardless of skills or interest.
- A non-binary participant repeatedly addressed as "she/her" because others assume their appearance aligns with female stereotypes.
- During a group activity, facilitators unconsciously defer leadership roles to male participants.

Addressing the Issue: [11]

- Run regular workshops and awareness training sessions to raise awareness of the importance of the correct pronouns and ensure that everyone is able to use them correctly.
- Actively monitor the distribution of tasks to ensure a fair distribution based on skills and interests rather than gender.
- Regularly review whether people with underrepresented gender identities are given the opportunity to take on leadership roles or visible tasks.

3.2 Gender Sensitivity in Youth Work

Gender sensitivity entails recognizing and addressing the unique needs and experiences of all genders. This requires awareness of intersectionality and a commitment to inclusivity for both binary and non-binary participants. It involves addressing systemic challenges, such as binary norms in education and youth work, which disproportionately marginalize gender-expansive individuals. [12,13]

Facilitators must also be willing to understand the trauma and resilience of gender-expansive youth, who often face higher rates of violence, discrimination, and exclusion rooted in systemic binarism. [14]

Practical Examples and strategies:

- **Program design:** Include activities appealing to diverse interests, avoiding binary categorizations and ensuring inclusivity for non-binary individuals. [15]
- **Respect for Pronouns:** Include an introduction activity where participants state their names and pronouns,. Use name tags that include pronouns to normalize their visibility. Address misgendering promptly and provide guidance to participants who repeatedly use incorrect pronouns. [16]

- **Flexible Facilities:** Infrastructure, such as restrooms and accommodations, that adheres strictly to binary genders can marginalize non-binary individuals. Studies emphasize the distress caused by such facilities among gender-expansive youth, advocating for universal design to promote inclusivity and reduce stigma. [17]
- **Gender Equity in Leadership:** Gender Equity in Leadership: Encourage all genders to take on leadership roles during group activities, addressing imbalances through conscious facilitation. Empower marginalized participants by assigning leadership roles in contexts where they have traditionally been excluded. [18] Create mixed-gender groups for collaborative activities to encourage balanced participation. [19]
- **Intersectionality:** Address the compounded challenges gender-expansive youth who also belong to other minority groups face. For example, recognize and address the unique struggles of gender-expansive youth who are also racial or economic minorities, using an intersectional lens to craft support strategies. [20]

Inclusive Facilitation Practices

Inclusive facilitation practices actively promote equity by ensuring diverse perspectives are heard and valued. They also highlight the importance of challenging systemic biases, such as binary frameworks, that may unconsciously influence participants and facilitators. [21] Facilitators must adopt trauma-informed and intersectional approaches to address the compounded challenges faced by marginalized participants. [22]

Practical Examples and strategies:

- **Discussion-Management:** Use structured methods such as collecting requests to speak; prioritising disadvantaged groups; dynamically adjusting the order to ensure that all genders have the opportunity to speak. [23]
- **Conflict Resolution:** Respond sensitively and directly to situations in which participants do not respect the identities or pronouns of others. [24]
- **Balanced Representation:** Ensure visual aids and examples represent a variety of genders. Include intersectional examples that acknowledge overlapping identities, such as race, class, and ability, to reflect diverse experiences. [25]

Guidelines for the implementation of group activities

- Appoint a gender-inclusivity advocate within the facilitation team.
- Rotate leadership roles in activities to ensure all genders have opportunities to lead. [26]
- Use mixed-gender and diverse groups to promote cross-gender understanding. [27]
- Conduct icebreakers and energizers that challenge stereotypes (e.g., role-reversal activities). [28] **You can find two examples at the end of this chapter.**
- Create anonymous feedback mechanisms to allow participants to report inclusivity concerns. Use both digital and in-person tools to ensure accessibility for all participants. [29]
- Regularly debrief facilitators to address any observed gender imbalances or missteps. [30]
- Provide additional support to participants who feel marginalized due to gender bias. [31]
- Highlight positive examples of inclusion and equity. [32]

Examples of Icebreakers and energizers that challenge stereotypes:

a. Gendered Words Challenge

- Purpose: To raise awareness of how gendered language impacts communication.
- Give participants a list of gendered words (e.g., chairman, businessman, waitress) and ask them to come up with non-gendered alternatives (e.g., chairperson, businessperson, server).
- Debrief: Reflect on how language shapes our perception of gender roles and how we can use inclusive language to be more mindful of diverse identities.

b. Gender-Role Charades

- Purpose: To break down gender stereotypes through humor and play.
- Write common gender roles (e.g., "Stay-at-home dad," "Female CEO," "Non-binary artist") on slips of paper and have participants act them out for others to guess.
- The key is to include non-binary and less traditional roles to challenge preconceived notions of gender and identity.
- Debrief: Talk about how gender roles can sometimes limit people's choices and how we can support a broader range of identities and professions.

3.3 Strategien zur Prävention von geschlechter-diskriminierenden Strukturen

a. Gender-Neutral Task Distribution

- Avoid assigning tasks based on gender stereotypes. Use random assignment methods or allow participants to self-select tasks based on interest.
- Rotate leadership and decision-making roles to ensure equal participation across all genders.

b. Trust-Building Activities

- Implement activities designed to foster mutual respect and understanding among participants, with explicit respect for pronouns and identities.
- Focus on collaborative exercises that require equal input from all group members.

c. Code of Conduct Development

A Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines or rules designed to outline acceptable behaviors and practices within a specific organization, group, or community. To prevent gender discrimination during a Youth Exchange, it is useful to:

- Establish a code of conduct explicitly addressing respect for pronouns, gender neutrality, and inclusivity.
- Ensure all participants understand and agree to the code during introductions.

Self-Practice Exercise Chapter 3: Guide to Gender-Sensitive International Activities

What?	Instruction's
Objective	The ability to develop gender-neutral activities for heterogeneous youth groups and to ensure gender-sensitive implementation.
Duration	60-75 minutes
Materials needed	• Journal • Code of conduct template (optional)
Reflection about Gender-Neutral Task Distribution (15 minutes)	Reflect: Consider how tasks are currently assigned in your activities. Are there patterns based on gender stereotypes or binary thinking? Research: Look into best practices for inclusive task distribution (e.g., random selection, self-selection based on interest, rotating roles). Action Plan: Write down three specific strategies to ensure task assignments are gender-neutral and pronoun-respecting.

Reflection and Practice to Inclusive Trust-Building Activities (20 minutes)	• Reflect: Review the trust-building activities you typically use. Are there any that may unintentionally exclude or disadvantage participants based on gender identity or pronouns? • Evaluate: Identify possible adjustments or replacements that are inclusive to all gender identities. • Optional: Test one activity in a small group or discussion setting and note feedback.
Development of a code of conduct (30 minutes)	Review: Analyse a sample code of conduct template or create a new one. Make sure it contains the following: • Clear guidelines for using correct pronouns. • Policies on addressing gender bias and discriminatory behavior. • Concrete examples of inclusive practices in youth activities.



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Annex: Gender-Neutral Pronoun Guide

Gender-neutral pronouns refer to people without assuming their gender identity, promoting inclusivity and respect for non-binary, genderqueer, or genderfluid individuals. While "they/them" is the most common, others exist.

Gender-Neutral Pronoun	Example Sentences
They/Them/Theirs	• They went to the store. • I spoke to them yesterday. • This is their book.
Ze/Hir (oder Zir)	• Ze went to the store. • I spoke to <i>hir</i> (or <i>zir</i>) yesterday. • This is <i>hir</i> (or <i>zir</i>) book.
Xe/Xem/Xyr	• Xe is working on the project. • I asked xem for help. • This is xyr jacket.
Referring to a person in the third person	• "Ze is really good at solving problems." • "They are leading the group discussion today."
Giving feedback or instructions	• "I spoke to them about their idea." • "Xe completed the project on time."
Correcting misgendering	• "Actually, Taylor uses they/them pronouns."

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