HER STORY,OUR FUTURE.



The facilitator's guide.

From stories to action: a five-step pathway on gender equality and storytelling with young people

HERStory, OUR FUTURE

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HERStory, Our Future
Erasmus+ KA220-YOU – Cooperation partnerships in youth
Project number: 2025-1-ES02-KA220-YOU-000360770

From stories to action: a five-step pathway on gender equality and storytelling with young people
Facilitator's Guide – Output T3.2, WP3 Toolbox Production

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Year: 2026



Co-funded by the European Union

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Introduction.

1. How this guide was born

This guide is the last step of a journey that started by listening to young people. In the first phase of HERStory, Our Future, the partners in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Serbia asked 105 young people aged 18 to 30, and a group of experts in each country, what they knew about gender equality, what they needed and what stopped them from speaking up. Their answers shaped the competences that this guide helps to develop.

From there we went looking for stories. Together we produced ten mini-documentaries, each about ten minutes long, in which women from our countries tell their own lives: their work, their choices, the obstacles they met and what they did about them.

They are very different from one another, and that is the point. They are the heart of this guide and the material you will work with.

Finally, we designed five workshops that take a group from watching a story to telling its own.

They follow the approach of non-formal education: people learn by doing, by discussing and by reflecting together, and the facilitator is a guide rather than a teacher.

The workshops are meant to work anywhere, in a youth centre, a school, an association or a summer camp, and you can adapt them to your group, your time and your context.

To run them you don't need to be a specialist, but some familiarity with gender issues and with working with groups of young people is needed.

The next chapters give you the key concepts, and the Glossary at the end of the guide offers short definitions and practical tips to support you along the way.

2. Talking about gender

Before we start, it helps to agree on what we mean when we talk about gender.

The word is often used as a synonym for "sex", or for "women", but it means something wider: the roles, behaviours and expectations that a society attaches to being a woman or a man.

They are learned, not something we are born with, and they change over time and from one place to another.

A simple way to explain this to a group is the Genderbread Person, a drawing created by the American educator Sam Killermann and shared freely on his website: (https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2018/10/the-genderbread-person-v4/).

It shows a gingerbread figure and invites us to look at four different things that we often mix up.

Gender identity is how we feel inside, who we know ourselves to be. **Gender expression** is how we show ourselves to others, through clothes, behaviour, voice and style. **Anatomical sex** is our body. **Attraction** is who we feel drawn to, sexually or romantically.

These four things are connected, but they are not the same, and none of them decides the others.

The model is not a box to put people in. It does not say that everything is natural, nor that everything is built by society: in each of these dimensions the body, personal experience and culture all play a part.

It is on this side, the one shaped by society, that the question of gender equality arises. When a society builds very rigid ideas of what women and men should be, those ideas become rules, and rules create inequality: in the jobs people do, in the money they earn, in the time they have, in the space they are given to speak.

Most of the time we don't even notice them, because they look normal.

The **iceberg of gender-based violence** helps us see this. Above the waterline we find the violence that everyone recognises and that makes the news: femicide, sexual abuse, physical assault, domestic violence, threats.

Below the waterline, much larger and much less visible, lies everything that makes that violence possible: gender stereotypes, sexist language and humour, the objectification of women's bodies, catcalling, control and manipulation in relationships, blaming the victim, minimising violence, sharing intimate images without consent.

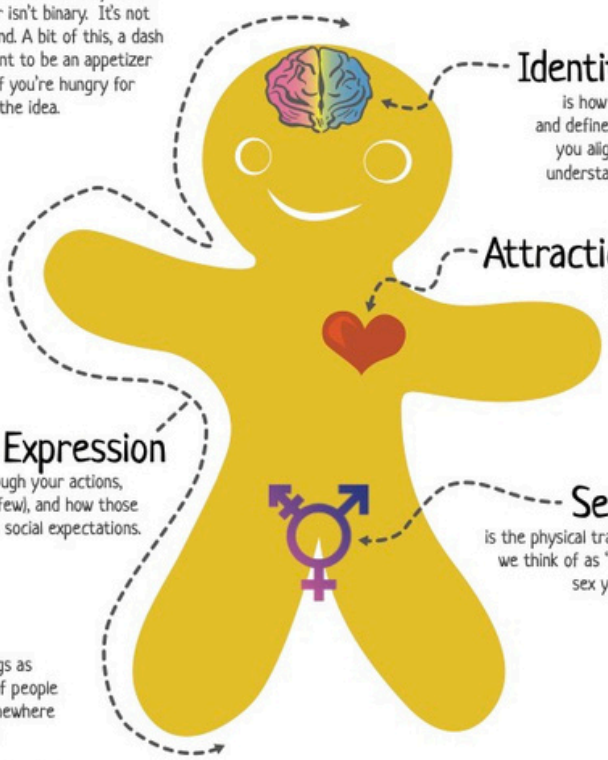
These behaviours are so common that we often don't see them as a problem at all.

Yet they are the base that holds up the tip of the iceberg.

The Genderbread Person

by it's pronouncedMETRO♂sexual.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more after reading it. In fact, that's the idea.



Identity

is how you, in your head, experience and define your gender, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand the options for gender to be.

Attraction

is how you find yourself feeling drawn (or not drawn) to some other people, in sexual, romantic, and/or other ways (often categorized within gender).

Expression

is how you present gender (through your actions, clothing, and demeanor, to name a few), and how those presentations are viewed based on social expectations.

Sex

is the physical traits you're born with or develop that we think of as "sex characteristics," as well as the sex you are assigned at birth.

We can think about all these things as existing on continuums, where a lot of people might see themselves as existing somewhere between 0 and 100 on each

⊘ means a lack of what's on the right side

Gender Identity

⊘ → Woman-ness

⊘ → Man-ness

personality traits, jobs, hobbies, likes, dislikes, roles, expectations

common GENDER IDENTITY things

Gender Expression

⊘ → Femininity

⊘ → Masculinity

style, grooming, clothing, mannerisms, affect, appearance, hair, make-up

common GENDER EXPRESSION things

Anatomical Sex

⊘ → Female-ness

⊘ → Male-ness

body hair, chest, hips, shoulders, hormones penis, vulva, chromosomes, voice pitch

common ANATOMICAL SEX things

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth

☐ Female ☐ Intersex ☐ Male

Typically based solely on external genitalia present at birth (ignoring internal anatomy, biology, and change throughout life), Sex Assigned At Birth (SAAB) is key for distinguishing between the terms "cisgender" (whenSAAB aligns with gender identity) and "transgender" (when it doesn't).

Sexually Attracted to... and/or (a/o)

⊘ → Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People

⊘ → Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

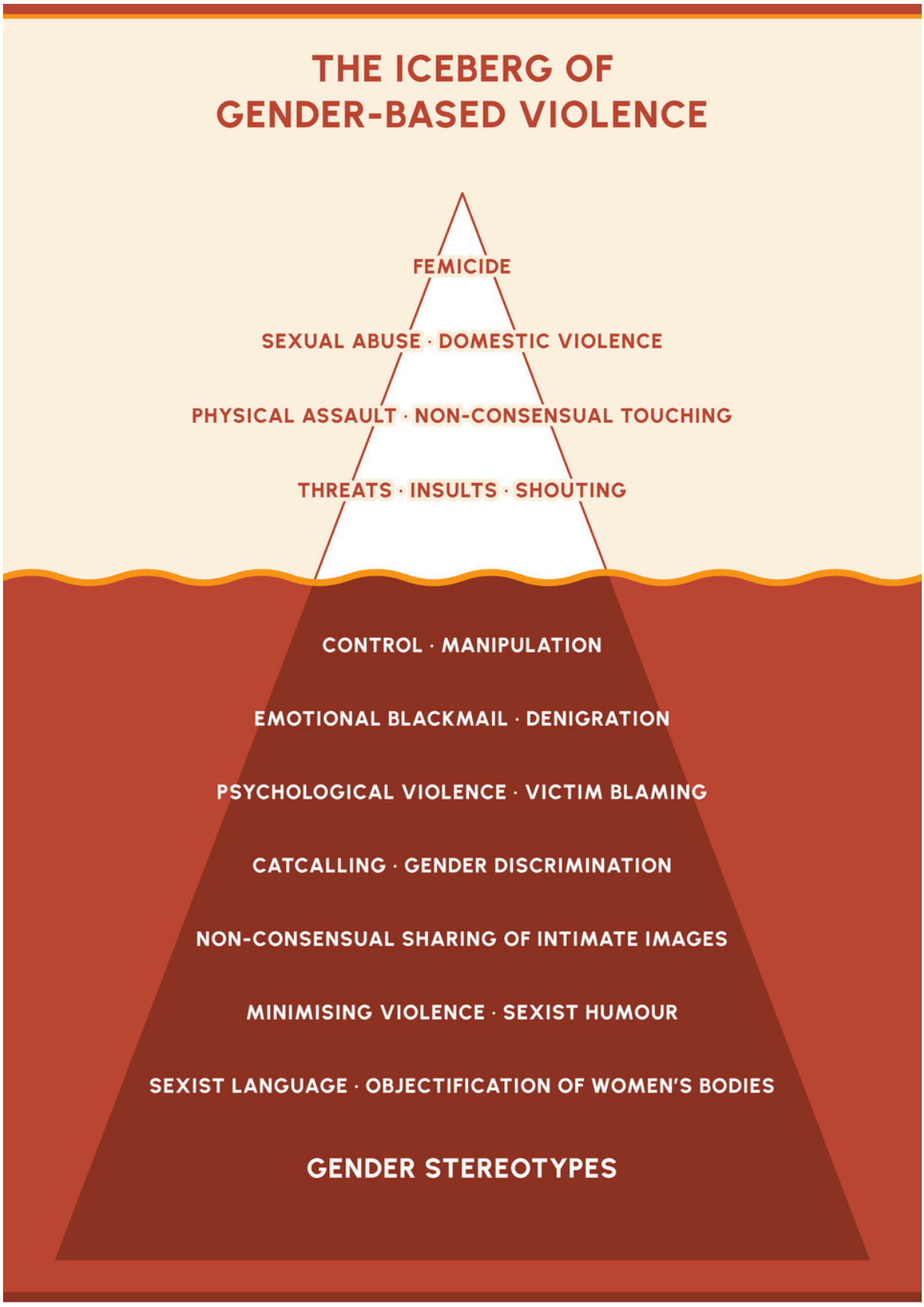
Romantically Attracted to...

⊘ → Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People

⊘ → Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

Genderbread Person Version 4 created and uncopyrighted 2017 by Sam Killermann For a bigger bite, read more at www.genderbread.org

THE ICEBERG OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



This is why HERStory chooses to work on culture. The workshops in this guide don't focus on the most extreme forms of violence, which are complex and need specialised support.

They focus on what lies below the waterline: the stereotypes, the words and the images that we all meet every day, in the media, at school, online, in our families. Working at the base of the iceberg means working on the conditions that make violence acceptable, and it is something that every group of young people can do.

One last idea runs through the whole guide: **intersectionality**.

The term was coined in 1989 by the American legal scholar **Kimberlé Crenshaw**, to describe how different forms of discrimination overlap.

Gender never works alone. It combines with other parts of who we are, such as where we come from, the colour of our skin, our social class, our age, a disability, our sexual orientation, or whether we live in a city or a village.

A young migrant woman and a middle-class woman born in the same city may both face sexism, but not in the same way.

Some aspects of our identity give us privilege, others expose us to exclusion, and most of us have a bit of both.

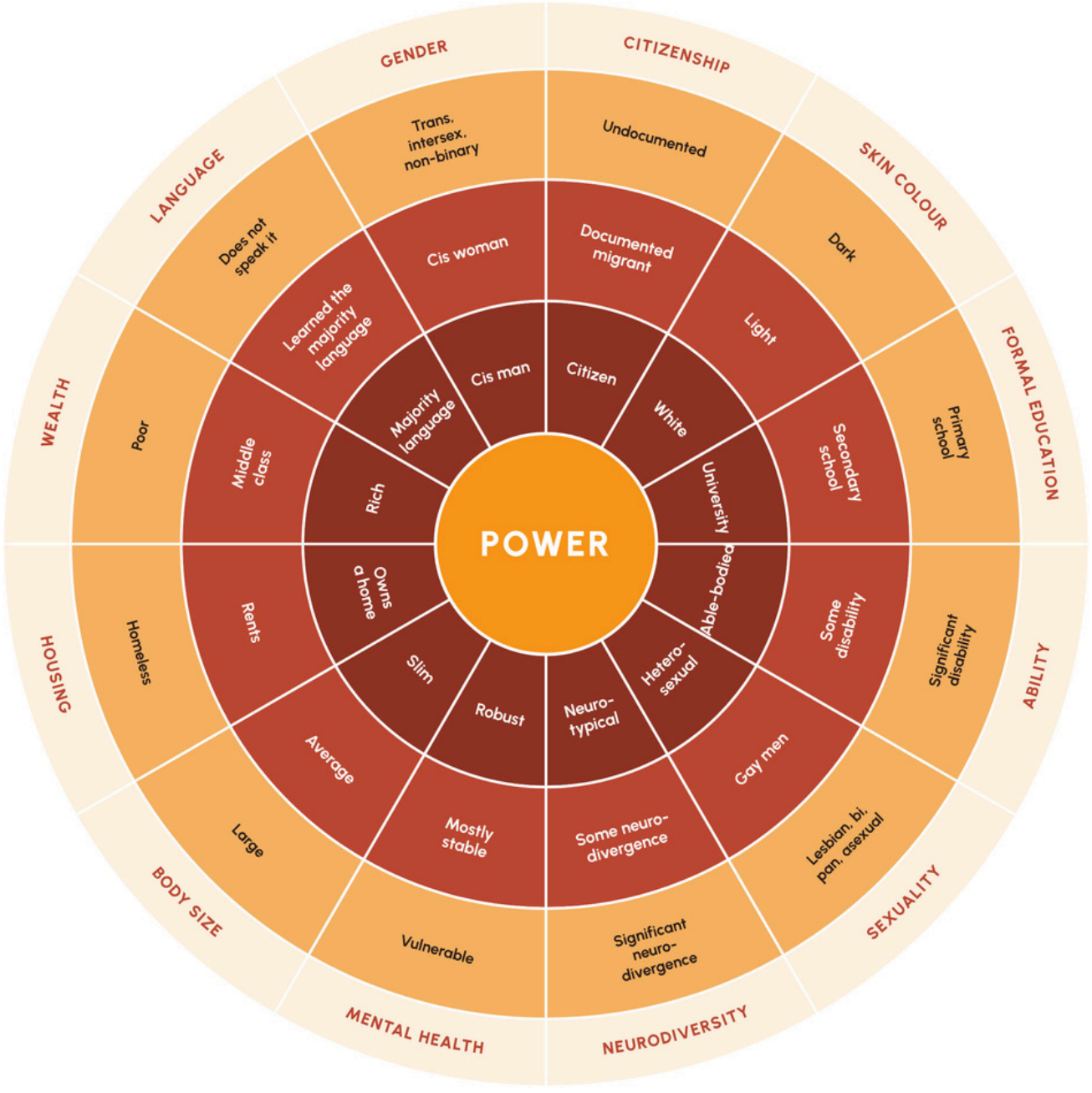
The wheel of power and privilege can help your group see this at a glance.

The mini-documentaries were chosen precisely because they show women with very different backgrounds, and reflecting on **privilege** is one of the most useful things you can bring into any discussion.

1. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex", University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989.

THE WHEEL OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE

HERStory, Our Future · Adapted from Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power/Privilege



Closer to the centre: more power and privilege. Towards the edge: more exposure to exclusion.

3. Why stories

Storytelling means telling stories, and it is one of the oldest ways human beings have to make sense of the world.

We don't understand our lives through data and definitions, but through stories: the ones we hear at home, the ones we read, the ones we watch on a screen and, more and more, the ones that scroll past us on our phones. Stories tell us who matters, what is normal, what is possible.

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This is why the question "**who tells the story?**" is so important.

For a long time, women's stories have mostly been told by others: in advertising, in the news, in films, often through the same few stereotypes. When a woman tells her own story, something changes.

We see a whole person, with her doubts and her strengths, and not a type. **This is what the HERStory mini-documentaries try to do**, and it is what young people experience as viewers in the first part of the pathway.

Then the pathway turns them into storytellers. Young people spend a large part of their lives on social media, where they don't only consume stories but also produce and share them every day. This is a huge opportunity, and also a responsibility.

The same tools that spread stereotypes and online hate can be used to question them, to give voice to those who are not heard and to bring people together around a cause. Learning to tell a story in a way that is ethical, safe and effective is therefore not a technical skill: it is a way of taking part in public life.

Bringing gender equality and storytelling together is the core idea of this guide.
Understanding gender helps young people see the stories that surround them with new eyes; storytelling gives them a way to answer, with their own voice.

Over the five workshops, the group moves from watching a real story to recognising the issues behind it, from analysing how women are portrayed to imagining a change, and finally to creating and presenting a small campaign of its own.

Each workshop builds on the previous one, but each can also be adapted, shortened or used on its own, depending on your group.

Take what works for you, and make it yours.

https://herstoryourfuture.com/stories/

Module 1

Gender equality: Recognising the issue

Themes	Gender equality · Gender stereotypes · Intersectionality
Complexity	Level 1. No previous knowledge needed: a good first activity on gender equality
Group size	6–20 participants
Time	About 2 hours (2 h 30 min if you screen two documentaries)
Competences	Gender equality literacy · Intersectional analysis
In the pathway	The starting point, built on the mini-documentaries

Overview

In this module the group watches one of the HERStory mini-documentaries together and then talks about it.

You don't explain anything beforehand: the story speaks first.

Then, step by step, the conversation moves from "How did it make me feel?" to "What is this story really about?", until the group can name the gender equality issues behind it. Think of the debriefing as a sieve. You start with everything the story has stirred up, emotions, impressions and opinions, and gradually filter it down to a few key themes such as gender stereotypes, discrimination, the glass ceiling or intersectionality.

Only at that point do you put a name to these concepts, starting from the participants' own words.

Everything the following modules build on starts here. Before young people can plan a campaign, communicate online or tell their own stories, they need to recognise and name the issues at stake.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will:

- know some key gender equality concepts that emerge from the story and be able to name them, for example stereotypes, discrimination, the glass ceiling or intersectionality;
- be able to recognise gender equality issues in a real-life story, and see how gender combines with other factors such as origin, class, age or disability;
- look at gender (in)equality with curiosity, a critical eye and empathy.

Materials

- A projector or large screen and good speakers
- The mini-documentary, downloaded if possible, with subtitles in the group's language, if available.
- Flip chart and markers
- Sticky notes and pens

Preparation

- Choose the documentary. The HERStory library has ten mini-documentaries of about ten minutes each, and they are very different in tone, themes and approach. The Gender Equality Lens Documentary Library shows at a glance which issues and intersectional factors each one covers. Think about your group: their age and background, what might feel close or far to them, and which topics might be sensitive, such as gender-based violence.

- Watch it yourself, at least once and better twice. Note the moments that struck you and the themes you expect to come out. Don't hold on to your list too tightly, though: the group may see something different, and that's fine.

- Check the technical setup in the room: sound, subtitles, and the internet connection if you are streaming. A technical problem in the first five minutes can break the atmosphere you need.

- Set up the space. Place the chairs in a semicircle facing the screen, so that you can easily turn it into a full circle for the discussion.

- Prepare two flip-chart sheets. One is for the ground rules. The other is blank, with the title "What is this story about?".

Instructions

Step 1 - Welcome and ground rules (15 min)

- **Welcome everyone. If the group is new, do a quick round of names.**
- **Introduce the pathway in one or two sentences, for example: "Over five meetings we'll go from stories to action. Today we start with a story."**
- **Agree the ground rules. Suggest a few and ask the group whether they want to add any: listen without interrupting · speak for yourself ("I think…") · what is said here stays here · nobody has to speak if they don't want to · disagreeing is fine, disrespecting is not. Write them on the flip chart and keep it visible for the whole pathway.**

Tip!

Ground rules work better when the group adds at least one of its own: people respect the rules they helped write.

Step 2 - Watching the documentary (15 min)

- **Introduce the screening with one sentence only, for example: "We're going to watch a short story about a woman. Just watch it, and we'll talk about it afterwards."**
- **Don't say who she is or what the story is about.**
- **Ask participants to put their phones away and to watch without taking notes.**

Why so little introduction?
If you tell the group in advance that the story is about discrimination, they will watch it looking for discrimination. Without guidance, each person brings their own reading, and the discussion is much richer.

Step 3 - First reactions (10 min)

- **When the film ends, leave a few seconds of silence before you speak.**
- **Do a quick round: everyone says one word or a short sentence about how they feel now, or what stays with them. Write the words on sticky notes or on the flip chart.**
- **Don't open the discussion yet: for now you are only collecting.**

Step 4 - Debriefing: the sieve (40 min)

This is the heart of the module. Guide the conversation through four levels, from the broadest to the most precise. You don't need to follow them rigidly. Go where the group takes you, but keep the direction: from feelings to issues.

a) Feelings
- What struck you the most? Which moment do you remember best? Why?
- Did anything make you angry, surprised or moved?

b) The story
- Who is the protagonist? What does she do?
- Besides her own, whose stories does she tell? Which women, groups or communities appear through her words? What obstacles do they face? How do they react, alone or together?

Note:
Not every documentary is only about the protagonist. Some women talk mostly about their own lives; others speak about the women they work with or for, such as migrant women, victims of violence, or the groups and associations that act from the grassroots. In the questions below, "the women in the story" means all of them: the protagonist and the people whose stories she brings with her.

c) Beneath the story

- Do some of these difficulties exist because they are women? Would the story be different if they were men?
- Do other aspects of their lives, such as where they come from, migration, their age, their economic situation or where they live, make things harder or easier? Is it the same for all the women in the story?
- Did anything in the story contradict what you would have expected?

d) Our world

- Have you seen similar situations around you, in your country or in the media?
- What would need to change for their stories to be different?

While the group is talking, write down on the "What is this story about?" sheet the key phrases that come up, as close as possible to the participants' own words.

Tip!

You're not looking for the "right answer". If the group sees something you hadn't noticed, follow it: that is exactly what the sieve is for.

Step 5 - Naming the concepts (20 min)

- **Look at the flip chart** together and ask: "If we had to give these situations a name, what would we call them?"
- **Help the group cluster the phrases into themes.** When the group gets close to a concept, give it its name: "What you've described here is called a gender stereotype." Add a short definition in plain words (see Glossary), then ask for another example, from the documentary or from their own experience.
- Aim for three or four concepts, not all of them. **A few concepts well understood are worth more than a long list.**
- **Always touch on intersectionality,** even briefly: the documentaries were chosen precisely to show women with very different backgrounds and experiences. A simple question can open it: "Would it have been the same for every woman?"

Step 6 – Closing (10 min)

- Do a final round: "One thing I'm taking home from today."
- Thank everyone and briefly say what comes next: in the next meeting the group will look at how women are portrayed in the media, and compare it with what they saw today.
- Keep the flip chart! The concepts and phrases the group found today are the starting point of Module 2, and they can also feed Module 3.

Evaluating the session

After the session, take five minutes to ask yourself:

- Did everyone have a chance to speak? Did anyone stay silent all the time, and why?
- Did the group manage to move from emotions to issues? Which concepts came out?
- Were there strong emotional reactions that need some follow-up?
- Which concepts will you take into Module 2?

Tips for facilitators

- When someone disagrees. Someone may say "That's not discrimination, it was her choice". Don't correct them straight away. Ask the group what they think, and go back to concrete moments in the story. Disagreement, kept respectful, is often where the best learning happens.
- Take care of emotions. Some stories deal with violence or discrimination that participants may have experienced themselves. Watch body language, offer a break if needed, and stay available after the session. Nobody should ever be asked to share personal experiences. It's a good idea to have the contacts of local support services at hand.
- Neither hero nor victim. Help the group see the protagonist, and the women she talks about, as real people with their strengths, doubts and contradictions, rather than as superheroines or victims.
- Model inclusive language. The way you speak is part of what the group learns.
- Watch the time. The debriefing tends to run long. Protect Step 5: naming the concepts is what the next modules need.

Module 2

Gender equality + storytelling: How stories are told

Themes	Gender stereotypes in the media · Ethical and inclusive storytelling · Rights and policies on gender equality
Complexity	Level 2. It builds on the concepts found in Module 1.
Group size	6–20 participants
Time	About 2 h
Competences	ST3 Ethical and inclusive storytelling · GEA3 Rights and policy literacy
In the pathway	It starts from the concepts the group found in Module 1 and prepares the ground for Module 3, where participants build their own story

Overview

In Module 1 the group listened to a woman telling her own story. In this module the group looks at the other side: **how women's stories are usually told by others**, in advertising, in the news and on social media.

Participants first analyse a few real examples you have chosen and list the patterns that keep coming back. Then, in small groups, they draw a **Stereotype Tree**: where do these stereotypes come from (the roots), who carries them (the trunk), and what do they produce in women's real lives (the fruits and leaves).

The trunk is also the moment to talk about rights and policies: laws and institutions can carry stereotypes, but they can also counter them.

The session ends where it began, with the documentary. The group compares the way women are portrayed in the media with the way they appear in the mini-documentary, where they speak for themselves. What changes when a woman tells her own story? The answers become the group's first principles for ethical and inclusive storytelling, which they will use from Module 3 onwards.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will:

- **know** the gender stereotypes that recur most often in the media, and some of the main laws and policies on gender equality;
- **be able to analyse** how women are represented in media content, and recognise stereotypes, victim blaming and the lack of an intersectional perspective;
- **look at** the media with a critical eye, and value ways of telling stories that respect people's dignity and diversity.

Materials

- 6–8 examples of one type of media material, printed or on slides (see "preparation")
- A projector or large screen, if you use videos or social media content
- Flip chart and markers; large sheets of paper (A3 or bigger) for the trees
- Sticky notes in three colours, and pens
- The flip chart from Module 1, with the concepts and phrases the group found
- A few stills or short clips from the mini-documentary watched in Module 1
- Optional: one copy per group of the box "Rights and policies you can mention"

Preparation

- Choose **one type of media material**, and prepare it well. You can work on TV commercials, news articles on gender-based violence, print advertisements, or TikTok and Instagram videos. **Each type raises different questions and needs different knowledge** (*news calls for some understanding of how journalists frame a story, social media for how algorithms work, etc.*). Our advice is therefore to choose 6–8 different examples, all of the same type: the one that best suits your group and that you feel most confident with. Pick recent examples from your country, in the group's language, and include one positive example, so the group also sees that a different way is possible.
- **Read the material with the lens of Module 1**. For each example, ask yourself which concepts from Module 1 it touches on (stereotypes, discrimination, gender-based violence, intersectionality…) and what the group might notice.
- Think carefully about sensitive content. News and images about violence against women can be part of the material, but first consider whether the participants are mature enough to work on them. Our advice, however, is to focus on the issues at the base of the **iceberg of gender-based violence** (see the introduction to this guide), such as stereotypes, sexist language and everyday sexism, rather than on violence itself. Violence is a complex topic, with many implications, including emotional ones, that this module cannot fully take into account.
- **Prepare the "rights and policies" input**. Choose policies to mention when the groups reach the trunk of the tree: international or European ones and one from your country. You only need a sentence or two on each.
- **Go back to the documentary**. Re-watch one or two moments of the mini-documentary used in Module 1, where the protagonist speaks about herself or about other women in her own words.
- Prepare three flip-chart sheets: "How are women portrayed?", a simple drawing of a tree (roots, trunk, fruits and leaves) as an example, and "What changes when a woman tells her own story?".

Tip!

Worldwide, women are only about a quarter of the people heard, read about or seen in the news. Who is absent from a story says as much as who is present. See the HERStory mini-documentary with data journalist Donata Columbro: what is not counted remains invisible!

Instructions

Step 1 - Welcome and back to Module 1 (10 min)

- Welcome the group and put the rules from Module 1 back on the wall.
- Recap Module 1 in a few minutes using the concepts and phrases on the old flip chart. Which concepts did we find? Ask two or three people to recall them in their own words.
- Check the concept of stereotype. Ask the group to recall the concept of gender stereotype from Module 1, in their own words. If it did not come up, or is still vague, introduce it briefly (see Glossary): a fixed, simplified idea of what women or men are like or should do. Don't anticipate which stereotypes you expect to find.
- Introduce today's focus in one or two sentences. For example: "Last time we watched women telling their own stories. Today we look at how women are usually told by others".

Step 2 - Media Pattern Analysis (30 min)

- Split the group into small groups of 3–4 people and give each group 3/4 pieces of material.
- Give the groups 15 minutes to look at their material, using the questions that match the type you chose:
- **For advertising and social media**: Who is the woman? What is she doing? What does she look like? What is she selling, or what is being sold through her? Who is missing: older women, women with disabilities, women from different backgrounds, different bodies?
- **For news about violence against women**: Who is the subject of the headline, the man or the woman? Which words are used: "love", "jealousy", "a moment of madness"? Is there any focus on what she did, what she wore, where she was? Is the violence presented as a private tragedy or as part of a wider problem?
- **Do not explain the stereotypes first**: if you tell the group in advance which stereotypes to look for, they will only find those. Letting them observe first produces a richer list, and the patterns come from the group itself.
- **Back in plenary**, each group shows one example and says what they noticed. Write the recurring patterns on the "How are women portrayed?" sheet, for example: "always young and thin", "the woman takes care, the man decides", "the headline talks about his feelings, not about her".
- Close with one question: "Which of these patterns had you never noticed before?"

Step 3 - The Stereotype Tree (40 min)

- **Show your example tree** and explain it in a few words.
- **Roots** – cultural causes. Ask: *"Where do these ideas come from? What traditions, beliefs or habits keep them alive?"*
- **Trunk** – institutions and media that convey the stereotypes. Ask: *"Who passes these ideas on, and who could change them?"* (schools, advertising, news, social media, public institutions). Here you can introduce the legal frameworks and public policies on gender equality.
- **Fruits and leaves** – real consequences in women's lives, for example glass ceiling, economic violence. Ask: *"What happens to women's lives when these stereotypes are repeated everywhere?"* Ask the groups to link each fruit to a root or to something on the flip chart.
- Each group presents its tree in plenary. Ask the others what they recognise and what is different in their own tree.
- **Ask:** "What do the trees have in common? Which roots come back?"

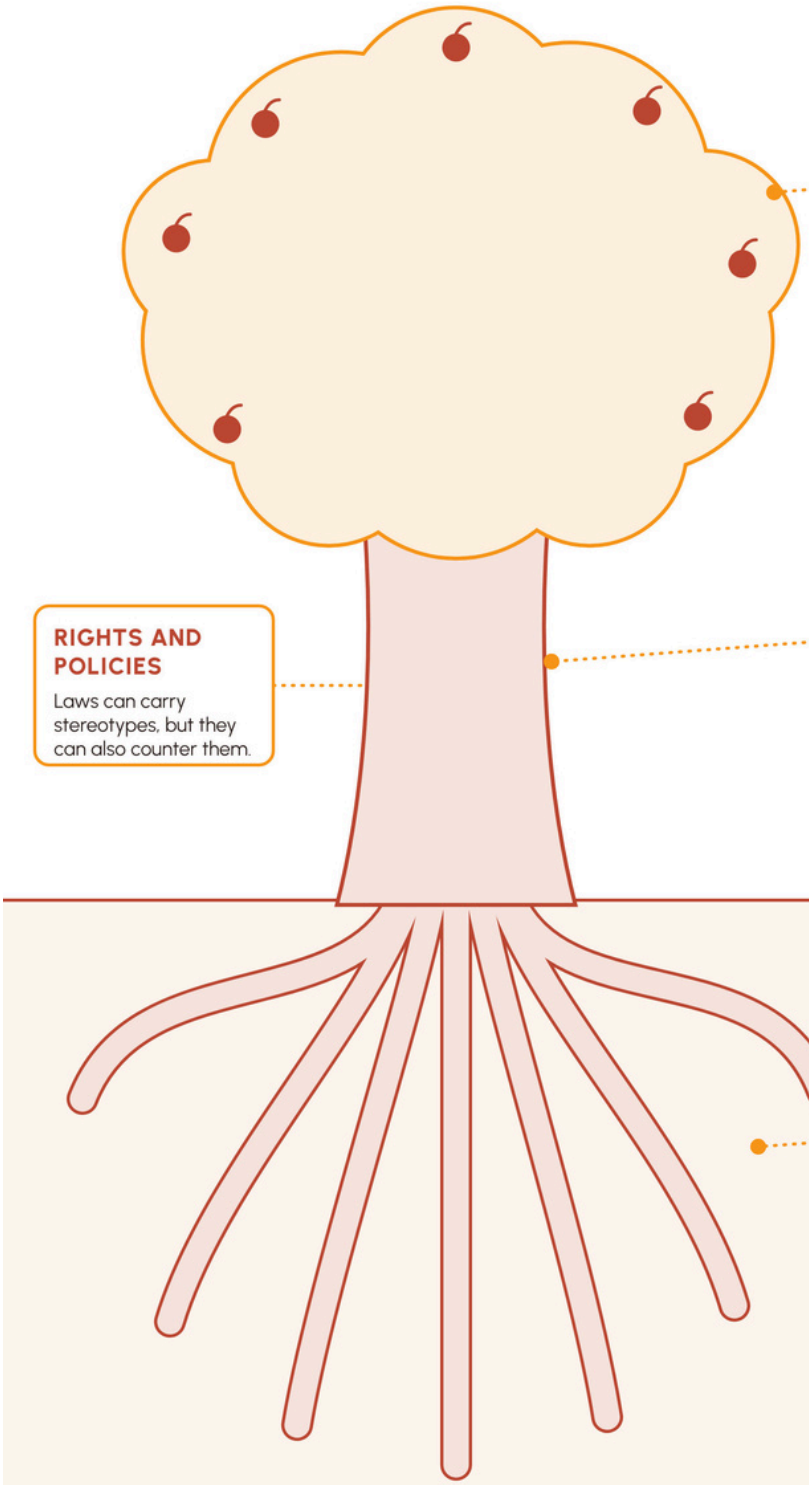
Rights and policies you can mention:

- **CEDAW (UN, 1979):** the international convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Article 5 asks States to change social and cultural patterns based on stereotyped roles for men and women.
- **Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011):** the European treaty on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Article 17 asks the media and the private sector to take part in prevention.
- **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, Article 23:** equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas.
- **Audiovisual Media Services Directive (EU)**: advertising on TV and video platforms must not include or promote discrimination based on sex.
- **Directive (EU) 2024/1385** on combating violence against women and domestic violence: the first EU law on this topic, which also covers some forms of online violence.
- **Manifesto of Venice** (ITALY, 2017) is an Italian code of ethics for journalists, written to promote accurate reporting and responsible storytelling on gender-based violence and on respect for gender equality

THE STEREOTYPE TREE

HERStory, Our Future · Module 2 – Gender equality + storytelling

Our stereotype: .....



FRUITS AND LEAVES

What are the consequences in women's real lives?

TRUNK

Who carries this stereotype and keeps it alive?

RIGHTS AND POLICIES

Laws can carry stereotypes, but they can also counter them.

ROOTS

Where does it come from?

Step 4 - Giving women a voice (25 min)

- Bring the group back together and show the one or two moments of the documentary you have chosen.
- **Guide the comparison with questions**: *How are women usually portrayed in the media material analysed, and how are they portrayed in the documentary, where they tell their own story? Who speaks and who is spoken about? Which roles, emotions and complexity emerge?*
- **Finish with the key question**: "What changes when a woman tells her own story?" Write the answers on the third sheet, in the participants' words.
- **Note**: Don't let the comparison turn into "media bad, documentary good". Ask what the documentary does differently in concrete terms (who holds the camera, who is named, who has time to speak) because these are the choices participants will make themselves in Module 3.

Step 5 – Closing (15 min)

- **Do a final round**: *"One thing I will notice differently in the media from now on."*
- **Thank everyone** and say what comes next: in Module 3 the group starts building its own story. Tell them they can already start thinking about an issue or a situation they would like to tell.
- **Keep the flip charts!** The list of patterns and the trees are a starting point for Module 3: they show what to avoid and what the group wants to change.

Evaluating the session

After the session, take five minutes to ask yourself:

- Did the group manage to recognise patterns, and not only comment on single examples?
- Did the trees go beyond the media, down to the roots and up to the real consequences?
- Did the rights and policies input feel connected to the trees, or did it sound like a lecture?
- Which principles came out in Step 4? Are they clear enough to guide the work in Module 3?

Tips for facilitators

- Take care of emotions. Content on violence against women may touch participants personally. Say clearly before showing the material what it contains, offer a break if needed, stay available afterwards and have the contacts of local support services at hand. Nobody should be asked to share personal experiences.
- Don't amplify the stereotypes. Present problematic material neutrally, expose the group to it for as little time as needed, and always bring the discussion back to the critical reading rather than to the content itself.
- When someone disagrees. Someone may say "It's just advertising, it reflects reality". Don't correct straight away: ask what the group thinks, and go back to concrete details of the material, such as who is shown and who is missing.
- Model inclusive language. The way you speak is part of what the group learns.
- Watch the time. Step 3 tends to run long because of the drawing and the legal input. Protect Step 4: the comparison is what connects this module to Module 3.

Module 3

Gender equality + advocacy: From issue to action

Themes	Advocacy planning · Community mobilisation · Story structure and framing
Complexity	Level 3. Asks the group to produce something of its own
Group size	6–20 participants, working in groups of three to five
Time	About 1 h 20 min
Competences	GEA4 Advocacy planning and campaigning · GEA6 Community mobilisation and participation building · ST1 Story structure and narrative design · ST2 Writing and framing stories for impact.
In the pathway	It starts from the problems mapped in the Stereotype Tree and from the mini-documentary watched in Module 1

Overview

In this module the group moves from analysis to action. Each small group takes one problem, from the Stereotype Tree or inspired by the documentary, and asks: what could change, who has the power to change it, and who could help?

Then the group writes a short story, about one minute read aloud, with an invented protagonist and a clear request to someone who can make the change. How to take it online and turn it into content comes in Modules 4 and 5.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will:

- **know** the basic elements of an advocacy campaign (problem, solution, target, allies) and of a story for social change;
- **be able to identify** who can bring about change, and build a short story that links personal and collective dimensions to a call to action;
- **see themselves as agents of change**, able to turn a shared concern into collective action.

Materials

- Flip chart and markers: one sheet per group for the problem, solution, target and allies, and one for the ground rules
- One printed copy of the example story for each participant
- One story canvas per group, printed on A3 or drawn on a flip-chart sheet (see Step 4)
- Sticky notes and pens
- From the previous modules: the notes on the documentary (Module 1), the Stereotype Trees, the "How are women portrayed?" sheet and the "What changes when a woman tells her own story?" sheet (Module 2)
- A card or a flip chart with the four feedback questions for the reading.
- A timer, and a phone or camera to photograph the canvases and stories at the end

Preparation

- **Choose the example story**. Select or adapt a short example story with the same shape as the one the groups will write: 6 to 8 sentences, about one minute read aloud, a protagonist who experiences a concrete problem, meets an obstacle, and a request at the end. It should be clearly different from the topics the groups are likely to choose, so that they don't copy it. You can adapt the one in the box below to your context.
- **Prepare the story canvas** with its six boxes.
- Prepare examples of who holds power in your context, to help groups that get stuck on the question "who could make this change?". (F*or example: employers, school or university boards, local councils, regional or national authorities, media, advertising bodies, equality bodies, trade unions*).
- **Decide how to form the groups**. Groups of three to five. If the Module 2 trees are still on the tables, groups can stay as they were or mix, depending on how many problems you want to cover.
- **Prepare a safe space**. The protagonist is invented, so nobody has to tell their own story, but the problems chosen may still touch participants personally.

A real example: #FreePeriods

In 2017 **Amika George**, then 17, read that **girls in the UK were missing school because their families could not afford period products**. She launched an online petition and the #FreePeriods campaign, asking the UK government to provide free period products in schools. Her petition gathered nearly 200,000 signatures and she led a protest of around 2,000 people outside the Prime Minister's residence; in January 2020 the UK Department for Education launched a scheme providing free period products to schools and colleges in England.

Amika George, "*Why I started the campaign to get free tampons in schools*", Dazed, 8 March 2019 — dazeddigital.com/life-culture/article/43633. As the article is long (about 1,100 words), the facilitator can read the excerpt or summarise it**. This story shows how a concrete problem, a clear request and the right target can lead to change.**

Instructions

Step 1 - Welcome and recap (10 min)

- Welcome everyone and recall the ground rules and recap the path so far in a few minutes.
- Introduce today's focus in one or two sentences. For example: "Until now we looked at the problem. Today we start imagining how to change it, and we write a short story that asks someone to act."
- The facilitator reads a short example story (see the box), selected in advance, and, with the group, identifies its parts: who the protagonist is, what happens to her, what blocks her, what would change, what is asked and to whom.

Step 2 - A concrete case: the story canvas (30 min)

- In this activity **each group chooses a concrete case**, a problem and a person who experiences it, and builds the story canvas step by step: who she is, what blocks her, what would change, and what we ask, to whom. You can find a model canvas in the next page.
- **Choose a concrete case**. Each group chooses one problem and one person who experiences it. The case can come from a story that someone in the group has lived or knows well. A real story is even better, because it is easier to tell (in that case, always use invented name/s).
- **Fill in the story canvas**. Each group answers five questions, one box each:
  - Who is she? Name (invented), age, where she lives, what she does, her habits and hobbies.
  - What happens to her? An everyday situation where the problem hits her.
  - What blocks her? Stereotypes, institutions, rules: the "trunk" of the tree.
  - What would change? Her life if the solution were realised.
  - What do we ask, to whom, and why now? The call to action to the target, that is who has the power to make the change happen. Then add one line: who could join us (allies)?
- **Go round the groups and ask**: Is she a person with a name and a life, not a type? Is the situation concrete enough to see it? Is the request addressed to someone who can actually decide? If a group gets stuck on the target, go back to the trunk of the tree and to the laws and policies discussed in Module 2

A real example: #FreePeriods

Problem: in the UK, many girls missed school because their families could not afford period products.
Solution: free period products in schools.
Target: the UK government.
Allies: other students, grassroots groups and associations working on period poverty, lawyers, the media.

THE STORY CANVAS

HERStory, Our Future · Module 3 – Gender equality + advocacy

1 Who is she?

THE PROBLEM

2 What happens to her?

3 What blocks her?

THE SOLUTION (OUR HYPOTHESIS)

4 What would change?

TARGET

5 What do we ask, to whom, and why now?

ALLIES

6 Who could join us?

Step 3 - Building the story: from canvas to text (15 min)

- Each group turns the five boxes into a story of 6 to 8 sentences, with a beginning, a development and an ending containing the request.
- Ask groups to read their story aloud once among themselves and to check the timing: about one/two minutes.

Step 4 – Reading, feedback and closing *(25 min)*

- **Each group reads its story aloud**. Allow about one minute for the reading and three minutes for feedback per group, and use a timer.
- **The others answer four questions**: Is it clear who she is? Is the problem clear? Is the request clear? Does it follow the principles we found in Module 2, and avoid the stereotypes we saw?
- If time allows, let groups improve their story or key message after the feedback.
- **Do a final round**: "One thing I'm taking with me from today."
- **Collect the outputs!** The completed story canvas, the 6–8 sentence story and the one-sentence key message of each group are the starting point of Modules 4 and 5. Photograph or collect them before leaving the room.

Evaluating the session

After the session, take five minutes to ask yourself:

- Did every group choose a problem, a solution, a target and allies that are concrete?
- Did the stories have a protagonist, a problem, an obstacle, a change and a clear request?
- Did the stories follow the principles found in Module 2, and did the protagonists act, not only suffer?
- Did everyone have a chance to contribute? Did anyone stay silent all the time, and why?
- What will you take into Modules 4 and 5?

Tips for facilitators

- Keep the focus on ideas and narrative. When groups start planning the how (hashtags, videos, events), write it on a "*later*" sheet (where you can put everything that could be useful for the next modules) and bring them back to the problem, the target and the story.
- Help groups to be concrete. A specific target ("the director of this school") is better than a general one ("institutions"). A specific request ("publish the criteria") is better than a general one ("respect women").
- Protect the dignity of the protagonist. Show a person with a name and a life, who has choices and wants, and not only a victim.
- No need for personal stories. If a participant chooses to share a personal experience, respect it and don't push others to do the same.
- Take care of emotions. The problems chosen may touch participants. Stay available during and after the session, and have the contacts of local support services at hand.
- Watch the time. The module is tight, so use a timer.

Module 4

Gender equality + digital communication: From story to campaign

Themes	Campaign planning · Platforms, audiences and engagement · Online safety
Complexity	Level 3. The module builds on the story each group wrote in Module 3
Group size	6–20 participants, in the same groups as in Module 3
Time	About 1 h 30 min
Competences	DC1 Strategic digital communication · DC2 Platform literacy and algorithm awareness · DC4 Audience engagement and community building · DC5 Online safety and digital resilience.
In the pathway	It starts from the story canvas and the story written by each group in Module 3, and prepares the content that will be produced in Module 5

Overview

In this module each group's story becomes a campaign plan. The group first looks at one or two real campaigns to see how they work: what they say, whom they speak to, where, and what they ask people to do.

Then each group applies the same logic to its own story and fills in a one-page campaign plan, including how to stay safe online. Content is only planned here: it will be produced in Module 5.

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Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will:

- **know** how a campaign uses a story to change the way an issue is seen, and the basic elements of a digital campaign, including its risks and the platform rules;
- **be able to plan** a simple campaign, choosing audience, channels, call to action and type of content;
- **use digital spaces strategically**, responsibly and safely.

Materials

- Projector or large screen and speakers; the campaign videos, downloaded if possible
- Each group's story canvas and story from Module 3
- One campaign plan per group, printed on A3 or drawn on a flip-chart sheet (see Step 3)
- Flip chart and markers: one sheet for the ground rules and one with four columns for the video analysis (audience, channels, call to action, involvement)
- Sticky notes and pens
- Optional: one device with internet per group, to check which platforms their audience uses

Preparation

- **Choose one or two campaign videos**. Short campaigns, two or three minutes at most, that use a story to break a gender stereotype and that can be understood without much context. Prefer examples in your language or that your group may know, and download them in advance.
- **Print the campaign plan** (see Step 3).
- **Prepare two short inputs**, a few minutes each, in plain words: how platforms decide what we see (echo chamber) and why paid promotion is not always an option for social-issue content in the EU (see the box in Step 3); and how to deal with online hate (see Step 4).
- **Bring the Module 3 outputs**. Each group needs its own story canvas and story.
- **Prepare a safe space**. Online hate can be a personal experience for some participants. Remind the group of the ground rules, and have the contacts of local support services and the reporting tools of the main platforms at hand.

Campaigns you can use:

- **Always, "#LikeAGirl" (2014): what does it mean to do something "like a girl", and when does it become an insult?** https://youtu.be/olUAKw66y2k?si=5YithSMtuhZCKgPj

- **Bodyform/Libresse, "Blood Normal" (2017): the first advert to show period blood as red instead of blue liquid.** *https://youtu.be/QdW6lRsuXaQ?si=e5D-SGBqTYppd9Yr*

- **Orange, "La Compil des Bleues" (2023):** highlights that seem to show the French men's national football team turn out to be the women's team, thanks to digital effects. **Why do we assume that great football is played by men?** https://youtu.be/QVNZRHIZVL8

- **Dove, "Reverse Selfie" (2021): a girl's edited selfie is "undone" step by step, back to her real face**. How far do young people go to look perfect online, and who gains from it? https://youtu.be/z2T-Rh838GA?si=bUYhC3BTe_Poi1GK

Instructions

Step 1 - Welcome, recap and key message (10 min)

- Welcome everyone and recall the ground rules.
- Each group reads its story from Module 3 aloud.
- Then each group writes its key message: one sentence, the idea they want people to remember. Ask: "If someone remembers only one sentence of your story, which should it be?" The key message is what the campaign will carry online.
- Introduce today's focus in one sentence, for example: "We have a story. Today we plan how to bring it to the people we want to reach, and how to do it safely."
- Say right away that today is about planning, not producing: the content will be made in Module 5. It helps the groups to stay focused on audience and strategy.

Step 2 - How real campaigns work (20 min)

- **Show the video or videos** once without comment, then a second time with two sets of questions in mind.
- The story: Which stereotype does it show, and how does it break it? What was the old way of seeing the issue, and what is the new one?
- **The campaign**: Whom does it speak to? Through which channels? What does it ask people to do? How does it involve them? Write the answers on the flip chart in four columns: audience, channels, call to action, involvement.
- Briefly ask what changes when a feminist message is promoted by a company that sells a product: more reach and resources, but also less credibility and the risk of using the message to sell. There is no single answer.

Step 3 - From story to campaign: the campaign plan (30 min)

- **Each group fills in a one-page campaign plan** (see next page) starting from its story and key message. Five boxes, one question each:
  - **Audience**. Whom do we speak to? Not "everyone": one kind of person, described in a sentence. Who doesn't think about this issue yet? Who has influence on our target?
  - **Channels**. Where is this audience online? One or two platforms at most, chosen for the audience and not out of personal habit.
  - **Call to action**. What exactly do we ask people to do? Start from the request at the end of the story, and make it concrete and doable on that channel (sign, share, write to someone, join, come to an event).
  - **Content**. Which format carries our key message best: video, reel, post, carousel? Choose something the group can really produce in Module 5.
  - **Planning and participation**. What do we publish, when and who does it, over two weeks? How do we involve people, answer comments and find allies who can share our content?

- When the groups reach the channels, give the short input on echo chamber, algorithms, platform rules.
- Go round the groups and ask: Is the audience a real person, not "all young people"? Does the call to action fit the channel? Who does each task, and when?

Paid promotion: META restrictions

Since October 2025 Meta no longer accepts ads on political, electoral and social issues in the EU, because of the new EU rules on political advertising (the TTPA Regulation).

Whether an ad falls into this category is decided case by case by Meta's review: some content on gender equality is accepted, other content is rejected. Organic posts are always allowed.

Campaigns should therefore not count on sponsorship, and should build on organic reach, communities and partnerships with allies.

THE CAMPAIGN PLAN

HERStory, Our Future · Module 4 – Gender equality + digital communication

OUR KEY MESSAGE

The one sentence we want people to remember

AUDIENCE

1 **Whom do we speak to?**

CHANNELS

2 **Where is our audience online?**

CALL TO ACTION

3 **What exactly do we ask people to do?**

CONTENT

4 **Which format carries our key message?**

PLANNING AND PARTICIPATION

5 **How do we keep the campaign going, and how do we involve people?**

RISKS AND PROTECTION

6 **What could go wrong, and how do we protect ourselves?**

Step 4 - Risks and protection (15 min)

- Give the short input on online hate (hostile comments, harassment, coordinated attacks, often against people who speak about gender equality) and on how to protect yourselves: privacy, moderation, documenting and reporting abuse, knowing when not to reply, where to find support.
- Close the step with one idea: safety is a condition for taking part, not a reason to stay silent.
- Some participants may have experienced online abuse. Stay available during the session to listen.

Step 5 – Sharing the plans and closing (15 min)

- Each group presents its plan in two minutes.
- Do a final round of questions and reflection or suggestions.
- Collect the outputs! The key message and the campaign plan of each group are the starting point of Module 5.

Evaluating the session

After the session, take five minutes to ask yourself:

- Did the groups understand how the campaigns use a story to change the way an issue is seen?
- Did each group complete its plan, with a concrete audience, one or two channels, a doable call to action and a realistic calendar?
- Did the groups take online hate and the platform rules into account? Are the plans realistic without paid promotion?
- Did everyone have a chance to contribute? Did anyone stay silent all the time, and why?
- What will you take into Module 5?

Tips for facilitators

- You are a guide, not an expert. You don't need to know every platform but try to be prepared on the main topic you will tackle.
- Go beyond those already convinced. Ask participants what would make them listen.
- Take safety seriously. Present it as a condition for taking part, not as a warning. Make sure each group knows who moderates and what to do in case of attacks.
- Don't idealise brand campaigns. They teach a lot about storytelling, but they have budgets and goals that the groups don't have.
- Watch the time. Step 3 tends to run long: keep groups to one or two channels, one call to action and a short calendar. Protect Step 4: risks and protection should never be skipped.

Module 5

Gender equality + storytelling in practice
Creating and presenting the campaign

Themes	Visual and audiovisual storytelling · Safe and consensual storytelling · Public speaking and argumentation
Complexity	Level 3. The module builds on the whole pathway and asks the group to produce and present something real
Group size	6–20 participants, in the same groups as in Modules 3 and 4
Time	About 2 hours
Competences	DC3 Content creation for advocacy · ST5 Visual and audiovisual storytelling · ST4 Safe personal and collective storytelling · GEA5 Public speaking and argumentation
In the pathway	It starts from the campaign built by each group in Module 4

Overview

This module closes the pathway by moving from planning to practice. Each group turns its story into the format chosen in its campaign plan and produces one real piece of content with smartphones and free apps, after checking the safety and consent of everyone involved.

Then each group presents its campaign with an elevator pitch and defends it in front of the others, who play the target or a sceptical audience. The session ends with a look back at the whole pathway, from the documentary to the campaign.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will:

- **know how to adapt a story** to a visual or audiovisual format, and the basic rules of consent and release forms;
- **be able** to produce a short piece of advocacy content, and present and defend their campaign with an elevator pitch;
- **act with confidence and responsibility** as a voice for gender equality.

Materials

- Smartphones, at least one per group, charged and with free memory; power banks if possible
- Free editing or design apps installed before the session: choose those the group already knows
- One storyboard sheet per group, with six frames and space for "what is seen", "what is heard" and "which text appears"
- Release forms, enough for everyone who may appear (see Preparation)
- Each group's campaign plan and key message from Module 4, and its story from Module 3
- Paper, pens, markers and sticky notes
- A projector or large screen with speakers, and a timer

Preparation

- **Prepare the release form**: who appears, in which content, where it is published and for how long, and that consent can be withdrawn. Adapt it to your national rules, including those for participants under 18.
- **Agree on publication**: the content can be published on any profile the group chooses (preferably those of the organisation running the workshop), always with the project hashtag and, where possible, as a collab with the HERStory profile. Only after the safety check and with valid release forms, and never as a condition for taking part.
- **Check devices, apps and space**, so that groups can record without disturbing each other.
- **Bring each group's story** (Module 3) **and campaign plan** (Module 4).

Sample elevator pitch (to adapt)

Many girls in our country miss school every month because their families cannot afford period products. This is the problem we want to change.

Our story follows Julia, 15, on a morning when she decides to stay at home rather than risk being embarrassed in class. We made a 45-second video with her voice, her empty desk and the school corridor, without showing any face.

We ask the Ministry of Education to provide free period products in every school from next year. Watch it, share it with #FreePeriods, and sign our petition. This pitch is inspired by the real #FreePeriods campaign presented in Module 3.

Instructions

Step 1 - Welcome and recap (10 min)

- Welcome everyone and recall the ground rules.
- Each group says its key message and the format it chose, in one sentence each.
- Introduce today's focus, and say right away how much time there is for production, so that groups choose something they can really finish.

Step 2 - Storyboard and safety check (25 min)

- **From story to format.** Each group adapts its story to the format chosen in Module 4, within a clear limit: for example a 60 second video (or a six-slide photo carousel). What do we keep, what do we cut, what do we show instead of saying?
- **Storyboard**. Before shooting or designing, the group sketches up to six frames: what is seen, what is heard, which text appears. Stick figures and short notes are enough. The key message must come in the first seconds, the call to action at the end.
- **Safety check**. Before shooting, each group asks itself two questions: Does anyone appear who has not signed a release form? Could someone be recognised from a face, a voice, a name or a place? If the answer is yes, change it or leave it out.
- **There is always a safer way to tell the story:** voice-over, hands, silhouettes, drawings, objects, text on screen. If the story is inspired by a real person, keep the invented name and change the details. Nobody starts production before the safety check is done.

THE STORYBOARD

HERStory, Our Future · Module 5 – Gender equality + storytelling in practice

Draw each scene. Under it, write what we see, hear or read.
Need more scenes? Ask for another sheet.
Remember: the call to action goes in the last scene.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Step 3 - Production (40 min)

- **Each group shoots, edits or lays out its content**, following the storyboard. Suggest a division of tasks, so that everyone has a role: who records, who edits, who writes the text, who prepares the pitch.
- **Go round the groups, help** with technical problems and keep track of time: ten minutes before the end, each group should have a first version.
- If a group cannot finish, the storyboard and a draft are enough for the presentation. The content can be finished after the session, before any publication.

Step 4 - Prepare, present and defend (30 min)

- **Each group shows its content and then gives its pitch** (two minutes), then answers questions (three minutes).
- Remind everyone that it is an exercise: be tough on the argument, not on the person. Use the timer. With more than four groups, reduce the questions to two per group.

Step 5 - Feedback, reflection and closing (15 min)

- **Peer feedback**: each group receives one thing that worked and one thing that could be improved from another group.
- **A look back at the pathway**, from the documentary to the campaign: What have you learned? What will you do with what you have learned?
- **Thank everyone** and explain what happens next: which content will be finished, checked and, with valid release forms, published, and where.
- **Collect the outputs!** Each group's content or draft, the pitch notes and the signed release forms.

Evaluating the session

After the session, take five minutes to ask yourself:

- Did each group produce a piece of content, or at least a clear draft, and an elevator pitch?
- Did the safety check happen before production? Are the release forms complete for everyone who appears?
- Does the content tell the story clearly, with a key message and a call to action, and avoid the stereotypes seen in Module 2?
- Did the groups defend their position with arguments? Did everyone have a role?
- Looking at the whole pathway, what worked best, and what would you change for the next group?

Tips for facilitators

- You are a guide: You don't need to be a video editor. Let participants who know the apps help the others, and keep the focus on the story and the message.
- Safety comes first. No publication without valid release forms for everyone who appears; if in doubt, choose the safer version.
- No one has to appear. Offer alternatives to showing faces, and don't push anyone to be on camera or to share their own experience.
- Celebrate the path. This is the last module: recognise what each group has built, from the first documentary to the campaign.
- Watch the time. Production tends to run long. Protect the safety check in Step 2 and the presentations in Step 4: they are the heart of the module.

Glossary.

Short definitions in plain words of the key concepts used in this guide.

You can use them during the sessions, or print them as cards. Terms are grouped by theme and listed in alphabetical order within each group.

This glossary is not exhaustive.

Many important areas are only touched on here, such as the wider vocabulary of LGBTQI+ identities, or gender studies applied to fields like medicine, architecture and urban planning.

They are not the specific focus of this guide, but we warmly invite you to explore the aspects that interest you most.

1. Gender and equality

Catcalling
Unwanted comments, whistles or sexual remarks addressed to someone in public, usually to women in the street. It is a form of street harassment.

Cisgender
Describes a person whose gender identity matches the sex assigned at birth.

Economic violence
Controlling or limiting a person's access to money and resources: for example taking her income, stopping her from working or studying, or making her depend economically on someone else. It is one of the forms of gender-based violence.

Everyday sexism
Small, frequent acts of sexism, such as comments, jokes or assumptions, that seem normal but reinforce inequality.

Femicide
The killing of a woman or a girl because of her gender. It is the most extreme form of gender-based violence.

Gender
The roles, behaviours and expectations that a society attaches to being a woman or a man. They are learned, not something we are born with, and they change over time and from place to place.

Gender data gap
The lack of data about women, or data not broken down by gender, which makes women's experiences invisible in research, services and policies.

Gender discrimination
Being treated unfairly, or excluded, because of one's gender.

Gender equality
Women, men and people of all genders having the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities, with their needs and priorities equally valued.

Gender expression
How we show our gender to others, through clothes, behaviour, style.

Gender identity
How we feel inside about our gender: who we know ourselves to be.

Gender pay gap
The difference between the average earnings of women and men.

Gender stereotype
A fixed, simplified idea of what women or men are like or should do, such as "women are more emotional" or "men don't cry".

Gender-based violence (GBV)
A violation of human rights and a form of discrimination that affects women disproportionately. It includes all acts of violence based on gender that cause, or may cause, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm, including threats, coercion and deprivation of liberty, in public or private life (*Istanbul Convention, Art. 3*).

Glass ceiling
An invisible barrier that stops women from reaching top positions, even when they are just as qualified.

Heteronormativity
A social norm that treats standardised heterosexual behaviour as the only socially valid one, so that anyone who does not follow it is put at a disadvantage compared to the rest of society. This idea underlies discriminatory and prejudiced arguments against LGBTQI+ people, especially on forming a family and on public expression.

Identity
In general, the whole set of characteristics that make a person who they are. It is not fixed: it is built over time, as the result of a cultural construction.

Intersectionality
Gender combines with other parts of who we are, such as origin, class, age, disability, sexual orientation or where we live. These combinations create different experiences of discrimination or privilege. The term was coined by the American scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.

Non-binary
Describes a person whose gender identity is not only woman or only man.

Objectification
Showing a woman as a body or an object, for example to sell a product, rather than as a person with her own thoughts and choices.

Privilege
An advantage that some people have, often without noticing it, because of a part of their identity, such as gender, skin colour, class or ability.

Secondary victimisation
The further harm a victim suffers because of the way institutions, the media or other people treat her after the violence, for example when her story is told without respect.

Sex
The biological characteristics of the body, such as anatomy, chromosomes and hormones.

Sexism
Actions or attitudes that discriminate against people because of their sex or gender. Sexism is linked to power: those who hold power usually receive favourable treatment, while those without power are usually discriminated against. It is also linked to stereotypes, because discriminatory actions or attitudes are often based on false beliefs or generalisations about sex or gender. (Source: EIGE)

Sexual orientation
Who a person is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to. It is different from gender identity.

Transgender
Describes a person whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned at birth.

Victim blaming
Suggesting that the person who suffered violence is partly responsible for it, for example because of what she wore, where she was or what she did.

2. Stories and representation

Agenda setting
The power of the media to influence which issues people consider important, by choosing what to talk about, how often and how prominently. The theory was developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972.

Brief
A short document that sets out what a piece of communication must achieve: the goal, the audience, the key message, the tone, the format and the deadlines. It guides whoever creates the content.

Elevator pitch
A very short presentation, as long as a lift ride, that explains the problem, the story, the content and the call to action.

Ethical and inclusive storytelling
Telling a story in a way that respects the people in it: giving them a voice, avoiding harm and stereotypes, and showing their diversity.

Femvertising
Femvertising is advertising that uses feminist messages or empowering images of women to sell products. When a company uses gender equality, or LGBTQI+ rights, only to improve its image, without a real commitment in what it actually does, we speak of pinkwashing.

Gender-sensitive language
Words and images that include women and men equally and avoid stereotypes, for example using both the feminine and the masculine form, or neutral terms.

Identifiability
The possibility that a person can be recognised from a face, a voice, a place or a small detail, even without a name.

Informed consent
Agreement given freely, after being told clearly what will be done with one's image, voice or story, and where it will be published. It can be refused or withdrawn.

Non-formal education
Planned learning that takes place outside the formal school system. It is voluntary and based on participation, experience and reflection.

Reframing
Changing the way an issue is seen, by changing what is presented as the problem, who is responsible and what is possible.

Release form
A written permission, signed by a person who appears in the content, saying that she or he agrees to be shown, and for which use. Also called "consent form".

Representation
The way a group of people is shown in the media, in images and in stories. It shapes how others see that group, and how the group sees itself.

Safe storytelling
Telling a story in a way that respects the boundaries, privacy and emotional safety of the people involved, including those who tell it.

Story for social change
A short story that makes a problem visible through one person and ends with a request that invites others to act.

Storyboard
A sequence of simple drawings and notes, frame by frame, that plans what will be seen, heard and written before producing a video or a carousel.

3. Advocacy and digital campaigning

Advocacy
Organised action to change a rule, a practice or an attitude, by convincing the people who can decide.

Algorithm
The set of rules a platform uses to decide which content to show to whom, usually based on how much people interact with it.

Ally
A person, group or organisation that can join the effort, because it shares the concern or can reach more people.

Argumentation
Giving reasons to support a position, and answering objections respectfully.

Call to action (CTA)
The request at the end of a story or campaign: what we ask, to whom, and why now.

Collective action
Many people acting together on a shared concern, instead of each person alone.

Community building
Creating a group of people who share a concern, talk to each other and support the cause over time.

Digital resilience
The ability to protect oneself online, respond to abuse and keep taking part without giving up.

Doxxing
Publishing someone's private information online, such as their address, phone number or workplace, without consent, to intimidate or harm them.

Empowerment
The process through which people gain the confidence, skills and power to make choices and act on the issues that affect their lives.

Engagement
How much people interact with content: likes, comments, shares. In advocacy it also means involving people in the cause.

Fundraising
Raising money or other resources to support a cause or an organisation, for example through donations, crowdfunding, events or grants. In a campaign it often goes together with telling a story that motivates people to give

Online hate
Hostile, offensive or threatening behaviour online, such as insults, harassment or coordinated attacks.

Organic reach
The number of people who see a post without paid promotion, because they follow the account or because others share it.

Target
The person or body who has the power to make the change happen. The campaign is addressed to them.

HERStory,
OUR FUTURE

Co-funded by
the European Union

HERStory, Our Future is an Erasmus+ project that empowers young people to become advocates for gender equality through women's stories, digital communication and storytelling. It brings together organisations from Italy, Spain, Portugal and Serbia.

Discover the project and watch the documentaries at herstoryourfuture.com

This guide is dedicated to the memory of **Michela Murgia** (1972–2023), Italian writer and activist, whose work changed the way many of us think and talk about gender, power and language.

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