



Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together



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RESET aims to address the challenge of Gender Equality in Research Institutions in a diversity perspective, with the objective to design and implement a user-centered, impact-driven and inclusive vision of scientific excellence.

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Toolbox for gender-neutral, diversity-oriented institutional communication

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Abbreviations

AUTh	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (GR)
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
FESTA	Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia
Gender-SMART	Gender in Science Management of Agriculture & lifesciences, including Research and Teaching
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GIL	Gender Inclusive Language
HEI	Higher Education Institution
RESET	Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together
RUB	Ruhr University Bochum (DE)
ScPo	Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (Sciences Po, FR)
SUPERA	Supporting the Promotion of Equality in Research and Academia
UBx	Bordeaux University (FR)
UOULU	Oulu University (FIN)
UL	University of Łódź (PL)
UN	United Nations
UNIC	European University of Post-Industrial Cities
WP	Work Package



Executive Summary

This Toolbox for gender-neutral, diversity-oriented institutional communication (D. 5.4) is submitted by RUB as part of Work Package 5 – Ensure a sustainable and cultural change by establishing a gender and diversity-friendly environment. The purpose of WP5 is to establish a culture of gender equality and diversity in an intersectional perspective that includes other factors that contribute to multiple axes of discrimination. To support change, the tasks in WP5 rely on the detailed analysis of cultural, social, economic, and political obstacles to the promotion and implementation of gender equality. It targets students, researchers, top and middle management as well as administrative staff. The primary objective of WP 5 is to open spaces for discussion, co-design and creation of a gender- and diversity friendly environment. Furthermore, its tasks and deliverables aim to support GEP implementing universities (AUn; UBx; UL; UPorto) while being aligned with the plans among mentoring universities (RUB; Oulu).

This toolbox is the output of Task 5.4 – Promoting a unique standard of gender neutral, non-discriminatory, positive forms of communication. The toolbox builds on the insights and achievements that are reflected in the *Guidelines for gender-sensitive communication in research and academia* (2021) of the project SUPERA - *Supporting the Promotion of Equality in Research and Academia*. Additionally, this toolbox enriches the focus on gender-sensitive communication with the notion of gender-inclusive forms of communication as well as an intersectional perspective on further dimensions of diversity. For this, the Toolbox contains with a conceptual framework, that has a purpose to provide valuable information and knowledge around the necessity of gender-neutral, gender-sensitive as well as diversity-oriented forms of communication. Here, RESET's intersectional perspective, and its understanding of diversity in the context of HEIs are explained. Information on social psychological and socio-linguistic aspects of communication are interpreted in relation to gender and diversity. Against these backgrounds the opportunities and challenges of visual aspects of communication are reflected. Part B contains the tools that have been developed in the context of the toolbox-creation, aligned with the conceptual framework, and based on institutional queries, interviews, and discussions within RESET consortium. They are meant to provide a starting point for making communication at our universities more inclusive, both in terms of gender diversity and other diversity factors. The Toolbox is a work-in-progress and closely interwoven with the ongoing work of RESET project. It will be enriched as the project evolves. At this stage, the toolbox has a strong focus on the aspect of gender-inclusive communication. In the future, it is going to entail more tools that emphasize the diversity aspect to a greater extent and that are going to be co-designed with our communities at our universities, to create safe and diversity friendly environments.





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1. Introduction to the Toolbox for gender-neutral, diversity oriented institutional communication

Language functions as a reflection of personal and social ideas and structures. The use of language not only determines our thinking and our perception, but also has a decisive influence on our actions. It “is also and always infused with and caught up in the political economic, national, (post)colonial, and political circumstances that shape its use and its role as an object of study, political manipulation, and cultural value” (Cavanaugh, 2020, p. 51). Thus, language also creates meaning and reality. At the same time, it constantly changes. The intentional use of language in the sense of gender-sensitive and gender-neutral communication is both a field of action for gender equality measures and a political point of debate in European societies (Burnett & Poznaniak, 2021; Vergoossen et al. 2020). The rejection of gender-inclusive practices is a widespread response to efforts to make language and practices of communication gender-just, and to change traditional ways of writing and speaking accordingly. Here, it is in line with populist, conservative, religious and even far-right movements, discourse strategies and lines of argumentation, against the so-called “gender-ideology” (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). According to these views, the so called “gender-ideology” and its manifestations (as in gender-sensitive language) is considered artificial, a devaluation of and a threat to traditional, heterosexually structured family forms and gender roles and threatening languages in their supposed integrity. In this respect, the ideological resistance to gender-inclusive language (GIL) is shared by persons who are politicized and hostile to gender issues for ideological reasons. The rejection of scientific and political commitment to gender equality and gender diversity is a global phenomenon (ibid; Mayer, 2021; Kováts, 2021). However, it is not reserved to a specific political agenda or affiliation. In some national contexts, gender-sensitive language can be brought down to the addition of graphic forms in writing or a slightly different pronunciation in spoken language and arise opposition in wider and independent circles of political cleavages. Another example, the attachment to the neutral universal that the masculine is supposed to represent, is widespread in many European societies (Sczesny et al., 2016; Günthner, 2018). Hesitations about GIL, therefore, can rise from many reasons, different sources and can vary in their extent. They are also expressed by of people who have had little exposure to its concepts and rationale, or who are confused by the ambiguities of the multiple possibilities of gender-equitable language. It is therefore of great importance, to raise awareness and to share information on the aims and possibilities that come along with GIL. Low awareness of language issues can be expressed by different attitudes, e.g., an indifference or the diminution of its necessity, or by the sincere adherence to the universalism of masculinity. At the same time, this discourse against gender equality and against the recognition of gender and sexual diversity is often mixed with the rejection of other social and cultural



forms of diversity which make European societies heterogeneous, always changing, plural and complex constellations. As such, they cannot be reduced to a supposed "true cultural identity" and its "roots" (Bettini, 2016; Mayer, 2021). It is therefore important to discuss questions of inclusive language addressing aspects of gender as well as other dimensions of diversity together.

Against this background, the commitment to gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented communication takes on a political dimension and responsibility. The goal of advancing social participation regardless of gender is expressed in measures that promote gender-equitable communication. It is important to note that gender is a socio-structural and demographic factor among others that shape the diversity of social situations and individual and collective experiences of inequality. The approach followed in this toolbox is aligned with this intersectional understanding of gender equality and diversity. For this reason, gender-inclusive and diversity-sensitive, appreciative communication is all the more important. Discrimination and misunderstandings can be avoided by including all genders in language and by shaping institutional communication in accordance with institutional culture, in a diversity-aware manner.

Overall, gender-inclusive language has a significant impact on the equality of all genders in our thinking and perception, and ultimately on our actions (Stout & Dasgupta, 2011; Horvath & Sczesny, 2015). Therefore, the promotion of gender-inclusive communication is an important tool to foster gender equality. As such, it challenges stereotypes, addresses people of different genders equally and makes the diversity visible, which is inherent to our universities and our societies (UNIC, 2021). By this, it has an active impact on perception and decision making.

This toolbox is part of task 5.4, "promoting a unique standard of gender neutral, non-discriminatory, positive forms of communication" in Work Package 5, that is dedicated to ensure a sustainable and cultural change by establishing a gender and diversity-friendly environment.

Central purposes of this toolbox are:

- to provide information and inspiration for the elaboration and implementation of strategies to foster the use of gender-sensitive and gender-neutral, non-discriminatory and diversity-oriented forms of communication at academic institutions. Therefore, it also emphasizes visual language as a crucial aspect of institutional communication.
- to help to initiate further strategies on gender-inclusive communication at universities in the RESET network and beyond. Therefore, the starting points elaborated in this toolbox are intended to stimulate an assessment of the need for change at the institution and to inspire processes and strategies for its further development.



- to shape communication at our universities in a way that creates an environment in which diversity is respected and valued at our universities.

Thus, the toolbox targets different stakeholders and institutions at our universities:

- First and foremost, those who are aware of the potential for change in current communication practices, and those who can develop appropriate measures.
- The toolbox addresses actors of gender equality and diversity at our universities,
- as well as those in communication departments, organizational development and human resources at our administrations, who can strengthen a gender-equal and inclusive interaction at our universities and keep in mind the importance of this in the transfer of science to society.
- In addition, we tackle key aspects of gender-inclusive communication in science, especially with regard to scientific writing and the organization of conferences.

How can our institutions become more inclusive in terms of communication?

This question is central to the development of this toolbox. There is no simple or clear-cut answer to it, but rather a variety of factors that affect the institution and its actors and processes of communication. We have highlighted these different facets in Part A.

Practices of gender-inclusive communication require active involvement and the will to change conventional language use and to overcome stereotypic attributions that are transported by language, such as in job advertisements as well as in highlighted characteristics in the promotion of study fields. As recipients, we interact with text, images, and their messages. We evaluate – for example – if we meet the requirements that seem to be characteristic for a certain career path or for a study field. Decisions are made on attributions that often imply gender biases – often unintentionally and implicit. Here lies the central function of the toolbox: **to promote awareness towards gender-sensitive communication in higher education**. By this, RESET aims to make influence on institutional practices of our universities and to provide inspiration for other universities and projects in academia.

1.1 How to use this toolbox?

Above all, the information, tools, and examples shared in this document are suggestions for reflecting on the practices at one's own institution against the background of the respective social processes and for developing appropriate tailored and dialogue-driven measures aligned to the institution's communities, their languages, and societal and cultural specificities.



This toolbox contains:

- a theoretically and empirically supported insight into concepts of gender-inclusive language and communication
- information on the relevance of language for our thoughts and actions - and vice versa
- an overview of practices and concepts of gender-inclusive language
- an embedding of the development of gender-equitable language practices in academic contexts
- examples of gender diverse representation in communication
- further information on other project results around this topic

It preserves the following tools:

<p>TOOL #1</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PATHWAY to gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented institutional communication
<p>TOOL #2</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHECKLIST on gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented visual communication
<p>TOOL #3</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESPONSES TO RESISTANCES – how to react to rejections of gender-inclusive communication
<p>TOOL #4</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEMPLATE of a questionnaire on institutional practices on gender-inclusive language
<p>TOOL #5</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEMPLATE of an interview-guideline on gender-inclusive language
<p>TOOL #6</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMMENTED LINK COLLECTION – useful guidelines and databases on diversity-oriented & gender-inclusive communication

Figure 1: Overview of the tools in this box

1.2 Structure

Part A contains the conceptual framework of the Toolbox. In a sense, knowledge is itself a tool that can be used strategically in developing policies, preparing arguments, and sharing information.

In section 2 we will firstly outline theoretical perspectives focusing on the notions of intersectionality and diversity that we use. By this, we will clarify our understanding of these analytic terms. Afterwards, we will describe and reflect on the methodological foundations of this toolbox.

Then, section 3 addresses principles of gender-inclusive communication. Within the chapter, we focus on both approaches of gender-neutral and gender-sensitive language, contrasting them with gender-exclusive and discriminatory language. Prior to this, we outline social psychological concepts and factors that are linked to language as a crucial element of interpersonal interaction and cultural meaning-making systems. These are important for understanding the scope of gender's inscription in language and psyche.

Section 4 is devoted to visual communication. We take up the campaign "Images that change the World" (Gunnarsson, 2019) to address the possibilities of representing social diversity and blind spots of visual campaigns. This is followed by examples out of the RESET universities, that feature diversity and the deconstruction of stereotypical depiction of gender-related content. Afterwards, we critically reflect pitfalls of visual communication related to gender and diversity.

Part B contains tools we have developed so far in the context of RESET. They provide a starting point for making communication at our universities more inclusive, both in terms of gender and other diversity factors. The Toolbox is a work-in-progress and closely intertwined with the ongoing work of the RESET project. We will continue developing the toolbox as the project evolves once a year and at the end of the project. At this stage, our tools have a strong focus on the gender-inclusive communication aspect. In the future, we will work with university communities to develop more tools that emphasize the diversity aspect to a greater extent.





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Part A – Conceptual Framework

2. Theoretical perspectives & methodological approach

2.1 Intersectional Perspective

RESET is a project based on an intersectional approach towards gender. Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) is a perspective and an analytic tool that centers the intertwined relations between different social and cultural categories – “axes of difference” (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998) in which social inequality and individual differences unfold (gender, race/ethnicity, age, class, dis/ability, religion and sexual orientation). By this, intersectionality manifests itself at the junctures between demographic and structural markers on the one hand and personal experience and people’s social identities on the other (Mirza, 2018). It is important to think about and acknowledge this double position in order to recognize the multi-layered character of intersectionality, by which multiple in-groups, forms of belongings but also segregations and discriminatory practices emerge:

“Situations in which social differentiations based on ethnicity, gender, age, religion, occupation, political power, and economic roles are all crosscutting require patterns of interdependence and accommodation that promote integration and complex social identities. Situations in which distinctions based on gender, ethnicity, class, and power are convergent set the stage for division along a single societal fault line.”
(Brewer, 2010, p. 29)

Therefore, an intersectional approach aims to analyze how intersecting power relations influence both social relations in heterogeneous societies as well as individual experiences in people’s daily lives (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Moreover, intersectional perspectives aim to act upon these power relations in a practical way. Hereby, RESET follows an idea of an “ethical view of higher education’s purpose as serving the formation of equitable societies and this requiring that inequities be actively challenged” (Nichols & Stahl, 2019, p.2). Thus, RESET aims to reveal the overlapping of inequality, especially in HEIs, and counteract it with measures, acknowledging intersectionality as “the intellectual core of diversity work” (Dill, 2009, p. 229).

2.2 Diversity

Discourses about diversity date back to the Civil Rights Movement and the civil rights legislation about it in the United States. These laid the groundwork in the 1960s to codify measures for the fair treatment of disadvantaged minorities: “Affirmative Action [...] was initiated as a key institutional instrument for attempting a course of action to promote

equal opportunities, fight discrimination and help minorities gain better positions in employment and education” (Vertovec, 2012, p. 289). Since then, discourses about diversity bear witness to increased social difference in pluralistic societies and can be found especially in Western societies in a variety of their institutions - such as HEIs, NGOs, in governmental agencies, the European Union, or in private companies. In this regard, the focus is on both the success of organizational goals and the consideration of differing social and demographic factors and anti-discrimination (ibid.; Klein, 2018).

This toolbox addresses diversity in the context of HEIs. That means to focus on the "axes of difference" (gender, race/ethnicity, age, class, disability, religion and sexual orientation), as defined in section 2.1, in their effects and interplay in the context of higher education. HEIs are influenced by the inclusion and exclusion mechanisms, shaped by their society's culture and history. At the same time, they form their own mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in educational systems, making it more likely for some, to succeed while making it more unlikely for others. Hereby, they are often conflicting with the meritocratic principle of equal opportunities (Alon, 2009). This concerns both the category of gender in general, and other factors, such as the chances of people from low-income and/or migrant backgrounds to enter - and stay in – universities as well as the inclusion of people with disabilities.

“Processes of exclusion in higher education are difficult to unpack as they are underscored by the complex dynamics of class, gender and race. Experiences are complex and relational and are located at the intersection of structure, culture and agency.” (Mirza, 2018, p 6 f.)

It is the responsibility of universities and education systems to expose, reflect on, and work to overcome the systemic and structural hurdles, obstacles, and often implicit and unconscious biases.

Facets of diversity

As Vertovec (2012) points out, there is not one clear understanding or a fixed definition of diversity. Instead, the term can be differentiated, also depending on context, interest, and theoretical embedding.

We highlight these 6 facets here, quoting Vertovecs explanations of them: (Vertovec, 2012 pp. 297)

Redistribution

Focusses on “policies intended to redress historical discrimination against groups, especially ‘economic harm’. Here, the purpose of ‘diversity’ is largely akin to Affirmative Action, with goals towards helping minorities to gain better access

to scarce economic and societal goods – especially jobs, equitable income, housing and education” (ibid.).

Recognition

“Measures under this heading seek to foster dignity and esteem among minorities, promote positive images, and facilitate their fuller participation in social interaction and political processes through renegotiating their ‘terms of incorporation into the state’” (ibid.).

Representation

Is characterized by Vertovec as “a politics of presence”. Its goal “is to create an institution – a company workforce, teaching faculty, student body, health service, civil service, military, police, or chamber of political representatives – that looks like the population it serves” (ibid.).

Provision

“Public services today often employ this facet of ‘diversity’. It entails identifying, developing skills around, sensitizing staff to, and responding adequately to the specific requirements of customers with reference to their myriad group and individual differences (variously and broadly defined)” (ibid.).

Competition

“Promotion of ‘diversity’ and a diverse workforce is aimed at achieving a better understanding of customers, spot market opportunities, thereby increasing competitiveness, improving product quality, appealing to a wider consumer base and increasing sales. [...] The promotion of ‘diversity’ in a company’s public relations is also meant to influence customer perceptions by improving its image (or at least deflecting image damage by not having a visible ‘diversity’ commitment). It is also, at the same time, a measure to avoid grievances and discrimination lawsuits” (ibid.).

Organization

“‘Diversity’ management policies, training programmes, structures and staff positions within corporations or other institutions serve the purpose of developing and delivering many of the facets listed above. Additionally, they are undertaken with the aim of maximizing the performance of teams or workforces. The positively charged rhetoric surrounding this facet of “diversity” includes terms such as: leveraging the benefits, unleashing talent, meeting challenges, working to full potential, achieving objectives, creating a richer work environment, problem solving – often paired with adjectives such as rewarding, successful, productive, creative, innovative, enabling, competitive, flexible” (ibid.).

The ambiguity of diversity that is demonstrated by the wide differentiation of its facets indicates the plurality of the interests that inform the term “diversity”. By this it becomes also clear, that diversity at HEIs is shaped by all those different facets, if we consider various strategic and operational levels of them and the individual interests, that come together in our institutions. By this, different interests or priorities can cause tensions. In the following (Part A and Part B alike), mainly the notions of redistribution, recognition, representation and provision will lead our understanding of diversity.

Superdiversity

In addition to the nuances of diversity already elaborated, we would like to add a further differentiation of the term that can be useful as an analytical concept to focus on the plurality we have already touched upon with intersectionality as well as the reflection of different facets of diversity. The concept of superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) aims to grasp the entangled dimensions of a complex diversity that is characteristic for universities in heterogenic, pluralistic societies, shaped by globalization, industrial change and a history of migration (UNIC, 2021).

Hereby, superdiversity is used to catch on the multilayered complexity of diversity in contemporary societies:

“Superdiversity is a summary term proposed also to point out that the new migration patterns not only entailed variable combinations of these traits, but that their combinations produced new hierarchical social positions, statuses or stratifications. These, in turn, entail: new patterns of inequality and prejudice including emergent forms of racism, new patterns of segregation, new experiences of space and “contact”, new forms of cosmopolitanism and creolization (including what’s more recently discussed in terms of conviviality and multicultural), and more.”
(Vertovec, 2019, p. 126)

As a reference to the wide diversity of migration patterns and its outcomes, superdiversity shares with intersectionality the “call for recognizing the composite effects of social categories” (Vertovec, 2019, p. 134).

2.3 Methodological Approach

This toolbox is the first outcome of the co-designing approach in relation to strengthening gender-inclusive communication practices in the RESET project, as laid out in Work Package 5 (Task 5.4). As such, it was designed as a collaborative process that incorporated experiences and practices from RESET partner universities. These simultaneously



serve the task's goal of developing new strategies for inclusive communication. Accordingly, the questionnaires and interview guidelines presented in Tools #4 and #5 represent an excerpt from this ongoing process.

The toolbox builds on the insights and achievements that are reflected in the *Guidelines for gender-sensitive communication in research and academia* (2021) of the project SUPERA - *Supporting the Promotion of Equality in Research and Academia* as it provides the orientation, we require to further develop processes to make communication more inclusive. In these guidelines, SUPERA addresses the further development of communication strategies in research institutions and universities with a focus on gender sensitivity. In doing so, SUPERA refers to the framework of Responsible Research and Innovation in its role in *Horizon 2020* as a key action of the *Science with and for Society* paradigm.

SUPERA's guidelines are of central importance for this toolbox because they not only provide an overview of the approaches of other EU-funded projects to the issue of gender-inclusive communication, but also give a practical reference to relevant fields of communication in research and academia. Furthermore, they provide an insight into the strategic role of communication in research institutions and the importance of gender-inclusive communication in this context.

Therefore, we follow three intertwined areas that SUPERA (2021) focuses on:

- gender-inclusive language,
- visual communication,
- targeting fields of actions

These areas became central focus fields in our toolbox, culminating in our Tool #1, "Pathway to gender-inclusive, institutional communication", as they have also been highlighted as focal points in RESET's own evaluation of institutional practices focused on gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented communication.



Take a look at **TOOL #1:**
PATHWAY TO GENDER-INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION
It provides ideas and suggestions on how you can start the process and keep it going!

For the conduction of these first evaluations of the status quo, we relied on the GenderSmart (2020) checklists and recommendation to analyze the current state of gender-inclusive communication at our own institutions. Guided by them, we created our own questionnaire and interview guideline, according to the approach of focus interviews (Merton et al., 1956; Flick, 2018). Based on this, we conducted conversations with members of our communication departments to get an overview of the current state of the

art, wishes, and concerns regarding gender-inclusive language. For RESET, it is relevant to gain insight into the ways in which our institutions target gender-inclusive, diversity-sensitive language and (visual) communication. In the aim of toolbox-creation we had to know whether this subject is a topic of discussions, incentives or it has not yet been in the spotlight. At the same time, these first interviews mark the beginning of an ongoing process that is going to continue built on the toolbox while contributing to its further development at the same time.

The results of discussions with stakeholders at our universities do not stand by themselves in a vacuum (Burnett & Pozniak, 2021). Preferences regarding gender-responsive communication, as well as concerns regarding its implementation, exist in the context of societal and political debates around the topic (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018). Additionally, we must also consider the diversity of languages in which our universities communicate on a daily basis.

So far, it has been illuminating to compare our results within the consortium. By this, we identified similarities and differences of the institutional practices and shared the variety of found strategies, in order to create new paths and gain broader perspectives. That comparison as well as the collection of examples will be the basis on which we are going to develop and design further actions together with and within our institutions.

The questionnaire on institutional practices aimed at providing an overview of existing policies and good practices for implementing gender-inclusive language at our universities. To get an overview on the status quo, RUB prepared a set of questions that target institutional practices around gender-sensitive language use.

We logged these conversations and compared the results within the consortium. In addition, we found out in what way specifications or guidelines on gender-inclusive language exist at our universities.



Check TOOL #4:
QUERY ON STATE-OF-THE-ART
It provides query focused on GIL.



Check TOOL #5:
TEMPLATE FOR INSTITUTIONAL INTERVIEWS
It provides an interview guideline focused on GIL.

The contents of this toolbox have been developed in response to the feedback we received from our interviews with institutional stakeholders. They are also based on the discussions both within the Consortium, and within our institutions.

3. Towards an Understanding of gender-inclusive communication

In the UN's guidelines on gender-inclusive language, practices of gender-inclusive communication are understood as a tool to promote gender equality. This status is attributed to it, since language has a crucial role in shaping society and culture (UN, n.d.). The European Parliament (2008) adopted multilingual guidelines that foster gender-neutral and gender-inclusive language in 2008. Following Stuart Hall (2013), we understand language as a construct that goes beyond the oral or written processing and dissemination of information and the constitution of meaning. Language thus also takes on its expression in visual materials or bodily practices. Communication is a social practice. As such, it is also culturally shaped and normatively loaded. Thus, it is never neutral. At the same time, it is also changeable, it can be shaped, and its normativity can vary (Cavanaugh, 2020).

It also includes different people communicating. And in this interpersonal interaction, in the way social and cultural norms and values shape the understanding of gender, these attributions also emerge in communication, often unintentionally and unconsciously.

3.1 Impact of Language – Social Psychological Aspects

Language (either oral, written, or visual) is more than the intentional communication of information. It also shapes the way we (as speakers and as listeners) perceive our world, it provides information about connotations, evaluations, and valances, and it refers to social positioning, and constellations. In order to strengthen understanding around the function and importance of gender-inclusive communication practices, the following part will first explain some key social psychological concepts that are integrally related to gender-inclusive language.

3.1.1 Stereotypes

Stereotypes and prejudices refer to social interactions that are marked by an emphasis on peoples' (assumed) belonging to social groups rather than their individual characteristics (Straub & Niebel, 2021). Moreover, stereotypes are not limited to the perception and assessment of others, but also refer to individuals, who assess themselves in light of their own group affiliations (Hannover & Wolter, 2018). That can be their gender, as well as other social and cultural categories such as age, ethnicity/origin, sexual orienta-

tion, or religious affiliation. Often, it is the combination or intersection of these categories. The contents of gender stereotypes are shaped by cultural norms and values (Cuddy et al., 2015).

Stereotypes, in contrast to prejudices, are cognitive schemata about social groups as well as about individuals as part of those social groups (including ourselves). They are components of knowledge, structures as well as means of the processing of social information (Straub & Niebel, 2021). They can also influence gender identity in that a person ascribes gendered attributes to oneself, as well as the extent to which a person does so (Hannover & Wolter, 2018).

Stereotypes can also manifest themselves in terms and linguistic images:

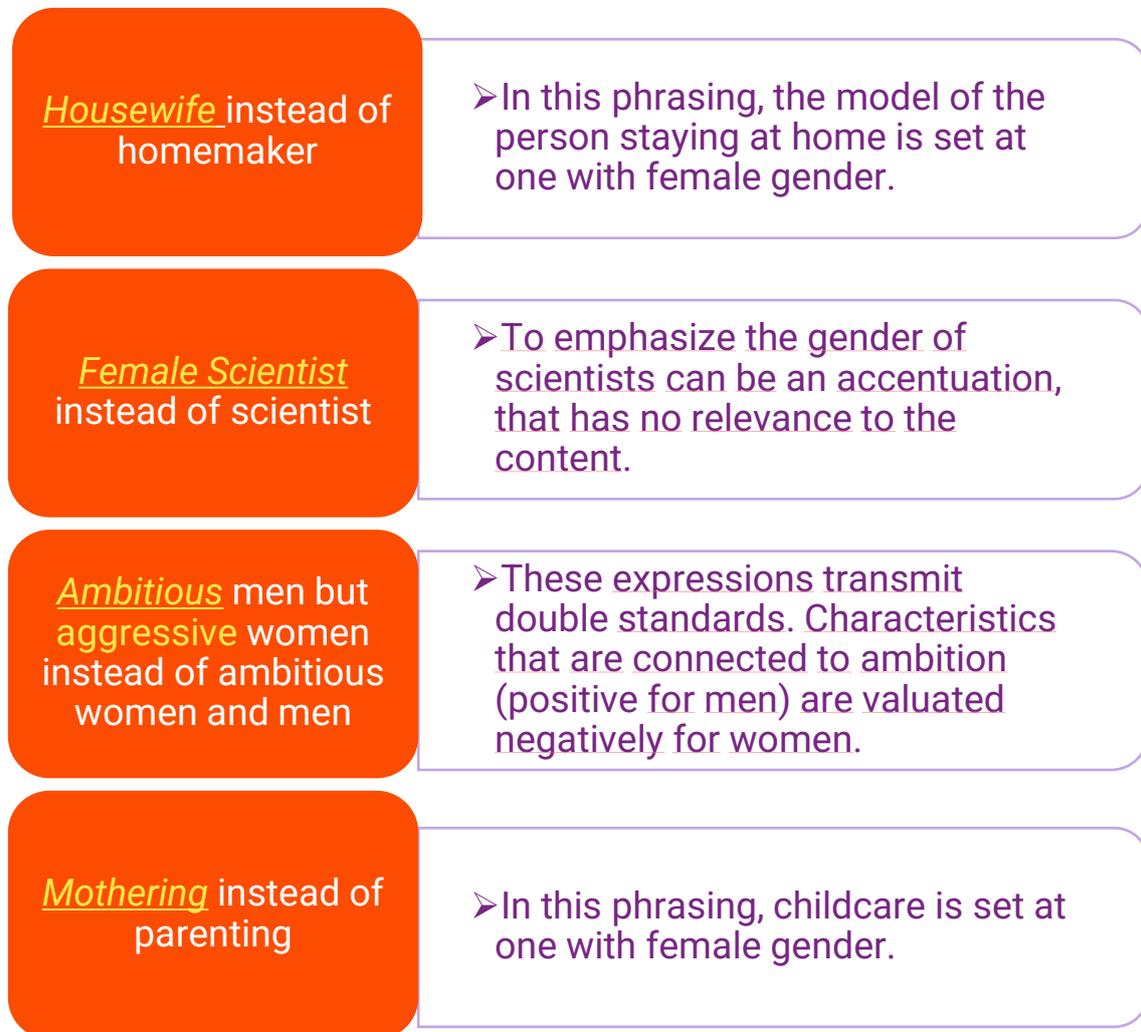


Figure 2: Examples for stereotypes in linguistic images (GenderSmart, 2020 p. 14)

3.1.2 Cognitive Schemata

“Cognitive schemata are characterized by a high degree of generality of the knowledge represented in them and therefore can be applied to any concrete examples” (Hannover & Wolter, 2018, p.6).

These cognitive schemata thus control what information is perceived and how it is categorized and interpreted. In this way, gender stereotypes influence the perception individuals have both of themselves and others. Therefore, they function as expectations or self-fulfilling prophecies.

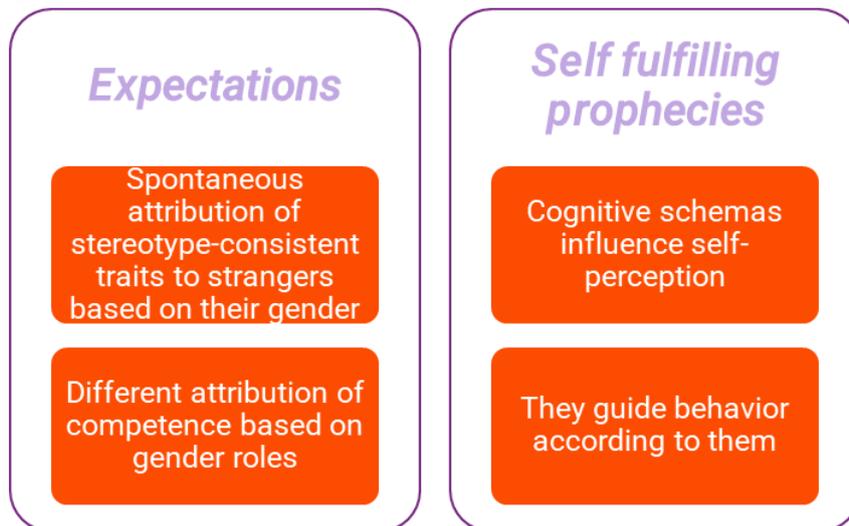


Figure 3: Definition of Cognitive Schemata (Hannover & Wolter, 2018)

Along with Hannover & Wolter (2018) we emphasize a special link between cognitive schemes and gender. Similarly, other factors such as (social) origin, age and dis/ability take an equally important part here and intertwine with the category of gender (Brewer, 2010).

3.1.3 Stereotype Threat

Stereotype threat theory describes another mechanism in which gender stereotypes can influence people's self-perceptions as well as their behavior. According to this concept, people can be threatened by gender stereotypes in performance situations if they belong to the gender group that is (supposedly) inferior in terms of what is conveyed by the stereotype (Hannover & Wolter, 2018; Steele, 1997).

The effect of stereotype threat manifests itself in two ways:

- the fear of being perceived through the lens of the (negative) gender stereotype itself.
- the fear of confirming the negative stereotype.

This effect is not tied to a person's own belief in the stereotype. However, it does affect the individual performance and motivation of people who may be falling short of their potential as a result. In particular, this effect is evident for girls and women in professional domains with a predominantly male connotation, e.g. in STEM-disciplines (Strayhorn et al., 2012; Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). This effect can also have an impact on communication behavior in groups, such as in seminars, or in examination situations.

3.2 Gender Bias

Closely linked to stereotypes is the concept of biases. A bias is “the conscious or unconscious interpretation or representation of a phenomenon in a way that (typically recurrently) favors (or is perceived as favoring) one particular point of view rather than another” (Chandler & Munday, 2020). Moreover, biases are often implicit and affect the attitude someone has towards other individuals or groups. By this, they are linked to the notion of prejudices.

Biases can
“be manifested in behavior as discrimination; or in representation, the evaluative loading of description or depiction so that connotative meanings become definitive characteristics”
 (Chandler & Munday, 2020)
by this, they are linked to the act of stereotyping.

Thus, the term gender bias is used on the one hand to understand prejudices associated with socially mediated gender roles. On the other hand, it refers to an unconscious process by which *“gendered practices in communicating with, or creating representations for, a general audience, (or tools for general use), particularly the male norm in patriarchal cultures, since the specificity of the worldview of those with power is normally unmarked and invisible even to themselves” (ibid).*

3.3 Gender in Language

Most of the languages are gendered (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001), this is at least true for the languages in the RESET network (see figure 4). Gender, therefore, often manifests itself in the language structure, in the designations of living and non-living objects, and references between these gendered positioning.

<i>Finnish</i>	Genderless language	Nouns are not categorized by gender; 1 pronoun refers a person neutrally
<i>French</i>	Grammatical gender language	2 genders (feminine, masculine)
<i>German</i>	Grammatical gender language	3 genders (feminine, masculine, neuter)
<i>Greek</i>	Grammatical gender language	3 genders (feminine, masculine, neuter)
<i>Polish</i>	Grammatical gender language	3 genders (feminine, masculine, neuter)
<i>Portugese</i>	Grammatical gender language	2 genders (feminine, masculine)

Figure 4: Gender in the language structures in RESET

These processes and structures in individual languages vary widely, as does the degree to which gendered nouns, adjectives, and pronouns structure language. At the same time, linguistic structures are related to ways of using them and expressing information and meaning in them. Language is a dynamic, constantly changing sign system. Terms shift in meaning, as does the way of expressing what is meant (Sczesny et al., 2016; Stahlberg et al., 2007).

Language type	Characteristics	Visibility of gender and gender asymmetries	Preferred strategies for gender-fair language
(1) Genderless (e.g., Finnish, Turkish)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neither personal nouns nor pronouns differentiated for gender (e.g., Turkish <i>öğrenci</i> 'student,' <i>o</i> 'she/he') Gender expressed only lexically via attributes (e.g., 'male/female [student]') or lexical gender nouns (e.g., 'woman,' 'father') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referential gender often not explicit (Lexical) gender asymmetries exist, but are less frequent than in (2) and (3) <p>Examples: Turkish <i>adam</i> 'man' and 'human being' Finnish job titles ending in <i>-mies</i> '-man,' <i>lakimies</i> 'lawyer,' <i>lehtimies</i> 'journalist'</p>	GFL policies generally deemed unnecessary
(2) Natural gender (e.g., English, Swedish)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most personal nouns gender-neutral (e.g., <i>neighbor</i>, <i>student</i>) Personal pronouns differentiated for gender (e.g., Swedish <i>hon/han</i> 'she/he') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referential gender more often explicit than in (1), but less often than in (3) Lexical and pronominal asymmetries exist, but are less frequent than in (3) <p>Examples: English <i>chairman</i>, <i>the typical student ... he</i></p>	Neutralization
(3) Grammatical gender (e.g., French, German)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every noun has grammatical gender Gender of personal nouns tends to match gender of referent (e.g., German <i>Student_{masc}/Studentin_{fem}</i> 'male/female student') Personal pronouns differentiated for gender (e.g., German <i>sie/er</i> 'she/he') Pronouns and other grammatically dependent words signal gender of personal noun (e.g., <i>der_{masc} Student_{masc}</i> 'the (male) student' <i>eine_{fem} kluge_{fem} Studentin_{fem}</i> 'a clever (female) student') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referential gender often explicit All kinds of asymmetries exist and are more frequent than in (1) and (2) <p>Examples: French <i>homme</i> 'man' and 'human being' German <i>der_{masc} typische Student_{masc} ... er</i> 'the typical student (masc) ... he' German <i>alle Wähler_{masc}</i> 'all voters'</p>	Feminization + Neutralization

Figure 5: Overview of grammatical language types in relation to gender (Sczesny et al., 2016, p. 3)

In the context of this toolbox, actions to make language more gender inclusive concern activities to address people of different genders as well as ways to avoid exclusionary language use.

The *European Institute for Gender Equality* (EIGE) provides in its Glossary and Thesaurus the definitions of terms, that are central for this toolbox as they clarify two strategies of building up a gender-inclusive language use:

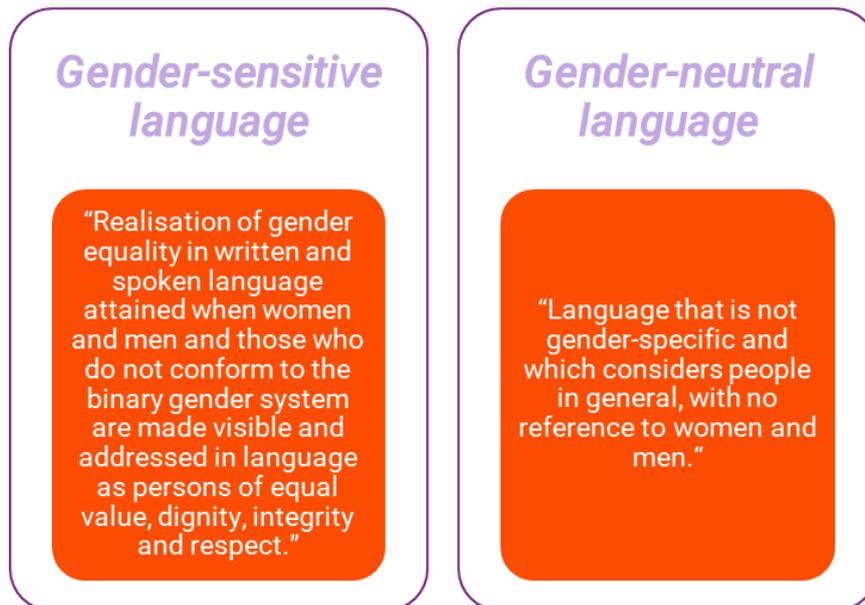


Figure 6: Definitions of gender-sensitive and gender-neutral language (EIGE, n.d.)

These definitions illustrate how diversely language can be used and shaped. They also show the different ways in which implicitness and purpose can flow into them. While **gender-sensitive language** is characterized by the intention to increase the visibility of all people in terms of gender (women, men, and non-binary people) and address them directly, **gender-neutral language** aims to create a general address that includes all people - regardless of gender.

Gender-sensitive and gender-neutral language strive for inclusivity. That is why we will subsume both approaches under the umbrella-term of **gender-inclusive language (GIL)**. Though, it is important to emphasize that both approaches have different scopes when it comes to implementing this inclusivity claim:

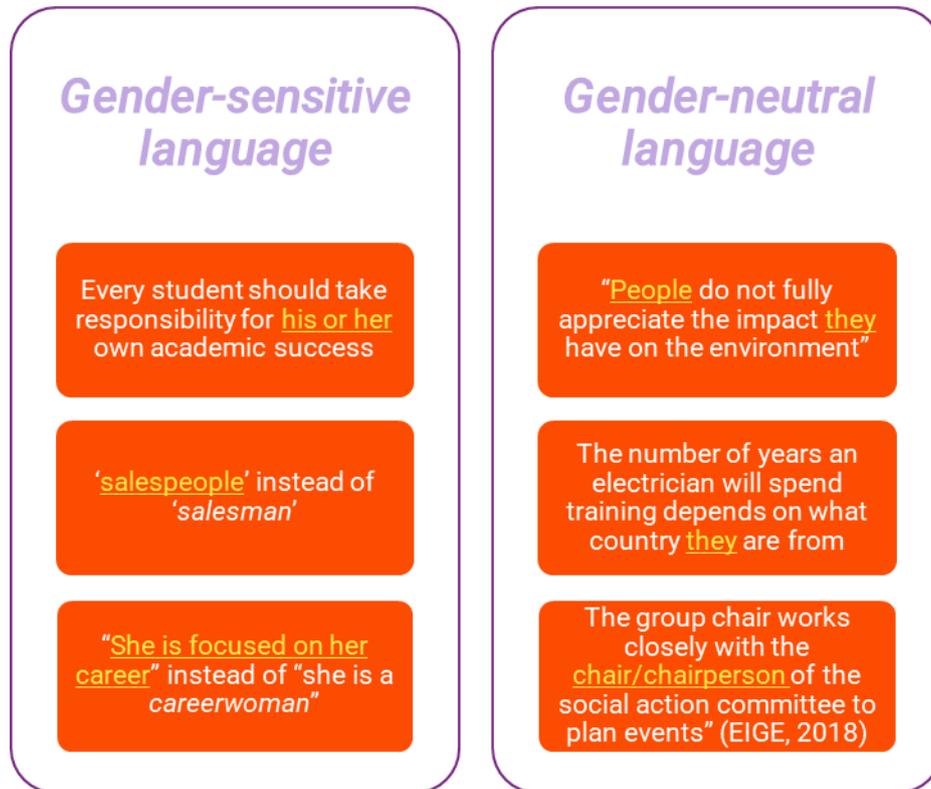


Figure 7: Examples for gender-sensitive and gender-neutral language (GenderSmart, 2020; EIGE, 2019)

Gender-sensitive language places a high value on expressing all genders and actively seeking word alternatives that allow people of all genders to be included, as well as avoiding stereotypical wording.

Gender-neutral language, on the other hand, emphasizes a "middle ground," seeking to use language that is as neutral as possible while making gender invisible. Here, people are addressed in general, not with reference to their gender. On the one hand, this fulfills an egalitarian claim without revolutionizing language. On the other hand, the invisibility itself can promote a gender bias, in that the demonstrative non-emphasis on gender facilitates traditional, stereotyped ideas.

3.3.1 Gender-Exclusive Language

The ordinary, mundane, and habitual use of language in many languages does not correspond to the model of a GIL. Instead, exclusions and stereotypes are often expressed - even unintentionally - through language. Such language can be considered as gender-discriminatory (Stout & Dasgupta, 2011; Sczesny et al., 2016).

Generic Masculine

The use of the generic masculine as a general form of addressing is an example of gender-discriminatory language. The generic masculine is found in all RESET languages (see figure 4) and common usage.

Its use marks an asymmetry: masculine nouns and grammatical sentence constructions are given a generic status. Female or non-binary forms are implied in them. In contrast, feminine forms are used exclusively when referring to women. Thereby, linguistic gender asymmetries are ubiquitous (Sczesny et al. 2016; Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001; Günthner, 2017).

The generic masculine thus contains some properties that contradict the approach of equal participation.

From statements that follow the principle of the generic masculine, it is only implicit that women and non-binary people are included. This information does not emerge from the statement itself. In fact, it is also possible that only men are meant.

- Imagine you read a report on a scientific conference. In it, you get an overview of the number of participants, content focus, and so on. In languages that use the generic masculine, it is not clear in this case whether there were women among the lecturers and speakers. Only the men are visible in the text.
- Also, in the direct address of participants the generic masculine has an effect: As soon as a man enters a room in which previously only female participants were present, all persons in the room are addressed in the masculine form. The other way around, the arrival of a woman would have no effect on the form of addressing.

Gender-Discriminatory Language

A case of gender-exclusive language is **gender-discriminatory language**. Practices and forms of expression that fit this definition are described by EIGE (2018) as follows:



Figure 8: Definition of gender-discriminatory language (EIGE, n.d.)

Examples for gender-discriminatory language:

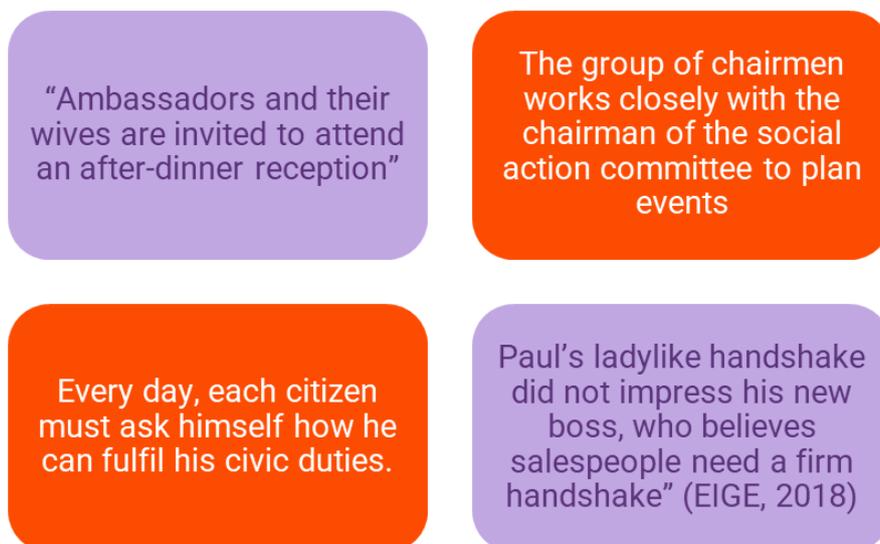


Figure 9: Examples for gender-discriminatory language (EIGE, 2019)

The following questions provided by the EIGE (2019) can be helpful in deciding which form is most appropriate for a text:

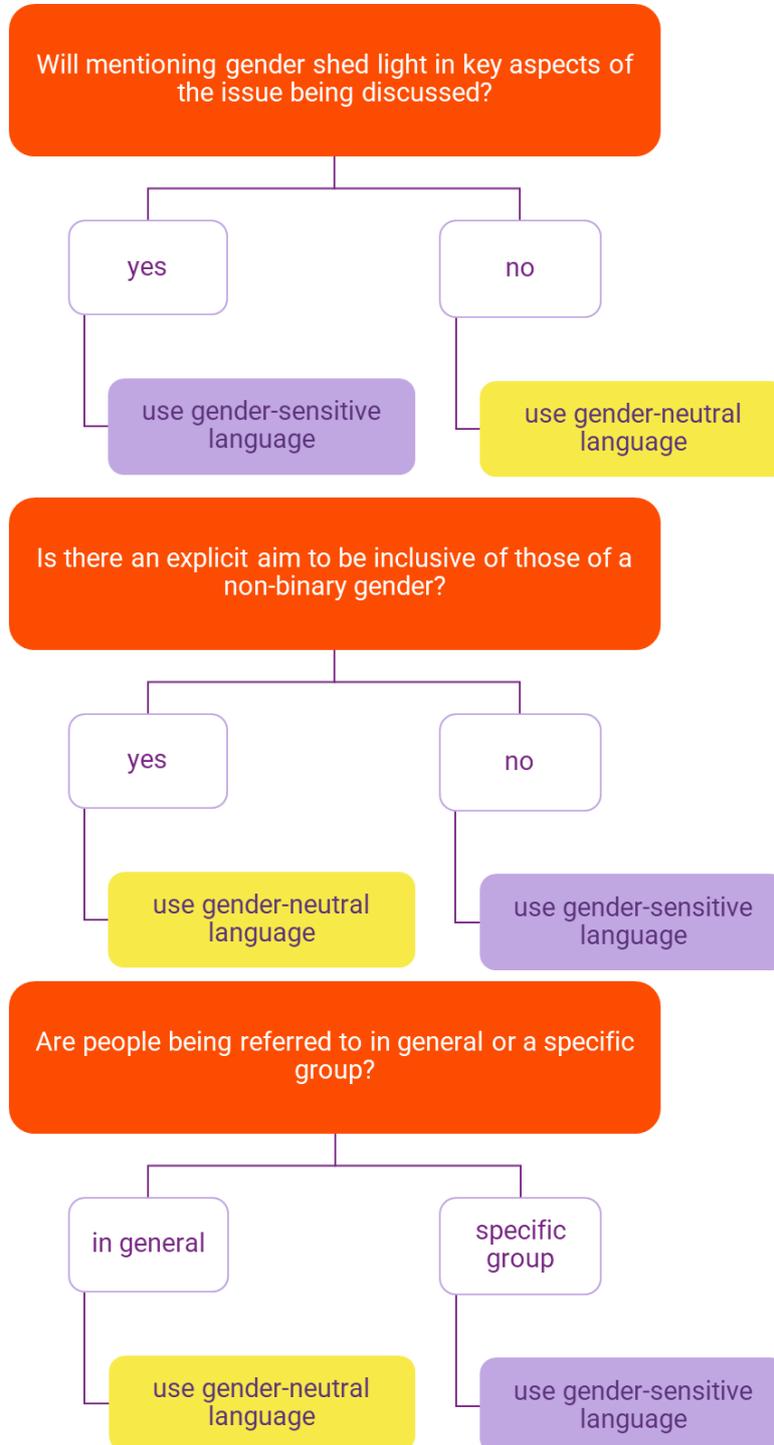


Figure 10: Helpful Questions to choose gender-sensitive or gender-neutral language

4. Visual Communication

“Images – or the absence of images – affect how we see each other, and ourselves. When some people are invisible in the media, when their voices and stories are never heard, there is a void left to be filled with prejudice and stereotypes” (Gunnarsson, 2019).

So far, we have discussed gender-inclusive language, focusing on the importance of using gender-neutral and gender-sensitive communication practices. A further highly relevant area that we want to focus on is **visual communication**. In terms of our intersectional understanding of equality, we would like to focus not only on the category of gender in the field of visual communication, but also on the representation of other dimensions of diversity. This means to involve people who, as highlighted in the opening quote, are often not seen and not heard in processes of creating and performing (visual) communication. Be it people of color, people with migration background, people with disabilities, elderly people, LGBTIQs and those to whom several of these factors apply. The purpose of visual representation is to do justice to the diversity of our societies and, in this case more concretely, of our institutions (Meier, 2018). With this approach, we follow the objectives of intersectional perspectives on diversity outlined in section 2. This means to pay attention to the inter-linkage of the categories in which social differentiation unfolds and to further develop visual forms of representation from the point of view of linking different categories of inequality and thus to complement the perspective on gender.

To this end, we will draw below on an example of visual representation in which ethnicity, sexual orientation, non-binarity, disability, and age were incorporated into a visual campaign as these marked and often excluded categories, often set apart from ‘the normal’. What is important here: not the categories or characteristics that are in the spotlight, but the people who live with these markers and have the claim and the right to participation and visibility.



Take a look at **TOOL #2: CHECKLIST** on gender-inclusive visual communication!

4.1 “Images that change the World”

One example of actively shaping gender-inclusive communication, is featured by the Swedish Institute's toolkit "Images that change the world" (2019). It emerged from a campaign run by the Swedish city of Gävle and that was developed by Tomas Gunnarsson. This example is highly interesting for our concern, as it foregrounds stereotypes and norms, looking at gender equity **not in isolation, but in conjunction with other factors**, such as origin and ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. "Images that change the world" follows a norm-critical approach in this regard. Accordingly, the heart of the toolkit stands the challenge of identifying cultural norms and encouraging a transformation of attitudes.

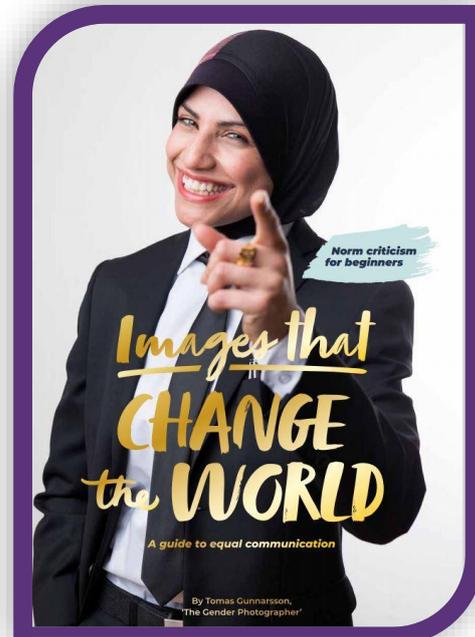


Figure 11: Cover of the Guide of "Images that change the world" (Gunnarsson, 2019)

4.1.1 What is "Images that change the world" about?

"In 2013, an angry citizen phoned Gävle Municipality to criticise the new posters they had put up in the windows of City Hall. Gävle Municipality had the ability, and courage, to take the criticism to heart – and to change" (Gunnarsson, 2019, p.3).

The starting point of that toolkit was a 2012 campaign by the Swedish city of Gävle, in which the city exhibited photos in the city hall that were meant to depict local life. The photos of the campaign illustrate multiple environments people at an outdoor concert, families on the mini-golf course, boys skateboarding and BMX-riding, women with children. But after a closer look it gets clear what caught the eye of one citizen:

- almost without exception, people that pursued activities, such as playing sports, reading comics or making music, were male;
- hardly no people without a (stereotypical) Nordic background were portrayed,
- there were only a few elderly persons in the pictures and no same-sex couples were shown

- No person with a visible disability was depicted

Together with photographer Tomas Gunnarsson and volunteer citizens, the city of Gävle launched the campaign with the goal of capturing Gävle's diverse community and, most importantly, making visible the blind spots that are hidden behind taken-for-granted notions of "normal."

4.1.2 Why "Images that change the world"?

The exhibition and the accompanying guide successfully draw attention to stereotypes and traditional norms that make people to be excluded.

With its images and accompanying reflections, the toolkit sensitizes viewers on how motifs, models, and the chosen visual language correspond to – or can irritate – culturally formed habits of seeing. Linked to this, it illustrates how the demand for representation in visual languages can be met.

The example of the city of Gävle also demonstrates a positive culture of error that is geared towards meeting the demands of changing and pluralizing societies in their various facets. This also implies that mistakes can (and will) happen not out of bad intentions, but out of unquestioned assumptions – of biases (see section 3.2). The error culture of this example points to the will to take responsibility for change and to rethink and think ahead.

4.2 Examples for gender-inclusive & diversity-oriented visual communication in RESET

Featuring “University Diversity”:

The University Diversity project was initiated in 2016 by the University of Łódź. The main goal was to integrate the academic community, with particular emphasis on its foreign students. This recognizes that over 2,000 people from multiple countries study at this University. Although it was to a lesser extent aimed at showing gender inclusive communication, but rather at showing the value of a human being as such, regardless of differences, the project can inspire other organizations to illustrate their diversity in an inclusive way.

The project consisted of a series of various actions, such as:

- a photo exhibition presenting the profiles of foreign students (2 editions);
- an international cookbook with recipes from around the world created by students of the University of Lodz;
- the “Guest for Christmas” campaign - the academic community invited foreign students to spend time during Christmas showing them the Polish Christmas tradition (4 editions);
- or the University Diversity Day with a training targeted at the UŁ community.



Figure 12: Cover of the International Cook Book of the University of Łódź, a product of the University Diversity Campaign

The project was addressed to all members of the UŁ as well as to the residents of Łódź city (the photo exhibition was available to everyone in the public space in one of the biggest shopping malls). By this means, UŁ showed cultural richness of other countries while promoting Polish traditions at the same time. Moreover, the project was gender neutral and showed people studying at the University, regardless of age, gender, country of origin, etc.

Featuring the abstract:

Another approach can be to avoid direct figurative representation in visual communication by turning to abstract forms of imaging, as it is beautifully demonstrated by the poster by UPorto, shown below (fig 13 and 14). Instead of depicting people - photographed or drawn - shapes and colors, as well as other design elements are used here to correspond to a message in a more abstract or metaphorical way. The resulting abstract space of meaning thus acquires an openness that can escape stereotypical or abbreviated fixation of what is being depicted. As the example shows, graphical options can deconstruct the representations associated with women. Multiple and not binding images offer a more diverse and plural representation.



Figure 13: "Dia Da Mulher: É Preciso Falar Com Os Homens?" ("Women's Day: Do We Need to Talk to Men?") A poster announcing UPorto's Women's Day Event



Figure 14: "Queer Porto 5 | Sessão de filmes premiados" ("Queer Porto 5 | Session of award-winning films")

As the examples show, graphical options can deconstruct the representations associated with women and men.

4.3 Challenges of visual representation

At this point, we would like to draw attention to some points related to dimensions of diversity, that are critical to consider when it comes to the depiction and representation of people in terms of visualization:

“So we’ve concluded that visibility is important. But almost equally important is to avoid the pitfalls that come with including and portraying people who are often forgotten by the mainstream media. One very common pattern is that people from underrepresented groups only get cast as representatives of that group, in stock photos, ads or the news. For example, people with disabilities often appear exclusively in articles or scenarios highlighting disabilities. Rarely does a person with a (visible) disability get to just represent a random example of an ordinary person, participating in social life, interacting with the world” (Gunnarsson, 2019, p. 13).

Although visibility is a desired outcome, it is precisely those pitfalls Gunnarsson mentions, that must be considered when designing and distributing images. Next, we list a few aspects that should be taken into account, and that mark visual representation of minorities and marginalized individuals as ambivalent (Schaffer, 2008, p. 59; Hall, 2013; Mirza, 2018):

- To be visible also means to be exposed. “There is an irony to heightened visibility for the “invisible” in our polite and genteel corridors of higher education” (Mirza, 2018). The form of exposure can be - and should be - appreciative. Nevertheless, its influence on the ways of reception (if it is appreciative or hostile; sympathetic or belittling) is limited.
- Increased visibility also entails vulnerability and does not equal to an increase in power, influence, or voice. It can reproduce women of color as “mute visible objects” (Mirza, 2018).
- If visibility also means recognizability, it also runs the risk of becoming a stereotype. This is especially true when it comes to increasing the visibility of marginalized groups (Hall, 2013).
- The ways in which people belonging to minorities are represented can often carry the risk of serving new, positive stereotypes in an attempt to escape old, negative ones.

One particular case that plays a role here, is a phenomenon known as **tokenism**.

Tokenism

*“is the practice of placing or promoting individuals from disadvantaged groups (e.g. women, ethnic minorities, disabled people) into high-profile roles in the organization in order to give the impression that the organization practices **equal opportunity**. It represents a cynical move by managers to disguise or ignore the structures and procedures that disadvantage women, ethnic minorities, and disabled people. In this way, whilst the token individuals may benefit personally, their role does nothing to help further the cause of the disadvantaged group to which they belong. In fact, it might have a negative impact because the token individuals become examples for organizational decision-makers to illustrate the **meritocratic** nature of the organization and to neutralize arguments for change.” (Heery & Noon, 2008)*

Although this definition focuses on tokenism as a practice in human resources, it can be applied to the aspect of visibility and making visible in the representation and communication of institutions. Here, too, there is a risk of instrumentalizing individuals as figure-heads of the institution in order to provide evidence of its diversity.

To depict diversity is a sensitive matter: it is where the various dimensions we elaborated in Section 2 come together: Recognition, Redistribution, Representation and Organization (Vertovec, 2012).

Thus, various interests can become guiding principles for action here:

- the desire for participation, representation and the commitment to this,
- the contribution to the extension or overcoming of outdated norms and standards, the representation of plurality and difference.
- Performance as an open, conscious organization (as a place of togetherness, of learning, as an employer, as a research institution).

At the same time, the depiction of diversity is tangled up in power structures and is precisely a sign of them - otherwise, after all, there would be no need to depict certain, marginalized groups of people in a particular or highlighted way. This dynamic goes beyond the subject we are focusing on with this toolbox and affects our societies as a whole and their institutions in particular.

This act thus carries the risk of appropriation, display, manifesting 'happy faces' (Ahmed, 2009) or “mute visible objects” (Mirza, 2018) for the institution - without effectively confronting mechanisms of institutional racism of lack of accessibility or other forms of exclusion, counteracting biases, stereotypes, and prejudices.

It is therefore important to ask the following questions and to develop actions accordingly:

- To whom do the actions and efforts undertaken apply?
- Who is involved in the development of these?
- Whose ideas are being incorporated?
- Whose concerns, suggestions and criticisms are listened to?
- And how is diversity-sensitive institutional visual communication developed?

5. Changing communication – a reflective outlook

So far, we addressed socio-linguistic and socio-psychological aspects of gender-inclusive communication and provided some examples and suggestions on the field of visual communication in the previous sections of the Toolbox. Before we continue with the Part B, presenting the tools in this box, we are going to reflect on the process of changing institutional communication related to two aspects:

- **Resistances** as they are very likely to be encountered in the process of implementation and realization of gender- inclusive communication and organizational (Benshop & Verloo, 2011; FESTA, 2016; SUPERA, 2021).
- **Safety**, as a notion that is connected to diversity (Dembouski, 2018; Mirza, 2018; Lester, 2018).

Resistance

- is a component of organizational behavior and change;
- can also be expected in relation to the implementation of gender-inclusive communication practices and strategies.
- it “can be defined as a form of opposition or refusal that emerges during processes of change and that is aimed at maintaining the status quo” (FESTA, 2016, p. 6)

In their Handbook on Resistance to gender equality in Academia (2016, pp.14.), the FESTA project provides an overview of possible causes and indicators of resistance in

universities. These cannot be considered in isolation but are often interrelated or overlapping. Some aspects can be located at the organizational level, others at an operational level. Additionally, the individual level plays an important role. We will not be able to go into these in detail here but would suggest to refer to FESTA's toolbox in order to encourage exploring them as an agent for institutional change.

Examples for Resistances related to gender-oriented, institutional change (SUPERA, 2021):

- Lack of prioritization of gender-sensitive communication
- Change of communication as a waste of time
- Gender-equal communication is already achieved
- Threat towards freedom of expression
- Aversion to neologisms
- Generic masculine as neutral form

Some of these resistances, as they are explicitly directed towards gender-inclusive communication. They are included in Tool #3 as examples to show helpful ways to respond to them.



Safety

So far, we have focused on providing basic information that promotes understanding of the importance of gender-inclusive and diversity-sensitive communication because, as the examples of resistances above show, these are often trivialized and taken as unimportant or marginal. We have thought here primarily from the perspective of the institution, its role and its responsibility.

To go beyond that, a change of perspective is necessary, towards the individual experience of persons at our universities. And from there, the aspect of safety becomes a central issue for further developing institutional change in terms of the links between communication, gender equality and diversity in an intersectional perspective.



This means:

- *Designing communications to address everyone equally - and explicitly - regardless of gender.*
- *creating safe spaces of articulation where the needs of individuals are met with respect*
 - *, making support options easily accessible, for example for people with disabilities or financially weak students and people with care responsibilities.*
 - *explicitly formulating the rules of studying, researching, and working together in institutional core texts.*
- *providing support services for first generation/non-traditional students and making them easily accessible.*
- *making financial aid and its application options easily accessible and its conditions understandable for (future) students.*
- *training teachers to be sensitive to the heterogeneity of their students and support them to identify factors that shape interactions in the seminar room or the exam besides the subject matter and act on them as needed. Accordingly, training opportunities should be tailored to this.*

This list is not exhaustive. It includes some of the factors that became apparent during the creation of the toolbox. They are incorporated into the tools included in Part B and those that are still being developed according to the work in progress of this toolbox - in cooperation between RESET universities and in their local communities, in dialogue, in productive and critical exchange with university members, with special attention to those who are more vulnerable by the different markers of diversity and for whom the need for change manifests itself in the gaze of others, in being overlooked or not being heard.





Redesigning
Equality and
Scientific
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Part B - Tools

TOOL #1



- **PATHWAY** to gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented institutional communication

TOOL #2



- **CHECKLIST** on gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented visual communication

TOOL #3



- **RESPONSES TO RESISTANCES** – how to react to rejections of gender-inclusive communication

TOOL #4



- **TEMPLATE** of a questionnaire on institutional practices on gender-inclusive language

TOOL #5



- **TEMPLATE** of an interview-guideline on gender-inclusive language

TOOL #6



- **COMMENTED LINK COLLECTION** – useful guidelines and databases on diversity-oriented & gender-inclusive communication



TOOL 1: Pathway to gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented institutional communication

Communication at our universities affects many different areas. According to the conceptual understanding provided in Part A of this toolbox, and according to the guidelines of the GenderSmart (2020) and SUPERA (2021) projects,

1. **we highlight 6 areas** that should become the target of the development and implementation of gender-inclusive communication strategies;
2. we present **4 steps to get started**;
3. in the last part we will suggest future steps

1. Ultimate Targets

Administrative Texts

The conditions of how we work, research and study as a community in our institutions as well as our rights and responsibilities are guided by numerous documents. **These should be written in a gender-neutral and gender-sensitive manner, to address women and men equally.** Women should not just be implicitly included by the generic masculine. If possible, this also applies to the designation of titles and professions.

Furthermore, the institution should have binding core texts addressing all its members, which concerns forms and limits of interaction, defining the **conditions of a mutually respectful communication**. It should be stated here that **transgressive, discriminatory behavior and forms of expression will not be tolerated**, explicitly defining, what is meant by them.

Job Offers

Job vacancies are not only an important advertisement for universities as employers. They also convey ideals of the job position as well as requirements and characteristics of ideal candidates. Numerous studies show that **job descriptions that use generically masculine phrases, which include but do not explicitly address women do not reach women to the same extent as those that explicitly address women** (Sczesny et al., 2016, Stout & Dasgupta, 2011).

Also, descriptions of job requirements or characteristics of applicants often include adjectives that are gender attributed and carry the risk that women (or men) will feel less addressed (Horvath & Hentschel, 2018). This is the case, for example, when the emphasis especially in management positions is placed on the candidates' determination, their willingness to take risks, or their assertiveness. In contrast, social skills such as the ability to work in a team, creative qualities or communication skills are just as important in most jobs and should be part of balanced job advertisements.

Description of Study Fields

The choice of academic programs depends on many factors. Among other things, gender attributions manifested in childhood and adolescence can be a basis, on which these choices are made. In many societies, natural sciences and engineering have a male connotation and female students are underrepresented in these fields. How these fields are advertised may have an impact on the decision of female entrants. It is important to address them as a target group and not to refer to them in the generic masculine way. At the same time, the description of the subjects and the characteristics associated with them should be multifaceted and reflect the diverse aspects of the study program and the culture of the subjects.

Conferences and Events

Conferences and other events are an essential part of communication in the scientific field and the transfer of science into society. Gender-inclusive as well as other diversity-oriented practices refer to different levels:

1) The clarification of needs and the provision of appropriate tools and services

Participation in events should be accessible to all interested parties. It is therefore necessary to clarify in advance which support measures are needed and how they can be

made available, e.g. for people with disabilities. In any case, microphones and audio transmissions should be made possible, and written materials should be available that are appropriate to the wording (and easy to read). In addition, in the context of conferences, it should be clarified to what extent the institution/organizers can provide child-care solutions

2) The choice of speakers, contributors, and the composition of panels.

The selection of contributors should be gender-balanced. Also, the diversity of various research contexts and regions should be reflected in the selection of contributors. Where possible, researchers from outside Anglo-American and Central and Western European universities should be represented in the panel selection. In addition to advanced scholars, young researchers should be included in the selection of speaker and the composition of panels.

3) The moderation of events

The selection and design of moderation should also be selected with gender-sensitive aspects in mind. The moderator's function is to lead through an event, introduce contributors, presentations and moderate discussions. Here lies a great potential to communicate in a gender-inclusive way, to break down stereotypes and make sure that all participants are given the same space for articulation.

4) The allocation of time slots

First, events should be scheduled in a timeframe that considers the compatibility of family and work for all participants. In addition, in areas where women are underrepresented, female speakers should be scheduled in time slots where attendance is conventionally high.

Academic Writing

Editorial boards of anthologies or journal volumes should strive to ensure a gender balance among contributors. In writing academic publications, female authors should be made visible whenever possible, e.g. writing out the forenames of authors in bibliographies. Ways to advocate should be used by researchers to both incorporate gender-inclusive language into publications and change the modes of the bibliographies accordingly.

Students should be given easily accessible information about the use of gender-inclusive language, as well as the opportunity to apply it in their seminar papers and theses. The use of gender-inclusive language should not be rejected or sanctioned by lecturers, as bottom-up practices of non-binary writing may be used by students. These involve

the invention of neologisms or grammatically incorrect expressions and/or ways of writing. It is therefore in the interest of the university to frame and accept this inclusive way of writing in various kinds of assignments.

For both undergraduate and doctoral students, there should be easily accessible opportunities for guidance in learning how to write academically, and present arguments. In this respect it is important to encourage their academic development in a positive culture of error.

Classrooms

This aspect addresses classrooms as communication-intensive arenas. They should be safe environments for learning, which provide binding and transparent rules of mutual respect among students, lecturers and students alike. Furthermore, to foster safety, lecturers need to be sensitive to the heterogeneity of their students' groups.

They have the responsibility to identify factors that shape interactions in the seminar room as well as in exams besides the specific academic field and act on them as needed. Accordingly, training opportunities should be tailored to help lecturers to find their role and make them aware of the gender- and diversity related factors that make an impact on the interaction in the seminar and are of importance to build, ensure and, if needed, re-establish a safe learning environment.

2. 4 First Steps

Below we detail 4 steps that guide the process for changing institutional communication within RESET. These aim to identify and initiate change with gender-inclusive communication in mind, as well as to continue elaborating diversity-aware policies.

1

Explore the current state

- **To which extent does the current campus communication reflect gender-inclusion?**
- **In what terms, have diversity-aimed measures already been established or are planned?**
- **Are there any already existing institutional guidelines on gender-inclusive language?**
- **Are there other recommendations available used as a basis for a gender/diversity sensitive communication (e.g., national guidelines)?**

These and similar questions can form the basis of providing an overview of the current status on issues of gender-sensitive, gender-neutral, and diversity-oriented communication.

- Particular attention should be paid to the types of **representation on the central homepages and social media channels of the universities**. This factor concerns both **visual language and quantitative aspects** - i.e., the ratio of women and men in forms of representation and in the communication of research results, grants, and the like.
- Furthermore, the ways in which diversity is addressed, should be explored (e.g., related to students and researchers with migration background or with disabilities)

Gain inspiration on what kind of terms and words are best to use

- You don't have to reinvent the wheel: Find out what gender-inclusive language strategies already exist in your language and how they can be implemented in both spoken and written forms.

Other tools in this box can also be helpful in working out this current state:



Take a look at **TOOL #2: CHECKLIST** on gender-inclusive visual communication!



Check **TOOL #4: QUERY ON STATE-OF-THE-ART**
It provides query focused on GIL.



For more information and inspiration on gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented communication, check **TOOL #6: COMMENTED LINK COLLECTION**

2

Get into conversations

- What benefits do people on your campus perceive and what concerns do they have about implementing and using gender-inclusive language?
- In which ways do individuals experience diversity in the context of communication on campus?

- Engaging in personal exchange is useful to learn about attitudes toward gender-inclusive communication and how to address resistances if any exist
- the most important, is to identify needs and challenges that are seen and experienced by the members of our institutions.



Check **TOOL #5: TEMPLATE FOR INSTITUTIONAL INTERVIEWS**
It provides an interview guideline focused on GIL.

For this purpose, it is important, to address different stakeholders:

- **administrative staff** (e.g., communication departments, human resources departments, units' communication offices and representatives) in order to get an insight into the administrative, strategic and operational aspects around gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented communication
- **researchers/lecturer** to have an insight on their experiences and perspectives in academic careers and working fields.
- **students** as the major, heterogenic, group on our campuses with a multitude of backgrounds, experiences, and concerns.

Focus on diversity:

- transversal orientation towards diversity-related factors: the exchange with and involvement of persons experiencing these factors, is crucial.

- At the same time, it must be clear that it is the institution and not the affected persons who bears the responsibility for (institutional, cultural, linguistic) change.
- It is also important not to generalize individual experiences here, but to cultivate a broad exchange whenever possible.
- Additionally, as many different aspects of diversity as possible should be considered, so that it is not always the same few persons who are taken as representatives of groups or communities.

Aspects of diversity can be the following:

- gender,
- race/ethnicity
- migration background,
- age,
- class,
- dis/ability,
- religion and sexual orientation

Take a look at [section 2 in part A](#) to get more information on RESET's intersectional perspective on diversity!

RESET'S EXPERIENCE

In order to get an impression of how RESET's universities target gender-inclusive language and visual communication, we started to conduct conversations with stakeholders at communication offices and others who engage with gender-inclusive communication in our universities. They gave valuable information on opinions, plans and ideas related to the implementation of gender-inclusive language at our universities and provided important inputs for the creation of this toolbox.

3

Identify needs and challenges

- The overview of common practices related to gender-inclusive language and the insight into different attitudes at universities allow to identify the need for concrete actions regarding gender-inclusive communication.

RESET'S EXPERIENCE

Through the conversations conducted in our institutions we identified several challenges regarding the implementation of gender-inclusive communication.

For example:

Lack of clarity regarding the possibilities of how to use GIL

The proposals of gender inclusive language practices are ambiguous in many languages, as they are a dynamic social instrument that is constantly evolving

Lack of clarity regarding responsibilities

Who is responsible for changing administrative texts and for the distribution of guidelines and other information on GIL? These and similar questions became visible in our interviews and showed the need to clarify responsibilities and to define an explicit processes.

Lack of awareness for the urge or necessity of GIL

This aspect coincides with the **resistances highlighted in section 5**. Implementing and guiding gender-inclusive language practices is not given a high priority within institutions. This goes hand in hand with the fact that their impact in the context of gender equality and diversity promotion is not as highly valued, or there is a lack of consciousness of their necessity. Guidance such as the one from EIGE, SUPERA and GenderSmart projects, and our RESET Toolbox can help raising awareness on this issue.

4

Recommendations instead of rules

A common prejudice against advocates of **gender-inclusive communication** practices is that they seek to restrict freedom of expression and speech. Accordingly, recommendations are misunderstood as obligations. Guidelines should be understood as recommendations that provide orientation, consistent with inclusive practices that promote diversity and equity at our academia.



3. Future steps

The phase of gaining information and developing strategies together with appropriate actors at the institutions is followed by a stage in which the corresponding strategies and the necessary knowledge and practices must get widespread at the universities. In the following, we elaborate on 5 essential aspects for such processes.

1

Disseminate information on GIL and diversity-oriented communication

The information gathered in this toolbox about different factors that are significant in the context of gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented communication can be a good starting point for disseminating information adapted to the needs of one's own institution. This also applies

to the suggestions of different strategies for dealing with written as well as visual communication.

We recommend preparing the information according to the target goals or groups, for example:

- Is it about adaptation of administrative texts (e.g., for all staff or its particular categories; students)?
- Is it about gender-inclusive addressing /job offers?
- Does Visual communication take into account diversity? And how?
- Does it target the possibilities for students to implement GIL?

Therefore, it should be clear, what is the core target group and through which communication channels it can be reached.

2

Provide guidance and personal exchange

At the institutions, as well as its units, contact persons should be designated, as they can help with questions about gender-inclusive communication and other gender and diversity related actions,. They can represent different fields of knowledge and do not have to be one person for all relevant aspects.

- *Offering training, publishing proposals via institutional communication channels, preparing podcasts or events can be a good way to spread knowledge about gender-inclusive language and raise awareness of its importance.*

3

Create own material

In connection with the aforementioned aspect, institutionally relevant and easily accessible information material should be developed. Here, too, it is possible to refer to the discussions and identification of needs mentioned in step 2 and 3 of the previous section (“4 first steps”).

- *Not every single aspect of gender inclusive language will have the same priority, but which issues are high priority and require action?*
- *At what points are tailored handouts needed for this purpose?*

4

Integrate it into training

As we have highlighted, gender-inclusive communication encompasses many different facets that have an impact on various areas of interpersonal interaction at our institutions. Accordingly, it is advisable to make aspects of gender-inclusive communication a component of training. Be it, as mentioned in point 3, to make dedicated offers for the implementation of gender-inclusive language or let individual aspects flow into existing and advanced training offers (e.g., in training on communication at the workplace, on conference planning or on conflict prevention).

5

Go public

So far, we have mainly focused on the further development of gender-inclusive language practices within institutions. Communication to society, to policy makers, and to research funding is another key aspect, in that universities can demonstrate the relevance of explicit address, and express their efforts to promote diversity at their institutions. For example, by using gender-inclusive language practices in press releases and developing strategies in public relations to feature women in areas and positions where they are underrepresented.



TOOL 2:

Checklists on visual communication

The goal of making diversity visible is to depict society and people who are part of it, in our case: especially those who are already part of our university communities, or its newcomers,

This means showing a realistic and diverse sample of our institutions with special attention towards those who are often overseen or made invisible.

As we have highlighted, visual representation has the function of making visible social groups and minorities that are often invisible (Gunnarsson, 2019; Meier, 2018).

As public institutions, we send a signal to recipients from these groups or minorities that they are not only welcome, but also part of our institutions. We stand up for diversity and social participation.

However, this should not be limited to visual statements, but must be a factor that is also incorporated in other practices and measures of our institutional cultures.

This tool is dedicated to help to further developing a diversity-oriented and gender-sensitive visual communication in our institutions and to reflect current practices. It is going to be updated every year and at the end of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Depiction in images and other visual material (graphs and videos) - Focus on gender

- ✓ *Images should be related to typical actions and situations in the university context. It can be social interactions, research, teaching, reading or writing texts or participating in events. Display the people involved in such actions rather than in static poses.*
- ✓ *Avoid stereotypical colors, such as the pink color-palette to emphasize “the feminine” or blue colors to emphasize “the masculine”.*
- ✓ *Examples for roles, in which we use to find a strong gender-imbalance are men as assistants and women as professors, team leaders and principal investigators and in fields in which they are underrepresented (e.g. STEM)*

2. Inclusion of people in the production of the images and other visual materials

- ✓ *Get in touch with people and groups of people who should become more involved in the development of forms of (visual) representation according to the different dimensions of diversity.*
- ✓ *Clarify with them what they want and need in order to establish a safe space of expression and visibility.*
- ✓ *Review, whether female photographers are engaged in the creation of visual materials as well, or should be given greater prominence.*
- ✓ *Also, the choice of female voice actors in informational videos and other parts of public relations should be made in cases where they are underrepresented.*

CHECKLISTS:

The following two checklists can be used to assess images from the perspective of gender-inclusive and diversity-sensitive visual communication (e.g. on the university's or institute's website). Thus, they can be used both in the development of new visual materials and in the assessment of existing images.

1. Depiction in images and other visual material (graphs and videos): Focus on gender

Are women depicted differently in images than men?

- Yes
 No

Are men pictured actively doing things while women are passively pictured (e.g. smiling at the camera, more in a decorative mode than involved in activities related to the context)?

- Yes
 No

Have you considered to show women and men in roles, in which they are under-represented (e.g. female professors, lecturers and PIs; male assistants and secretaries)?

- Yes
 No

Have you thought about using abstract forms of representation in preference to depicting people or using drawings of people?

- Yes
 No

If you checked "Yes" more than "No", your visual, pictorial communication appears to have significant characteristics of gender-inclusive communication. If you marked even or more "No" than "Yes", there seems to be more potential for development. In any case, it is worth considering how the features of the "no" statements can be improved in the future.

2. Inclusion of people in the production of the images and other visual materials

Are people from marginalized groups or minorities actively involved in the development of a visual language or campaign?

- Yes
 No

Did you seek feedback on existing or new images/visual material given by people from marginalized groups or minorities?

- Yes
 No

Have you incorporated such suggestions and ideas into the development of visual material?

- Yes
 No

Did female photographers and/or voice actors have been engaged in the creation of (audio-)visual materials in fields in which they are underrepresented?

- Yes
 No

If you checked "Yes" more than "No", your visual, pictorial communication appears to have significant characteristics of diversity-oriented communication. If you marked even or more "No" than "Yes", there seems to be more potential for development. In any case, it is worth considering how the features of the "no" statements can be improved in the future.

FURTHER QUESTIONS:

- *What kind of further measures can your institution develop to raise awareness for the different dimensions of diversity?*
- *How can they be included in processes of institutional communication?*

TOOL 3:



Responses to Resistances

In this tool, we take up **5 arguments** that often fall **into rejection on gender-inclusive language** (Lieb, 2021). Although the arguments were collected in the context of German debates around gender-inclusive communication, they can also be found in other European discussions around the topic (e.g. Burnett & Pozniak, 2021).

These arguments are exemplary here and are meant to support finding answers to these and similar arguments within the institutional framework. The arguments and the response-strategies have been formulated for the German context by Sigi Lieb (2021).

“There are more important problems than gender-inclusive language!”

We agree on that – to some extent. In fact, there are more important things. But what is the consequence of this conclusion? **Advocating for gender-responsive language and communication does not mean ignoring or de-prioritizing the importance of other problems.** It does not mean putting everything else aside.

Commitment to gender-responsive communication is not either/or, but rather and as well. It is a practical step toward gender-responsive and diversity-sensitive participation - not the only one, and not the last.

“The generic masculine refers to all!”

This is the intention that is always invoked as the logic of the generic masculine. It fulfills the function of a linguistic umbrella under which everything is implied.

But: "What someone means cannot be checked. We cannot, after all, look into the head, but only hear or read what the person utters." (Lieb, 2021)

The intention to include everyone is there. But **this implicit linguistic praxis requires more effort and interpretation on the part of recipients to feel addressed, to imagine women or non-binary people, when formulated only in the masculine.**

“Gender-inclusive language is enforced by ideologists!”

The use of language is an expression of society, its values and norms. Accordingly, language transforms insofar as norms and values also evolve - and in the case of our pluralized societies - diversify. The importance of gender-responsive language stems from the value of equal participation in society by people regardless of gender. In this sense, it is an expression of a value-based attitude. Accordingly, the rejection of

gendering is also an expression of other value-based attitudes. And this is quite legitimate in societies that uphold freedom and freedom of expression. Forcing people to gender would contradict such an attitude.

At the same time, **it should be recognized that speaking of “gender-ideology” itself stems from a highly politicized**

discourse. This fact should be pointed out in conversations, because the person being talked to may not be aware of it.

Therefore, we at RESET also emphasize the importance of gender-sensitive or gender-neutral communication in its contribution to the expansion of social participation. It is an expression of this aspiration.

“From a linguistic point of view, gender-inclusive language is nonsense!”

This argument exhibits a (polemical) opinion and is not a factual argument. Thus it can be accepted, that someone has this opinion, **but it is not a fact.** In linguistics, there is the discussed question of whether the use of language must follow the structure, or whether the structure should adapt to the use of language.

“The majority is against gender-inclusive language!”

In practice gender-inclusive language evolves in direct exchange with the level of action. "Language changes with societies and their values" (Lieb, 2021). Linguistics as a science of language, studies and analyzes these changes and language use, it does not invent them.

A counterquestion can be asked:

- What majority are we talking about?

For the most part, surveys conducted on the topic of gender-inclusive language are not representative, valid, or reliable in the scientific sense. They are commissioned, mostly to support predetermined positions. Basically, one would need to look more closely at the questions and questioning techniques, as well as the samples:

- **What understandings of gender-inclusive practices are being asked here?**
- **What understandings do the respondents bring to the table?**
- **And how are the questions constructed?**
- **In other words, how is it ensured that a question is clearly understood and that the answer is reliable?**
- **Does the group of respondents represent society well?**
- **How many people participated in the survey?**



TOOL 4: Template of a questionnaire on institutional practices on gender-inclusive language

This tool includes a **questionnaire to survey the current state of gender-inclusive communication** at academic institutions. It can be used to get an overview of the different fields (see **TOOL #1**) in which gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented communication practices are already established and where further action is needed. The questionnaire thus helps to get an overview of the state of gender-inclusive and diversity-oriented communication at your institution. The results, which are captured by it in a very clear way, can thus become the basis for dialogues on the further development of measures and of joint solutions at your institution.

Definitions:

<i>Gender-sensitive language</i>	<i>Gender-neutral language</i>	<i>Gender-discriminatory language</i>
“Realisation of gender equality in written and spoken language attained when women and men and those who do not conform to the binary gender system are made visible and addressed in language as persons of equal value, dignity, integrity and respect.” (EIGE, n.d.)	“Language that is not gender-specific and which considers people in general, with no reference to women and men.” (EIGE, n.d.)	“The opposite of gender-sensitive language. It includes words, phrases and/or other linguistic features that foster stereotypes, or demean or ignore women or men. At its most extreme it fails to treat the genders as equal in value, dignity, integrity and respect.” (EIGE, n.d.)

I. Practices of gender-inclusive communication:

1. What kind of actions do you identify at your university that address or include gender-inclusive language use?

Type of action	Target group	Short description	Link (if available)
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2. What kind of actions do you identify at your university that address or include gender-inclusive visual communication?

Type of action	Target group	Short description	Link (if available)
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3. Does your university have a complaint mechanism (e.g. a mailbox or organizational unit), in case someone has a complaint related to sexist communication?

(Please, insert answer)

4. In terms of best practice: Which action(s) or process(es) do you consider to be examples for good practice concerning gender-inclusive language or visual communication at your university?

Type of action	Target group	Short description	Link (if available)
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II. Practices of diversity-oriented communication:

1. In which forms does the central webpage of your university reflect 'diversity' in the following terms?

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Other (e.g. sexual orientation, disability)
--------	-----	-----------	---

2. In which forms does the advertising/promotion of your university targeting students reflect 'diversity' in the following terms?

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Other (e.g. sexual orientation, disability)
--------	-----	-----------	---



3. In which forms does the advertising/promotion of your university as a research institution (e.g. targeting researchers, policy makers and research funding organisations) reflect 'diversity' in the following terms?

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Other (e.g. sexual orientation, disability)
--------	-----	-----------	---

4. Does your university have a complaint mechanism (e.g. a mailbox or organisational unit), in case someone has a complaint related to discriminating communication?

(Please, insert answer)

5. Are the previously mentioned aspects of diversity in the university's communication considered together, or approached separately?

- considered together
- approached separately

(Other comments...)

III. Gender-inclusive communication guidelines:

1. Does your university have any guidelines on gender-inclusive or non-discriminatory use of language?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

(Other comments...)

2. Are these guidelines regulations (binding/mandatory) or recommendations?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

(Other comments...)





3. In which forms are they accessible:

- Internal use only
- Via webpages/public

4. Please describe the main topics or measures that are addressed by your institutional guidelines on gender-inclusive language:

(Other comments...)





TOOL 5: Template of an interview-guideline on gender-inclusive language

This tool includes a **conversation guideline in order to explore the current state of gender-inclusive communication** at academic institutions. It has been used to provide an overview of opinions, plans and ideas related to the implementation of gender-inclusive language at RESET's universities to create this toolbox and is based in the principle of focused interviews (Merton et al., 1956; Flick, 2018).

They can be used to get an overview of the different experiences, attitudes and resistances (see **TOOL #1**) around relevant fields to institutional change to explore in which ways further action is needed – in this case: gender-inclusive language practices. It can be easily adapted to other themes.

The conduct of the interviews should be preceded by an **explanation of the goal of the survey**. The participants should be informed in accordance with the data protection ordinance and have given their written consent to the interview and the **results should be anonymized**.

Choice of interviewees:

The choice of interviewees depends on the goals of the interview. For our first interviews in the project, with a focus on GIL, we conducted them with stakeholders from the field of university communication. Such stakeholders can explain perspectives of the institution and give information about the process, planned actions, overall: about the realistic way of dealing with them.



It is necessary to have discussions with other stakeholders for the further development of new strategies considering various needs, interests, and resistances. First, with those who are impacted (regarding further dimensions of diversity) as well as with people from other status groups, such as students, staff, and scientists.

Input for conversation:

Before going to the questions, the interviewee should be informed once again about the framework and purpose of the interview. It is important to explain the purpose and give the interviewee an opportunity to ask questions. It should also be made clear that there are no wrong or right answers, but that their individual experience and assessment are interesting and valuable. At this point, it should also be expressed that confidentiality about the identity of the interview partners will be maintained or provide other details on the protection of personal data if applicable

This is the input, we used in RESET:

“As you know, *#Name of the university/project/unit#* aims to develop further measures to strengthen gender equality. That is why we address gender-inclusive language. Gender-inclusive language aims to represent and to address people of different genders equally and to prevent stereotypes that are often linked with gendered expressions. For example, assuming secretaries/assistants to be female or a supervisor to be male.

Together with different representatives at our institutions we would like to develop a set of measures that will strengthen gender equality culture. Therefore, we are interested in getting into a dialogue with you and listen to your opinions and ideas on gender-inclusive language. There are no right or wrong answers to our questions.

This conversation will not be recorded, and your name and function will be anonymized. Other names or persons you might mention will also be anonymized. During the session, some notes will be taken.”

Possible Questions:

The questions should be short and open-ended. On the one hand, they should be focused and provide a quick orientation so that the interviewee can respond easily. On the other hand, they should be general enough to allow an associative response led by experiences and disclosing opinions and attitudes.

1. What challenges related to gender-inclusive language can you see – if there are any?
2. How would you tackle these challenges?





3. Can you name any measures at your university that could be undertaken to deal with such challenges?

4. How does your department currently deal with gender-inclusive language?

5. Are you or your department planning any actions or practices to strengthen gender-inclusive language in the future? If so, which ones?

6. Which benefits and which disadvantages can you see in the development and implementation of institutional guidelines for gender-inclusive language?

7. Do you have any ideas on how your university or your department could promote gender-inclusive language (e.g. around your colleagues/staff and your students)?

8. Do you have any additional remarks or comments related to the topic of our conversation?

Reflection:

The results of the interview should be recorded in writing, in a short protocol, along the interview questions. At the same time or afterwards, the interviewer should record his or her impressions of the interview. The following self-reflective questions may be useful:

1. What is your overall impression of the conversation?

2. Do you have any additional ideas or comments related to the content of the conversation?





TOOL 6: Commented Link Collection

This tool includes a **collection of links** which have been useful for the creation of this toolbox. It is going to be enriched and updated throughout RESET's project span.



TOOLKIT ON GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION

EIGE's toolkit provides a comprehensive overview of ways to implement gender-sensitive and gender-neutral language in institutional contexts, with practical examples in English which may be adopted to other languages correspondingly. **We highly recommend this tool to check up your own awareness of inclusive language!** EIGE toolkit provides different practical examples, e.g., job offers that demonstrate influence of language on the choice of text

Link: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-sensitive-communication>

[sensitive-communication](https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-sensitive-communication)

Check also the EIGE Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus:

<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/overview>



COLLECTION: GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

This collection contains a **database of guidelines on gender-inclusive language in over than 40 languages**. These come mainly from universities and public institutions. The collection helps to find support for the implementation of gender-inclusive language in all European languages. These can also form a good basis for some institutional change processes in communication(recommendations from other universities).

Link:

https://www.unige.ch/lettres/alman/files/3316/0430/7675/2020_10_Leitfaden_sammlung_V_1.pdf



GUIDEBOOK: IMAGES THAT CHANGE THE WORLD

These guidelines demonstrate in a clear and comprehensive way how visual language can realize **intersectional aspects of gender equality & multiple dimensions of diversity**. In doing so, it raises awareness on blind spots. Here, the processes of motif selection and photographic implementation provide impulses for developing inclusive visual communication and thoughts for further developing its dialogue- and participation-oriented standards.

Link: [https://sharingsweden.se/app/up-](https://sharingsweden.se/app/uploads/2020/02/guidebook-images-that-change-the-world.pdf)

[loads/2020/02/guidebook-images-that-change-the-world.pdf](https://sharingsweden.se/app/uploads/2020/02/guidebook-images-that-change-the-world.pdf)

Check also the correspondent exhibition, “Images that change the world”:

https://sharingsweden.se/app/uploads/2020/02/exhibition_overview_images_that_change_the_world_low.pdf



SUPERA GUIDELINES: TAILOR-MADE GUIDES FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION IN RESEARCH AND ACADEMIA

These guidelines focus primarily on gender-inclusive communication in HEIs as organizations. **They provide a helpful set of do's and don'ts for the further development of inclusive organizational practices, including a theoretical reflection of HEIs as organizations.** They contain easy-to-implement measures for different aspects of communication, regarding events, the use of pictograms and emojis, or the further development of administrative texts.

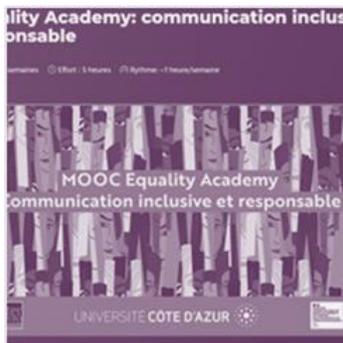
Link: <https://www.superaproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/D8.2-TAILOR-MADE-guides-for-gender-sensitive-communication-in-research-and-academia-v.1.1-.pdf>



FESTA HANDBOOK ON RESISTANCES TO GENDER EQUALITY IN ACADEMIA

FESTA project's handbook provides an **overview of possible causes and indicators of resistance in universities as well as strategies to deal with them**. They identify main causes and indicators for resistance and explore how resistance and gender are connected in processes of institutional change. It also contains an analysis of stories related to resistances at the institutions involved in the project and recommendations on how to avoid and overcome resistances.

Link: <https://www.festa-europa.eu/sites/festa-europa.eu/files/FESTA%20D7.1%20Handbook%20on%20Resistance%20to%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20Academia.pdf>



MOOC EQUALITY ACADEMY: COMMUNICATION INCLUSIVE ET RESPONSABLE

The Université Côte d'Azur (2021) shares with Equality Academy a free online training course for communicating without gender stereotypes; **open to French universities**. The approach proposed here by Alter Égaux is to give the possibility to the public to get out of sexist representations through awareness and training of future professionals. The training includes video courses, interviews with experts, quizzes, lectures and links to other resources. It presents

stereotypes, tools for a GI communication and also reflects on feminism-washing and gives advice to be more inclusive in a responsible way.

Link: <https://www.fun-mooc.fr/fr/cours/equality-academy-communication-inclusive-et-responsable/>

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