



**UniSAFE**  
ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Awareness-raising campaigns  
on gender-based violence:  
A step-by-step guide  
for universities**

UniSAFE Toolkit



# Awareness-raising campaigns on gender-based violence: A step-by-step guide for universities

## UniSAFE Toolkit

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This document is part of a toolkit developed under the UniSAFE Project “Gender-based violence and institutional responses: Building a knowledge base and operational tools to make universities and research organisations safe”

Find out more: <https://unisafe-gbv.eu>

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# Introduction

UniSAFE's survey results show that despite acknowledgement of gender-based violence as an institutional issue – 72% of respondents think that gender-based violence is a problem at their institution – only a small minority of people having experienced gender-based violence at their institution have reported it (13%). Among the reasons most often cited, respondents were unsure whether the behaviour was serious enough to report, did not recognise the behaviour as violence at the time, or did not think anything would happen if it was reported. There is a crucial need for universities and research organisations to raise awareness among students and staff about gender-based violence and to assert their commitment towards its eradication.

Awareness-raising campaigns are an essential element in the prevention of gender-based violence in research institutions and universities.

These campaigns aim to educate the academic and research community (staff, students, researchers, etc.) about this important issue, foster respect and equality, and create safe universities.

Apart from raising awareness, it is essential for organisations to show their commitment to combatting gender-based violence by providing information across different channels and ensuring accessibility to all members of the community, creating a culture of accountability and transparency where gender-based violence is not tolerated and survivors are supported.

Awareness-raising campaigns can take various forms, such as social media campaigns, workshops/seminars, events, internal radio/TV broadcasts, competitions, exhibitions, etc. to maximise visibility and accessibility, posters, leaflets, social media posts, videos, newsletters, and other internal communication tools can be used for campaign promotion.

This step-by-step guide aims to be a practical tool for representatives from universities and research organisations across Europe who would like to learn more about setting up awareness-raising campaigns and replicating the inspiring practices presented. It is meant for communication officers, gender equality/equality and diversity officers, or any staff interested.



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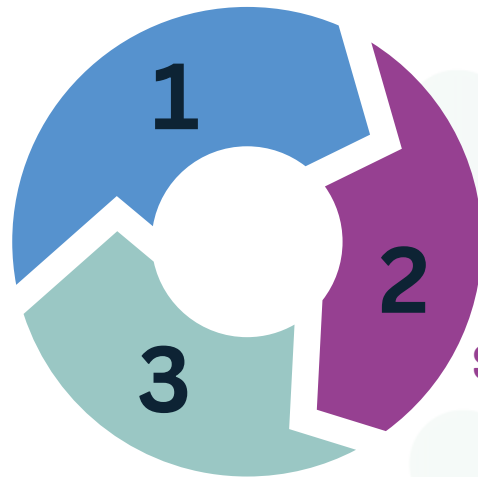


# **A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE**

**TO AWARENESS-RAISING  
CAMPAIGNS ON  
GENDER-BASED  
VIOLENCE**



## STEP 1: CREATE



## STEP 2: DESIGN

## STEP 3: EVALUATE



## STEP 1: CREATE

The first phase starts with the concept creation and ends with the full strategy and set of materials to launch a campaign on gender-based violence. During this phase, it is important to find allies and actors to help you define an effective campaign strategy and move on to the next stage.

### Define the objectives

What do you want to achieve with your campaign? Is it to raise awareness about gender-based violence? To educate people about the impacts of gender-based violence? To encourage people to report incidents? To challenge the current institutional culture? Establish clear objectives to guide your campaign. At this stage, you can define clear and achievable results and indicators (qualitative and quantitative). The campaign's objectives should be in line with the needs identified by frontline actors.

## Define the target audience

Universities typically have a diverse population of students, faculty, and staff. In line with your campaign objectives, identify the key groups you want to target with your campaigns, such as students, staff or specific departments.

## Determine the budget

Determine the budget for the campaign, including costs for materials, staff, and outreach efforts. Consider partnering with external organisations (e.g. NGOs, civil society organisations, etc.) or seeking funding from external sources (e.g. national funding to prevent gender-based violence, etc.).

## Set up a holistic working group/team

The team behind a campaign can vary depending on the scale and scope of the campaign. Communicating on gender-based violence is different from any other campaign as such a campaign can have implications at different levels (legal, HR, top management level, etc.)

**Internal actors:** Look within your institution for allies and relevant actors. However, typically, the following individuals or groups may be involved in the campaign: Equal opportunities officer(s), Communication officer(s), students, staff, advocacy groups (unions, student and staff representatives), designers, external consultants, civil society members, etc. It is important to have a diverse team with various skills and perspectives to ensure the campaign is effective and inclusive.

**External actors:** External actors could be requested or appointed by the leadership. The leadership is responsible for assigning internal bonuses or remuneration for consultants, external designers, etc. Hiring them would often require a procedure; they are also tasked differently from internal staff.

By working with external and internal actors, a campaign on gender-based violence can leverage a diverse range of resources, expertise, and networks to create a more effective result. This does not mean that a campaign cannot work only with internal or only with external actors.

## Develop a clear message

Based on your campaign objectives, develop clear and concise messaging that will resonate with your target audience. Make sure your messages are positive, respectful, inclusive and empowering. Use clear, concise language and avoid abbreviations. Make sure that your message is easy to understand and impactful. Develop trauma-informed messaging and be sensitive to the experiences of victims/survivors. For example, use language that centres on survivor empowerment rather than victimisation.

**Evidence-based campaigns** are powerful because the community recognises the problem, usually known but not spoken about or hidden. To check the effectiveness of the message, the organisation of **focus groups** is recommended. Focus groups can identify the needs of the target audience - whether it is a lack of recognition of gender-based violence, fear of reporting the incidents, tolerance to gender-based violence and victim-blaming or something else. The focus groups will provide a very clear message about what the problem at the institution is. Based on this collected evidence, the campaign would be organised in a more effective way. Collected evidence will be important to get approval for the campaign and cope with the resistance of specific groups. Focus groups can also work to test the messages of your campaign with representatives of your target audience.

## Find the appropriate channels

Various channels are available for disseminating messages, including social media, print media (such as posters and flyers), email, and events, among others. Choose the most likely channels to reach your target audience and create a comprehensive campaign plan. The help of the communication department of your organisation could be critical for this decision. If you decide to go for an offline campaign, place your material in strategic locations: Identify high-traffic areas where they will be seen by your target audience. This could include university libraries, sports clubs, cafeterias, common areas, student centres, etc.

## Design your material

Now's the time to create a visual concept and apply it to chosen materials: posters, flyers, banners, social media posts, etc.



Make sure they are eye-catching, and visually appealing, and convey your message clearly and effectively. Look for other campaigning material for inspiration to benchmark your campaign needs. Ensure your material provides access to support services and resources, such as counselling, legal assistance, or medical care. These could be contact details for support services for victims/survivors of gender-based violence e.g. a phone number, e-mail address, or website link.

As the design of your material is important, you may include consultation or cooperation with knowledgeable people inside your institution or external professionals to make your campaign visually powerful and effective. Partnering with the communication or design department of your organisation is recommended.

## Getting approval

In most of cases, approval for the campaign is needed either before or during different stages of the creation process. It is important to identify the relevant stakeholders and obtain approval in a timely manner to ensure that the campaign can move forward as planned. It may be helpful to develop a comprehensive proposal that outlines the goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes of the campaign to share with stakeholders and gain approval. These stakeholders could be administrative bodies, human resources, communication/public relations departments, etc.

## Duration and timeframe

The timeframe for creating and launching a campaign depends on several factors, especially the campaign size. A few factors to consider calculating the timeframe of your campaign are: regular meetings with the working group team, time for the design of the material, time for approval by the communication team or any other decision-making body at your institution, intensive periods at your institutions such as exams period or breaks such as spring break, etc. Create a detailed timeline that outlines the specific activities, events, and milestones of the campaign. This may include the launch date, outreach events, etc.

Remember! The timeframe and timeline of the campaign may need to be adjusted based on the changing needs and circumstances of the campaign. It is important to be flexible and adapt to any unexpected challenges or opportunities that arise. The launch of the campaign could be a strategic moment for the institution or any external factor or event (e.g. #metoo movement, an International Day etc.).

Determine the start and end dates of the campaign taking into account important aspects such as intensive periods for staff and students, breaks, important dates and national days, etc.

## Think about the impact

A system to track and evaluate the campaign should be in place from the launch onwards using qualitative and quantitative indicators. Before launching the campaign, the working group should think about the impact of the campaign and its measurement.

## Think intersectionally

- **Ensure accessibility** / Ensure that all campaign materials and events are accessible to people with disabilities, including those with mobility, hearing, and visual impairments. Ensure that all campaign materials are available in multiple languages, particularly for non-native speakers of the dominant language on at your institution. Consider partnering with language departments or student organisations to provide translations and language support.
- **Cultural sensitivity** / Recognise that cultural differences may impact how people experience and respond to gender-based violence, having an understanding of different cultural norms, values and practices. Ensure that messaging and outreach are culturally sensitive and inclusive of diverse perspectives and experiences. Considering cultural differences in your communication in order to avoid causing offence or misunderstanding.

In all circumstances, it is crucial to maintain a victim-centred approach as the focal point.

## Other tips

- Emphasise the confidentiality of any reporting of incidents. Depending on the focus of the campaign, this may be a crucial item and should be addressed with the highest priority.
- Ensure psychological support to victims/survivors and bystanders.
- Think about the tone of voice they want to use (slang language, humour, serious tone, etc.)



## STEP 2: LAUNCH

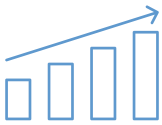
Launch your campaign using the channels and materials you have developed in your set timeframe.

### Launch your campaign

Initiate your campaign by utilising communication channels and materials. Make sure you have a clear plan for tracking and measuring your campaign's effectiveness.

Consider the following launching activities:

- **Press release:** Issue a press release to local and national media to announce the launch of the campaign, including information on the goals and objectives of the campaign, key activities and events, and how members of the university community can get involved. You may also add a general call to action for other universities. This is an opportunity for your institution to promote its activities in tackling gender-based violence in the overall context of the campaign.
- **Word of mouth/influencers:** Identify key influencers and actors from different groups e.g. reach out to student organisations, academic departments, influencers on social media, and other groups to encourage their participation and support.
- **Event:** Organise a launch event to generate awareness about the campaign with guest speakers, testimonials, performances, and other activities to engage the audience.



## STEP 3: EVALUATE

### Evaluate the campaign

Begin tracking and evaluating the campaign's impact from the launch onward using qualitative and quantitative indicators. This can include tracking engagement metrics, measuring increases in awareness and knowledge, and evaluating changes in behaviour related to gender-based violence. The team could distinguish between the immediate operational evaluation of the campaign and its longer-term impacts.

Ensure there is a consistent way to provide feedback. Generate an evaluation report and communicate it with key stakeholders and decision-makers. The results of the campaign could be considered to be published in the media to raise awareness in the wider community, ensuring confidentiality.

### Sustain your efforts

Plan for sustainability beyond the campaign duration. Consider how the campaign can be incorporated into ongoing initiatives or consider embedding it into the Gender Equality Plan and policies of your university to maintain its impact.

#### Something to remember

Gender-based violence is a complex issue; your campaign is just one step towards addressing it. Ensure you follow up with your target audience by providing them with resources and support and continuing the conversation about gender-based violence at your university.



**INSPIRING**

**PRACTICES**

**2**

# Inspiring practice #1

## “Poster campaign to raise awareness about sexual harassment” | University of Namur, BE



### STEP 1: CREATE

#### Objectives

- Communicate about the existence and the means to contact PHARE (Protection against Harassment), a service dedicated to students.
- Raise awareness and mobilise/sensitise students to speak up and learn more about harassment and the PHARE service.



#### Target audience

The main target audience is students and, secondarily, the staff members.



#### Budget

The estimated budget was for poster printing. Hours for the staff involved were calculated under their usual responsibilities, and the students were involved as volunteers.



#### Getting approval

Approval and validation were needed from the communication department.



#### Working group/team

Staff members from the Office in charge of supporting students, 5-6 volunteer students from different faculties, including the design department. The communication department was involved at a later stage to validate the results of the creation of the poster campaign.



## Channels

Physically at the university's premises: faculties, the entrances, the university's restaurant, the library, etc. The posters were also hanging on a stand outside the location of the International Women's Day event and were highlighted in different activity points during the harassment prevention week. The campaign is suggested to run electronically via online channels such as social media, the intranet, etc.



## Duration

4 working group meetings took place from September to December 2021 to design the campaign. The total duration of the campaign was from February to April 2022 (3 months).



## Design of the material

The working group had 4 meetings to co-create the posters.

- **1st: get to know each other and, construct the framework; the objectives of the campaign; and define the word "harassment".**

After defining the different forms of violence and harassment, the students decided which topics better reflected the objectives of the campaign. After this first meeting, it was decided to focus on sexual harassment and violence.

- **2nd: to benchmark and brainstorm**

A set of existing posters and campaigns material were identified and presented. The group went through the different campaigns together, explaining what they liked and what they didn't in order to come to an agreement. They looked at different images, colours, and messages. One of the key elements of their idea was the decision not to make the victims/survivors feel like victims but to replace the message with a feeling of support. About the colours, they decided not to use very harsh colours; they expressed their emotions about certain emojis and in the end, they had a whiteboard full of ideas. They rejected the use of humour that they felt was totally inappropriate.

- 3rd: specific ideas

The idea of the mobile phone conversation was brought up. Colours were discussed more specifically. The orange colour was used for a witness/bystander, and then they had to decide between green or blue for the victim/survivor. Background images portrait places generally considered insecure by students (e.g., along the river).

- 4th: finalisation



## Message

The final messages were formed by the students in the working group. They tried to de-identify the gender of the recipient and sender of each message and yet make it seem like a normal conversation, so everyone could feel represented. Slang language was used.





The posters focus on the PHARE service, which is provided 24h/7days through the internet and during office hours in-person. Using this service, a response will be given within 42 hours. When someone is scanning the QR code, immediate helplines are referenced via the PHARE website (see the translation from French to English in Annex).

## Resistances

Miscommunication between the working group and the communication department regarding the responsibilities resulted in a short delay (one month). The campaign was not sent electronically because of the delay.

## Things to consider

- Exams period: December is a packed month to launch any campaign.
- PHARE service is embedded in the GEP as for UNamur there are three pillars to combat harassment, one of which is raising awareness. Therefore, the campaign was part of the institutional awareness-raising activities.
- Highlight the importance of bringing confidentiality to the access to services.

## Think intersectionally

Intersectional aspects were not taken into account, although inclusive language was used. In a replication of the campaign, it is suggested to consider that materials are accessible to people with disabilities, including those with mobility, hearing, and visual impairments; translation of the text message is also suggested in case the university has an international community.



## STEP 2: LAUNCH

### How the campaign was launched

The initial idea was to roll out the campaign in two waves: one electronically while students were not on the campus (exams period) and then physically on the campus when they were back. Due to a lack of approval from the main communication department of the University, the campaign was rolled out in February 2022 only physically and not electronically.

It was emphasised during the International Women's Day and the prevention week from 25 to 29 April 2022, while feedback from students suggested reducing the duration of the prevention week to a couple of days as this is an intensive week in terms of other activities. The posters were hung at different activity points to be accessible to all.



## STEP 3: EVALUATE

### Evaluate the campaign

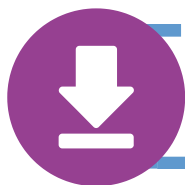
Any feedback came by word of mouth. As the working groups did not define any specific metrics, these were discussed after the end of the campaign. The metrics that are being considered are:

- Number of requests to the PHARE service after the campaign: these will be compared with the numbers before the campaign to see any differences.
- Number of openings of the QR codes.

Apart from the abovementioned numbers, positive feedback was communicated via word of mouth, especially during the International Women's Day event. People were really curious to read the posters as they contained text messages, and there is a tendency to be curious about private conversations.

### Sustain your efforts

The campaign is embedded into the GEP actions for awareness raising.



[Replicate this campaign and adapt it to your institutional context: Use the ready-to-be-adapted material](#)

### Contact person

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# Inspiring practice #2

## “ASK FOR ANGELA”

### Leeds Beckett University, UK

The Ask for Angela campaign is a safety initiative that was originally launched in the UK in 2016, and has since been adopted in various locations around the world. The campaign encourages individuals to discreetly ask bar or restaurant staff for "Angela" if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable on a date or in a social situation. "Ask for Angela" has been implemented in several university campuses and other public spaces to help prevent and respond to incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The programme provides a discrete way for individuals who feel unsafe or uncomfortable to ask for help from staff members without drawing attention to themselves or escalating the situation.

Some unique elements of the campaign are:

- Simple messaging that is easy to understand and remember. The message "Ask for Angela" is easy to remember and can be communicated quickly and discreetly.
- The partnerships with venues inside and outside the university, such as bars, restaurants, and other venues.
- Provision of training to staff members on how to recognise and respond to requests for help. This collaborative approach ensures that staff members are equipped to provide appropriate support and assistance.
- The campaign emphasises that anyone can ask for Angela, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, which gives an intersectional and inclusive element.
- It provides a range of materials in multiple formats, including posters, coasters, and social media graphics.

When a victim/survivor "Asks for Angela" a trained staff member or volunteer usually responds. They will discreetly assist the person who requested assistance by either providing them with a safe space to wait until help arrives or by arranging for them to be escorted out of the premises without drawing attention to themselves.

Depending on the specific circumstances, the staff member or volunteer may also provide further support or connect the person with relevant resources such as counselling services or local support organisations. It is important to note that the exact response can vary depending on the specific policies and procedures of the institution implementing the "Ask for Angela" programme.

Some more examples of support received using the "Ask for Angela" could include:

- The staff member or volunteer might ask the person if they feel safe, if they need any medical attention, or if they would like to make a report of the incident.
- In some cases, the staff member or volunteer might alert security to the situation and request their assistance in providing a safe exit for the person.
- If the person is a student, the staff member or volunteer might connect them with the university's counselling or support services for further assistance.
- The staff member or volunteer might also offer to accompany the person to their transportation, move them to a safe location, or make arrangements for them to be picked up by a trusted friend or family member.



There are several examples in different contexts and universities e.g. the University of Glasgow implements this inspiring practice to allow students to enjoy the university's sports club (more information [available here](#)), while the Leeds Beckett University has a few concrete posters [here](#), and examples of campaign material are also [here](#).

# Inspiring practice #3

## “DON'T TURN A BLIND EYE” #UNIUNIE CONTRE LE HARCÈLEMENT University of Geneva, CH

The campaign “Don’t turn a blind eye” aims to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all members of the community, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics. By engaging and educating a wide range of audiences, the campaign seeks to promote a culture of respect and equality throughout the university and to encourage individuals to take action to promote gender equality and diversity. The guide aims to help community members identify sexual and gender-based harassment within the university and ensure it is a respectful and safe place for research. The guide is also informational, with specific indications of secure numbers and e-mail addresses for reporting. It fosters a culture of accountability and support by providing resources for bystander intervention and reporting and ensuring that any reports of gender-based violence are taken seriously and handled appropriately.

Some unique elements of the campaign are:

- The tone of language and voice; humorous-sarcastic style stating the seriousness of zero tolerance against gender-based violence/sexism.
- The inclusion of a variety of activities and events, such as workshops, seminars, film screenings, and panel discussions with a wide range of topics related to gender equality and diversity, such as unconscious bias, gender-based violence, LGBTQ+ rights, and disability rights.
- The involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the campaign, including students, faculty, staff, and community partners.
- The emphasis on accountability and action, through the development of a gender equality and diversity charter and the provision of resources for reporting and addressing instances of discrimination or harassment.

- The inclusion of a comprehensive communication strategy, with a variety of channels used to reach different audiences. These channels include social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), posters, videos, and newsletters.
- The campaign features a colourful and playful design style that is intended to be visually engaging and memorable. The campaign's visual identity also incorporates a range of bright colours, bold typography, and eye-catching graphics. This design style is used across a range of communication channels, including posters, social media, and videos, to create a cohesive and recognisable brand for the campaign. By using visual elements that are both fun and informative, the campaign seeks to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages dialogue and action around important topics.

The campaign was launched in 2017 and is ongoing, with a variety of activities and events taking place throughout the academic year. Learn more [here](#).



More information about the campaign is available [here](#).



### Contact person

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# **TIPS & HINTS**

**DOs & DON'Ts**

**3**



- 1** Always add emergency call numbers to any awareness-raising campaign.
- 2** Ensure confidentiality when reporting an incident or using the websites and resources of the campaign. Provide opportunities for the community to engage, such as signing pledges to take action, participating in training, and volunteering in more activities.
- 3** Empower victims, survivors and bystanders by giving them a platform to share their stories, either anonymously or publicly, and creating a supportive environment for them to do so.
- 4** Ensure that the campaign messages you convey are aligned with the university's policies and procedures related to gender-based violence and that any messaging or activities are in line with legal and ethical guidelines.
- 5** Ensure that any statistics or information used in messaging are accurate and up to date.
- 6** Use storytelling, participatory and creative approaches, such as multimedia content or art installations, to engage and connect with audiences in a meaningful way.
- 7** Use engaging visual design that is eye-catching and memorable and helps the campaign to be more accessible and engaging to a wider audience.
- 8** A collaborative approach which involves a variety of stakeholders (students, staff, faculty, etc.) helps to create a sense of shared ownership and commitment to its objectives and overall goals.

# Annex

## TRANSLATIONS

### Poster 1

FRENCH	ENGLISH
Stop Aux Concours De Performance	Stop Performance Competitions
J'ai chopé la fille en pull jaune hier!	I scored with the girl in the yellow jumper yesterday!
Mec c'est chaud elle avait trop bu, ca se voyait !	Dude that's dodgy she had too much to drink, you cud tell!
En quoi c'est un problème?	How is that a problem?
le consentement ça te dit qqc... T'es sûr qu'elle était D'ACCORD?!	Does consent mean anything to u... Are you sure she was OK ABOUT IT?

### Poster 2

FRENCH	ENGLISH
Ton soutien est important!	Your support is important!
Les mecs y a une fille quise fait emmerder pres du bar et je sais pas comment reagir!	Guys, there's a girl who's being bothered near the bar and I don't know how to react!
T'es serieux? Attends on arrive! En attendant fais comme si tu la connaissais	Are you serious? Wait, we're coming! In the meantime, pretend you know her
Genre appelle-la de loin comme ci c'etait ta pote...	Like call her from afar like she's your friend...
Ok on se rejoint au bar.	Okay, I'll meet you at the bar.

### Poster 3

FRENCH	ENGLISH
Ton soutien est important!	Your support is important!
Comment ça va depuis hier...?	How are you doing since yesterday...?
C'est pas la forme Je me sens sale, ça tourne en boucle dans ma tête...	I don't feel well I feel dirty, it's all going round and round in my head...
Tu veux que je t'accompagne a ton rvd PHARE?	Do you want me to go with you to your PHARE appointment?
Oh oui ce serait cool, merci <3	Oh yeah that would be fab, thanks <3

### Poster 4

FRENCH	ENGLISH
On te croit	We believe you
Il m'est arrivé un sale truc hier	Something bad happened to me yesterday
Oh merde quoi?	Oh shit what?
Un mec s'est frotté à moi à la soirée J'ai l'impression que ça a duré une plombe. En plus il y avait du monde autour. J'aurais dû crier Pour attirer l'attention.	A guy rubbed himself against me at the party I'm not sure how long it lasted. And there were tons of people around. I should have shouted To attract attention.
Oh 'suis désolé pour toi ! Mais ce n'est PAS de ta FAUTE! Ne culpabilise pas	Oh I'm sorry for you! But it's NOT your FAULT! Don't feel guilty

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- Juliette Labarthe, Director of the Equality and Diversity Office at the University of Geneva
- Coline Leclerq, Contact Person for Gender Equality at the University of Namur
- Brigitte Mantilleri, former Equality and Diversity officer, Consultant on Gender Equality for the University of Geneva
- Andreia Inacio Ribeiro, Communication and Marketing Officer at the University of Namur

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