



U
N
D
P

*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

EN-GENDERING COMMUNICATIONS



www.tr.undp.org

Gender Sensitive
Communications Guide



U N
D P

*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

www.tr.undp.org



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

contents

Page	
4	Why Gender Sensitive Communication*?
4	The generic use of “man” and “he”*
6	Strategies for Reducing Negative Effects
7	United Nations Official Instructions
8	Be sensitive While using visual material
8	Ensure gender sensitive language and Challenge gender stereotype
18	Analyze following aspects of communication
18	For external communication Ensure gender sensitive language within
19	For Internal communication, Ensure gender sensitive language within
19	Inter personal communications: Solidarity between us...
21	References

WHY GENDER SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION ¹?

Language shapes our interpretation of the world. It defines how we think and behave. The word we choose while we communicate reflects our assumptions about the outer world including gender relations.

The meanings of reality are not given but they are constructed through language. There are meanings that are dominant, but also alternative meanings that question those dominant meanings.

Gender stereotypes limit and trivialize both females and males, presenting an inaccurate view of the world and its possibilities. Such misrepresentations constrain communication.

Gender sensitive language is against unconscious assumptions about gender stereotypes in daily language. Biased (gendered) language dominates the workplace and everyday life.

THE GENERIC USE OF "MAN" AND "HE"

The generic use of 'man' and 'he' (and 'his', 'him', 'himself') is commonly considered gender-neutral. The case against the generic use of these terms does not rest on rare instances in which they refer ambiguously to 'male' or 'human being'.

¹ See Gender Mainstreaming Crash Course presentation at Gender Mainstreaming Workshop by Barbora Galvnkova, 22-23 September 2015, UN House, Ankara, Turkey; Gender Sensitive Language in Communication Workshop presentation by Prof.Dr.Çiler Dursun, Ankara University Faculty of Communication, 9 June 2016, UN House, Ankara, Turkey;
<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang>; Guide to Gender Sensitive Use of Language, Kadir Has Üniversitesi, yayınları,<http://www.khas.edu.tr/w243/files/news/Gender%20Sensitive%20Writing%20Guide.pdf>

Rather, every occurrence of their generic use is problematic. Using the generic 'he' and 'man' is problematic because it often leads us to omit the distinctive elements of female experience and behavior. ²

Moulton claims that regardless of the author's intention the generic 'man' is not interpreted gender neutrally. Casey Miller and Kate Swift (1976) cite a study in which college students chose pictures to illustrate chapters of a sociology textbook. Those with chapters entitled "Society," "Industrial Life," and "Political Behavior" tended to select pictures of both females and males. However, when the same chapters were named "Social Man," "Industrial Man," and "Political Man," students of both sexes tended to select pictures of males only. "This is rather convincing evidence that when you use the word man generically, people do tend to think male, and tend not to think female" (Miller and Swift, 1976, p. 21)³.

² <http://www.apaonlinecs.w.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language>

³ Miller, Casey, and Swift, Kate. (1976) *Words and Women*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday

STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Avoid exclusionary forms such as “Dear mothers, please bake cookies for our class party.” Choose inclusionary alternatives “Dear families, please bake cookies for our class party”

Do not represent certain jobs or roles as only appropriate for, or held by women or men, i.e., farmers are men and elementary teachers are women. This leads to gender-based assumptions. When referring to a job or role, use a gender- specific pronoun only if the gender of the person is known.

Avoid using titles to name people and occupations often reflect inequitable assumptions about males and females. Gender-fair language promotes more inclusive and equitable representations of both females and males, opening possibilities rather than restricting choices.

Identify men and women in the same way. Diminutive or special forms to name women are usually unnecessary. In most cases, generic terms such as doctor, judge, or actor include both genders. Only occasionally are alternate forms needed, and in these cases, the alternate form replaces both the masculine and the feminine titles.

Seek alternatives to the phrases that omits, patronizes, or trivializes women, as well as to the ones that reinforces stereotyped images of both women and men.

Treat women and men in a parallel manner.

Use courtesy titles that promote gender equity. Courtesy titles that label a woman in regard to her relationship to a man (her marital status) or forms of address that depict a woman as the

⁴ Based on <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang>

mere appendage of her husband trivialize women or render them invisible.

UNITED NATIONS OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS ⁵

United Nations Secretariat Administrative instruction: ST/IC/1992/67 of 29 October 1992

Bias-free language is important because language reflects the attitudes of the user.

Expressions or words that suggest superiority of one gender over the other should be avoided.

Editorial directive: ST/CS/SER.A/41 of 14 August 1998

To: All those concerned with drafting and editing United Nations documents

Subject: Use of gender-sensitive language

- Pay maximum attention to the need to use gender-sensitive language when writing in their official capacity.
- Avoid sex-specific and potentially discriminatory expressions.

⁵ *Gender-sensitive language Summary of the awareness-raising session (ESCWA-December 2013) available here:*

https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:VPdqmMm3Y4IJ:https://unswap.unwomen.org/UNEntity/ViewDocument%3FFileName%3DAnnex16_23201435437.pdf+&cd=1&hl=tr&ct=clnk&q=tr

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang>

BE SENSITIVE WHILE USING VISUAL MATERIAL

Put people in the center. Choose visuals which represents both women and men equally.

Avoid visuals that victimizes the survivor or disadvantaged people.

Avoid visuals reproducing gender stereotypes.

Use visuals referring equalitarian gender roles.

ENSURE GENDER SENSITIVE LANGUAGE AND CHALLENGE GENDER STEREOTYPES

PROMOTE GENDER EQUITY THROUGH TITLES AND OCCUPATIONAL REFERENCES	
Biased	Bias-Free
salesman, saleswoman	sales representative, sales person
career woman	professional, executive, business person
steward, stewardess	flight attendant
waitress	waiter, server
male nurse	nurse

congressman	member of congress
Spokesman	spokesperson, representative, (when talking about a specific person: Mr.)
alumni	graduates
chairman, chairwoman	chair, chairperson
committee man, committee woman	committee member
corporate wife	corporate spouse
faculty wife	faculty spouse
freshman	first-year student
front man	front, figurehead
hostess	host
housewife, househusband	homemaker
middleman	go-between
man and wife	husband and wife

self-made man	self-made person, entrepreneur
businessman	business executive, entrepreneur
cleaning lady	cleaner
delivery boy	courier, messenger
foreman	supervisor
girl Friday	clerk, office assistant, receptionist
insurance man	insurance agent
landlady, landlord	proprietor, building manager
mailman	mail carrier, letter carrier
newsman	journalist, reporter
policeman	police officer
repairman	repairer, technician
serviceman	service representative
workman	worker
Miss, Mrs.	Ms. (unless the woman herself prefers the courtesy title Mrs. or Miss).

Mr. and Mrs. John Smith	Mr. and Mrs. Smith or Jane and John Smith or Mrs. Jane and Mr. John Smith
Mrs. Michael Austen	Ms. Patricia Austen

AVOID USING EXCLUSIONARY TERMS	
Biased	Bias-Free
man	Person, individual, human being
mankind	Humanity, human beings, people, men and women
chairman	Chairperson, chair, president (in certain cases)
the average man	the average person/individual, people in general
manpower	workforce; human power, labor force, workers
to man (verb) a project	to staff a project, to hire personnel for the project, to run/operate a project
man-made	of human origin, human-induced, (opposite to natural: artificial, synthetic)
cameraman	camera operator, for plural: camera crew
policeman	police officer, (when talking about a specific person: John is a policeman; Mary is a policewoman)

founding fathers	founders
manhood	adulthood (when referring to people in general and not to males)
gentleman's agreement	honorable agreemen, unwritten agreement
landlord, landlady	owner; proprietor

Biased	Bias-Free
brotherhood	kinship, community solidarity, human fellowship, human kinship
common man	common person, average person
countryman	compatriot
motherland, fatherland	native land
fellowmen	human
forefathers	ancestors, forebears
fraternal	warm, intimate
Frenchmen	the French
man, mankind	humankind, humanity, humans

mother tongue	native language
rise of man	rise of civilization
thinking man	thinking person, thinker, intellectual
working man, working woman	Worker, wage earner, laborer

AVOID REPRODUCING STEREOTYPES	
Biased	Bias-Free
kingmaker	power behind the throne
lady	woman
ladylike	courteous, cultured
like a man	resolutely, bravely
maiden name	birth name
maiden voyage	first voyage
man (verb)	staff, run
man enough	strong enough
manhood	adulthood

manly	strong, mature
manpower	human resources
master (noun)	owner, expert, chief, superior
master (verb)	learn, succeed at, overcome
master (adj.)	expert, gifted, accomplished
master of ceremonies	host, emcee, moderator, convenor
masterful	skilled, authoritative, commanding
mastermind (noun)	genius, creator, instigator
mastermind (verb)	oversee, launch, originate
masterpiece	work of genius, chef d'oeuvre
masterplan	comprehensive plan, vision
masterstroke	trump card, stroke of genius
man made	artificial, synthetic, machine-made
man of action	dynamo
man of letters	scholar, writer, literary figure

USE GENDER RESPONSIVE TURNS OF PHRASE	
Biased	Bias-Free
all men are created equal	we are all created equal
be his own boss	be one's own person
best man for the job	best person for the job
boys will be boys	kids will be kids
everybody and his brother	everybody and their cousins
every man for himself	everyone for themselves
a man's home is his castle	your home is your castle
John Q. Public	the average citizen
every schoolboy knows	every school child knows
gentleman's agreement	honorable/informal agreement
no-man's-land	limbo, unclaimed territory
to a man	to a person, without exception

EXAMPLES AND PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES	
Biased	Bias-Free
(Manager talking to the director): I'll have my girl do that job.	I'll ask my assistant (or secretary) to do that job.
Social good summit attendees and their wives are invited	Social good summit attendees and their partners are invited
John and Mary both have full time jobs; he helps with the housework.	John and Mary both have full time jobs; they share the housework.
Research scientists often neglect their wives and children.	Research scientists often neglect their families.
The average construction worker is experiencing impacts on his health by the age of 35.	Generally, construction workers are experiencing impacts on their health by the age of 35.
The Convention participants and their wives are invited.	The Convention participants and their spouses/guests are invited.
John and Mary both have full-time jobs; he helps her with the housework.	John and Mary both have full-time jobs; they share the housework.
Transport will be provided for delegates and their wives.	Transport will be provided for delegates and their spouses or Transport will be provided for delegates and persons accompanying them.

All the ladies on the committee supported the proposed amendment.	All the women on the committee supported the proposed amendment.
A political leader must work 12 hours a day and seven days a week. This places a heavy burden on him. He must cope with this or lose popularity.	A political leader must work 12 hours a day and seven days a week. This places a heavy burden on her/him. S/he must cope with this or lose popularity (the plural and s/he can also be used).
Maria is a career woman.	Maria is a professional. Maria is an engineer.
A nurse knows that every day she will touch a life or a life will touch hers.	A nurse knows that every day she/he will touch a life or a life will touch hers/his.
Pam had lunch with the girls at the office.	Pam had lunch with the women at the office.
Research scientists often neglect their wives and children.	Research scientists often neglect their families.
You can always read a doctor's bill but you can never read his prescription.	You can always read a doctor's bill but you can never read her/his prescription.

ANALYZE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION⁶

Review and analyze the different information media that are used within internal and external communications. Those would reflect the office's vision, positioning and actions for gender equality.

- ✓ Language used
- ✓ Images used
- ✓ Type of messages being conveyed
- ✓ Target of message
- ✓ Presence of gender issues, and whether they are marginal or prominent
- ✓ Evidence of the office's vision and positioning of gender in the country

FOR EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION ENSURE GENDER SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

- ✓ Website (Headquarters and the office)
- ✓ Specific gender Website (Headquarters and the office)
- ✓ Speeches by the senior management
- ✓ Presence of gender issues in local media appearances
- ✓ Choice of women, men or both as official spokespersons for the organization
- ✓ Choice of women, men or both as moderators at organization events
- ✓ Language of the general publications by the office
- ✓ Specific gender-related publications, television documentaries, radio spots, etc.)
- ✓ Marketing, advertising, press releases and promotional materials generated by the organization

⁶ "How to Prepare a Gender Strategy for a Country Office" guideline.

⁷ *ibid*

FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION, ENSURE GENDER SENSITIVE LANGUAGE WITHIN ⁸

- ✓ Letters and other correspondence: how women and men are addressed (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., Dr.)
- ✓ Communications from the management to the staff and among staff
- ✓ Presentations and communications at staff meetings
- ✓ Materials used for internal communication (UNDP bulletins, leaflets and so on, from Headquarters and from the country office)
- ✓ Posters and slogans decorating the office
- ✓ Language and communication manual in the office
- ✓ Choice of women, men or both to facilitate events or lead office meetings

INTER PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS: SOLIDARITY BETWEEN US ⁹

Relationship among us should be more **humane**; based on **cooperation, respect, honesty and recognition**. Changing our communications culture starts from practicing active listening and empathy.

Don't(s)	Do(s)
Disrespect	Respect
Competition	Honesty
Isolation	Recognition
Power-seeking	Exchange
Individualism	Corporation and teamwork
Elbows in the ribs	Communication
Mistrust	Trust

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*

DEBATE VERSUS DIALOGUE ¹⁰	
Debate	Dialogue
Assuming that there is a right answer and you know it	Assuming that many people have pieces of answers
Combative: participants attempt to prove the other side wrong	Collaborative: participant work together toward common understanding
About winning	About exploring common ground
Listening to flaws and make counter arguments	Listening to understand, find meaning and agreement
Defending our own assumptions truth	Admitting that others' thinking can improve one's own
Searching for flaws and weaknesses in others' positions	Searching for strengths and value in others' positions
By creating a winner and a loser, discouraging further discussion	Keeping the topic even after the discussion formally end
Seeking a Conclusion or vote that ratifies your position	Discovering new options, not seeking closure

¹⁰ Source: Gerzon, Mark (2006) *Learning through Conflict: How successful Leaders Transform differences into opportunities*

REFERENCES

Gender Mainstreaming Crash Course presentation at Gender Mainstreaming Workshop by Barbora Galvankova, 22-23 September 2015, UN House, Ankara, Turkey.

Gender Sensitive Language in Communication Workshop presentation by Prof. Dr. Çiler Dursun, Ankara University Faculty Of Communication, 9 June 2016, UN House, Ankara, Turkey.

Guide to Gender Sensitive Use of Language, Kadir Has Üniversitesi Yayınları,
<http://www.khas.edu.tr/w243/files/news/Gender%20Sensitive%20Writing%20Guide.pdf>

How to Prepare a Gender Strategy for a Country Office guideline. Available here:
https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bpps/gender/genderseal/_layouts/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/unit/bpps/gender/genderseal/Gender%20Seal%20Documents/How%20to%20prepare%20a%20Gender%20Strategy%20for%20a%20Country%20Office.pdf&action=default&Sou

<http://www.apaonlinecsw.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language>

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang>

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang>

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang>

Gender-Sensitive Language; e Summary of the awareness-raising session (ESCWA-December 2013) available here:

https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:VPdgmMm3Y4IJ:https://unswap.unwomen.org/UNEntity/ViewDocument%3FFilename%3DAnnex16__23201435437.pdf+&cd=1&hl=tr&ct=clnk&gl=tr

Learning Through Conflict. How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities Gerzon, Mark, (2006)

Words and Women. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday. Miller, Casey, and Swift, Kate. (1976)



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.







U N
D P

*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



www.tr.undp.org