

# Step by step towards equality

a guide for youth  
organizations



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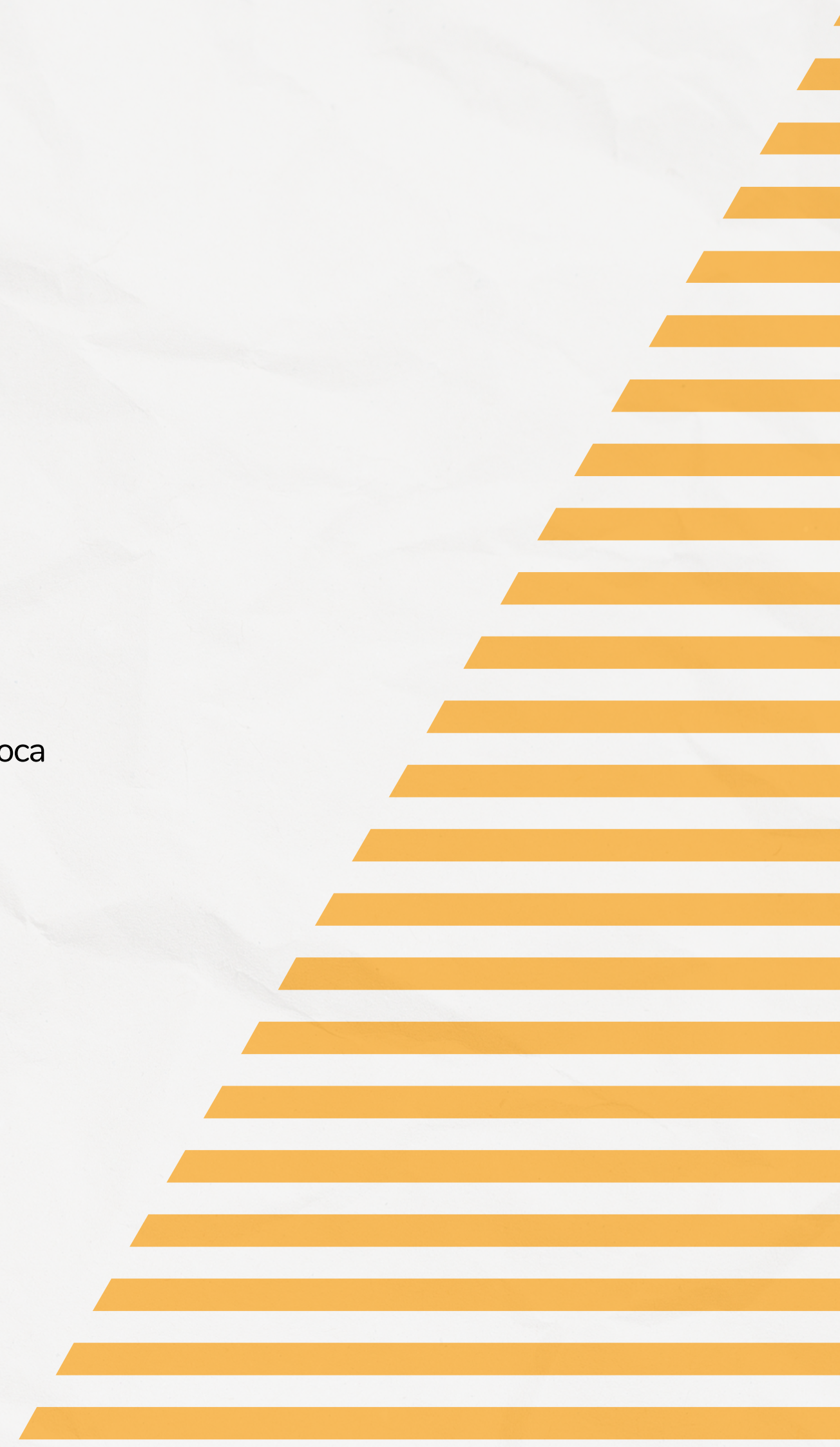
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# About this guide...

This guide was created having in mind youth organizations and is intended to be a **useful tool for all those who want to become more egalitarian, inclusive and active in promoting equality.**

It targets **youth organizations** because they are influential spaces in the shaping of young people: they can contribute to the reproduction of inequalities or, on the contrary, as we wish, they can play a decisive role in the transformation of unfair realities and in the eradication of gender discrimination.

Similar to what happens in other civil society organizations, there is a residual number of youth organizations that take up the cause of gender equality as their own. We are often faced with little knowledge on the subject and even with a devaluation of the cause, seen as outdated or relevant only in other geographies.

We disagree with this perspective and the numbers of inequalities do not support it. There is still a way to go towards equality, a way that we know is long, difficult, and unpredictable. We believe that youth organizations can accelerate progress!

This publication was elaborated within the framework of **OBLIO – One Bridge for Lifelong Inclusive Organizations** – an international project, promoted by Centrul de Voluntariat Cluj-Napoca (Romania), in partnership with Graal (Portugal) and Cazalla Intercultural (Spain), financed by the Erasmus+ Programme.

## What can you find in this publication?

This publication focuses, above all, on **inequalities between women and men and on the eradication of sexism**, a phenomenon that cuts across all societies and that affects, above all, women. This does not mean the absence of recognition or the devaluation of the multiple discriminations that exist in society and youth organizations: depending on sexual orientation, gender identity, social class, ethnicity, nationality, etc.

In the first part of this publication, we present some facts and data that reflect the inequalities that persist in our society, including youth organizations, and we offer some explanations about the root of these inequalities. In the following sections, of a more practical nature, we propose a path of self-analysis and transformation for organizations that want to become more egalitarian. It is a step-by-step guide.

### We challenge organizations to take the following steps:

\\ do a **self-diagnosis** regarding gender equality, based on a set of questions;

\\ identify a set of **actions and measures** that contribute to youth organizations becoming capable of reducing or eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between women and men/girls and boys;

\\ explore concrete examples of **practices** of youth organizations, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish, that we consider inspiring and promising towards the construction of equality;

\\ develop your own **action plan** for equality;

\\ **implement** the action plan, ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation.

This publication also includes a glossary that explains fundamental terms and concepts in the context of gender equality. We have tried, whenever possible, to share the definitions proposed by international and European institutions.



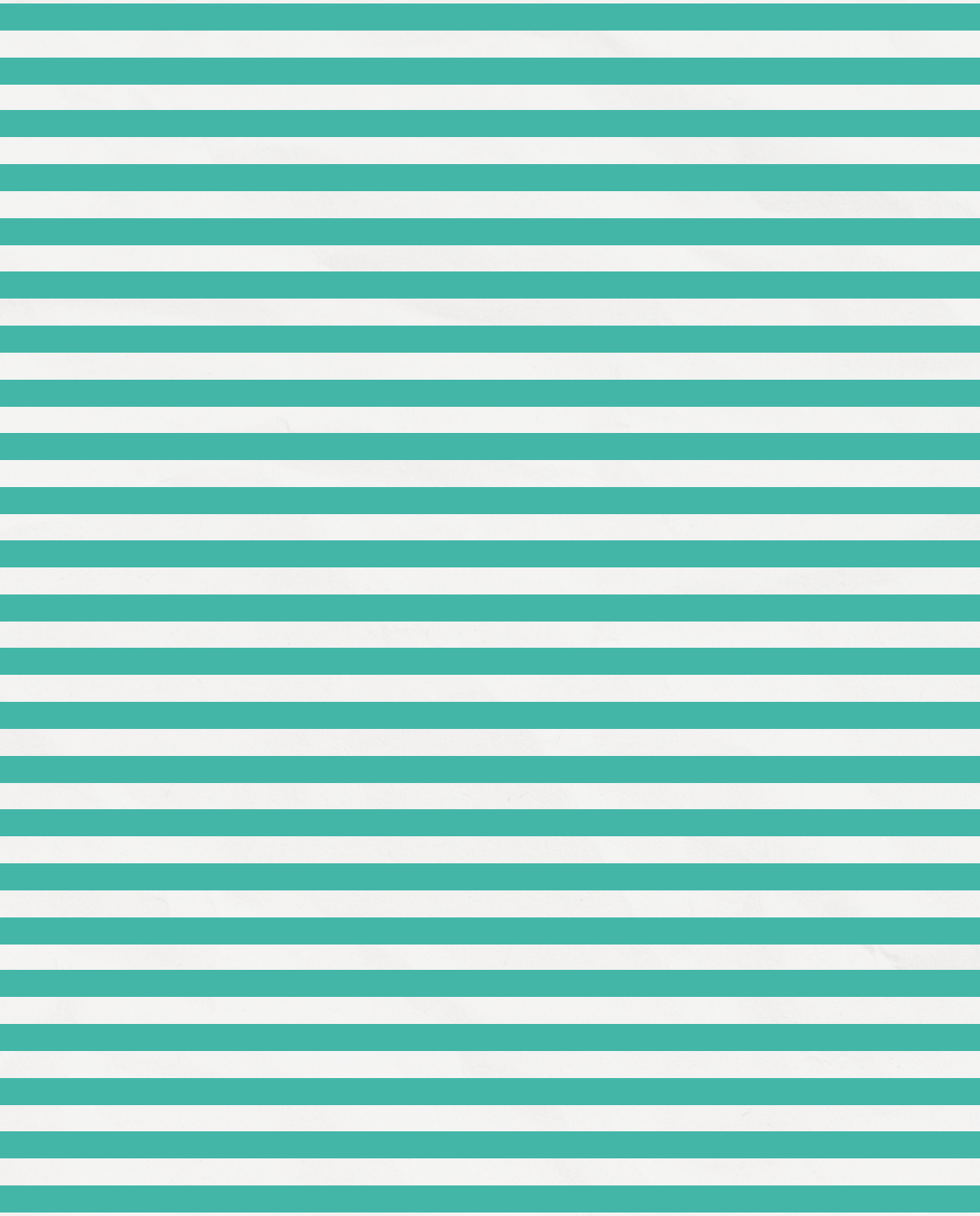


## About OBLIO...

*The name of the project - OBLIO - was given because of the main character of the '70s animated cartoon "The Point", called Oblio. Oblio was born with a round head in a kingdom where everything, the houses and the carts, the bridges and the barns all had points on them. In fact, even the people had triangle shaped heads. Even more so, the main activity of the village was making points. The round-headed Oblio had to wear a pointed hat since birth to conceal his "pointless" condition from his pointy-headed peers.*

*The message of the movie is an important one being about accepting diversity, following one's own intention, and realizing that everyone in society has a unique role to play.*





In short, this publication provides data on inequalities between women and men, raises questions that aim to stimulate reflection and awareness of gender discrimination in organizations and provides practical tips and ideas to promote equality.

We hope that this publication will be useful to all those who **seek to reflect and transform their organizations, their practices and their communities, with the horizon of building fairer realities: where it is possible to live, in freedom, diversity, where all people see their rights and dignity respected.**

We hope you enjoy and act on what you'll read next!



# Recognize and understand gender inequalities

## What is gender inequality? Does it really exist?

It is common to hear that gender inequality doesn't exist anymore, and that today women have the same rights as men. Sometimes we come across the idea that inequalities are something reserved for the older generations and that between young people they don't happen, and that as time goes by they will naturally disappear.

Despite advances in reducing gender inequalities in terms of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities between men and women in the public and private sphere, **we are still far from the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls.** In fact, no country in the world has achieved equality (United Nations, 2020). **Gender discrimination is present everywhere!**



## Notice that...



### Women are in disadvantage in access to resources and employment:

\\ There's a disproportionate number of women at risk of poverty (Eurostat, 2021a), especially if we talk about single mothers, elderly pensioners, immigrant women and women with disabilities.

\\ Unemployment rates for women are the highest in the most European Union (EU) countries (Eurostat, 2021b) and women are also the ones who work part-time the most, because they take more responsibility for household chores (more than a quarter of the women (29%), compared to 8% of men).

\\ They have lower salaries: in the EU, women earn, on average, almost 13% less per hour than men (Eurostat, 2022).

\\ Women continue to be underrepresented in economic decision positions and in the highest paid jobs.

In Romania, only 5.9% of people in CEO positions in listed companies are women; 7.1% in Portugal, and 2.9% in Spain (EIGE, 2022).

\\ Women are underrepresented in technology jobs. In Europe, for example, the percentage of men working in this sector is three times higher than the percentage of women. In 2020, only 18.5% among specialist people employed in Information and Communication Technology were women (CIG, 2021).

The fragility of the women's position in the labor market is particularly shocking when we confront the fact that **women are, nowadays, the majority of qualified people**. According to Eurostat data (2021c), in the EU, the percentage of young women (aged between 25 and 34 years) that have higher education degrees is bigger than the percentage of men (46.8% of women compared to 37.7% of men).



The data are even more asymmetrical in other countries like: Spain (women: 54.4% and men: 43.1%), Portugal (women: 56.5% and men: 38.3%) and Romania (women: 46.8% and men: 35.7%).

### There are inequalities in access to political power:

Women are still being kept out of decision-making centers, and are in the minority in leadership positions at local and national level. Even though there has been obvious progress in most EU countries, especially since the adoption of positive action measures (such as the Parity Law), equality is not guaranteed! Even today, there is no country in the EU that doesn't have more men than women in the national parliament (European Parliament, 2023).

In Portugal, out of every 10 mayors, about 9 are men and 1 is a woman. In Romania, only 4.5% of mayors' seats are occupied by women. In Spain, numbers are more encouraging, although far from parity: 22.03% (EIGE, 2022b).



### There are inequalities in the use of time:

Household chores and taking care of children and other dependent people are developed especially by women. In the EU, 43% of young women (between the ages of 20 and 34) spend 4 hours or more, per day, taking care of young children, compared to 21% of young men (EIGE, 2022c).

In Romania, 75% of women and 41% of men take care of household chores daily for at least 1 hour (EIGE, 2019). The differences in time uses become bigger when we consider couples with children (79% women and 42% men). In Portugal, women work 1h45 more than their male partners at home (Perista et al., 2016). In Spain, women assure 67% of unpaid work. In 2020, Spanish women on average devoted 78 hours per week to paid and unpaid work, while men devoted 62 hours (Consejo Económico y Social España, 2022).

This unequal sharing of domestic and family responsibilities translates into more difficulties for women in terms of professional development, access to training and reduced opportunities for civic participation.

### Women are more exposed to all forms of gender based violence:

Poor security and violence against women remains in our society, reaching worrying numbers, constituting one of the most serious expressions of unequal power relations between women and men. Historically, violence has worked as a mechanism to place and keep women in a subordinate position, imposing barriers, sometimes difficult to overcome, to the enjoyment of their rights and freedom.

Violence against women takes many forms and is observable in different life contexts. For example:

\\ In intimate relationships. Obviously, domestic violence disproportionately affects women, and the numbers of deaths and complaints that occur each year are worrying. In the EU, 22% of women have experienced violence from their partners (European Commission, 2020).



In Romania, 92.6% reported domestic violence cases, involving adult people, are against women (EIGE, 2019). In 2022, in Portugal, 22 women were murdered by their partners or ex-partners (OMA, 2022). In Spain, meanwhile, 49 women were murdered at the hands of their partners or ex-partners (Spanish Ministry of Equality, 2022).

\\ Numbers related to dating violence are also worrying because of the prevalence and social tolerance that exist for abusive behavior. Girls are more likely to be victims of sexual violence and several more forms of violence (Tomaszewska & Schuster, 2021).

\\ Sexual harassment and other ways of shame of a sexual nature mainly affects women and girls, including sexual harassment in the workplace, in universities, in public spaces, online, etc.



In Romania, it is estimated that 32% of the women have been sexually assaulted (EIGE, 2022d), even though many of the cases go unreported (KAS, 2023). In Spain, 85% of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment on the street, on public transport and in other spaces (Spanish Ministry of Equality, 2019), and 26% of the young women aged between 16 and 24 have experienced stalking and recurrent online harassment.

In Portugal, 9 out of 10 rape victims are women, with the rapists being men (Gabinete do Secretário Geral do Sistema de Segurança Interna, 2021). 79% of Portuguese women have been victims of harassment in the workplace (FFMS, 2019).

\\ Let's not forget that objectification of female bodies is so frequent and present in social interactions, but also in advertising, communication, art, prostitution, pornography.

#### In youth organizations:

As part of this project, we conducted an inquiry process to get to know youth organizations' perspectives and practices regarding gender equality. Even though it was a short study that involved 125 youth organizations (from Romania, Spain and Portugal) from different fields of intervention [find more [here](#)], our analysis reveals signs of the persistence of inequalities. These inequalities become clearer when we look deeper into the answers given:

\\ **Women are underrepresented in leadership positions** in youth organizations. Despite the fact that the majority of people involved in youth organizations are women (60%), the leaders tend to be men: around 53.6% of the organizations involved in the study were led by men. This tendency was identified in the three countries.

\\ To a certain degree, **the distribution of tasks between women and men appears to be biased**. When asked about whether there are gender specific tasks in their organizations, the majority of the respondents say no. Nonetheless, 17% consider there are gender specific tasks in their organizations (men tend to do tasks that require technical skills or physical strength, programming and sound systems and women tend to do the cleaning and cooking, marketing materials, human resources, etc.).

\\ In terms of communications, **organizations still have a lot of work to do in order to eliminate ways of communication that perpetuate stereotypical ideas** of what being a woman and a man is. For example, regarding the content on their platforms, 34% of the organizations do not always use images free from gender stereotypes.

\\ **Sexism exists in the youth sector and the organizations are not entirely prepared to deal with those situations**. 17% of the respondents know someone who has experienced sexism or gender-based violence in their organization and only 34% have specific measures to address incidents that might occur in the organization.



## Before we move on...

We want to underline that **women aren't a homogeneous group**, and that some of them suffer multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination. Migrant, racialized, romani, trans, lesbian, elderly and poor women suffer various other forms of discrimination, such as xenophobia, racism, classism, transphobia, homophobia, ageism, that should deserve our full attention, vigilance and solidarity, and also indignation!

Moreover, it is also important to underline that **the fight for gender equality is not a fight of women against men**. Gender equality concerns men and women, and we believe that it can benefit both.

In the case of women, the benefits of equality are obvious, because historically women have been relegated to secondary and disadvantageous positions. Despite men's condition of power and privilege, we can't ignore the negative impact of dominant models of masculinity on their lives.

Men:

- \\ are more at risk of having an accident;
- \\ are three times more likely to commit suicide than women;
- \\ have a shorter life expectancy than women;
- \\ are over-represented in the criminal world;
- \\ are the main agents and victims of peer violence, especially in public spaces: in schools, on the streets; in nightlife establishments, etc.;
- \\ in Europe, they are the early school leavers;
- \\ have more worrying consumption habits of alcohol and illicit substances.

**Moving beyond hierarchies and social expectations, that are based on cultural models and determine gender-based roles, will make men and women freer, will multiply their personal and professional choices, and will enable new opportunities, rights and experiences that have historically been denied to each other.**

## Where do we find the roots of gender inequality?

The inequality and violence that we have been talking about, have a double root:



The dominant sociocultural representation of what men and women are, which become **gender stereotypes**;



**Patriarchal power relationships** based on the idea of men's superiority over women.

Let's stop, briefly, at each of these roots of inequality!



## Gender stereotypes

We can say that stereotypes are **organized sets of beliefs about the characteristics of individuals who belong to a group**. These shared beliefs result from the processes of simplification and abusive generalization. Stereotypes are, so to speak, exaggerated, caricatured and often reflect negative images about groups.

Example: girls are sensitive and boys competitive.

As far as gender stereotypes are concerned, it is necessary to consider their normative function, since they describe the supposedly "natural" characteristics of men and women, and their prescriptive function, in the sense that **they inform individuals of what behaviors are appropriate for men and women**.

In a very simple way, gender stereotypes are shared ideas about what we're supposed to be or do, depending on whether we are men or women. They are present throughout the socialization processes, from an early age (for example, girls are educated for care and boys for domination).

The problem with stereotypes is that they work as corsets: there are different expectations for girls and boys, women and men, with regard to the various dimensions of their lives, which condition the paths of both. **Men and women are assigned to different spaces, positions, attitudes, behaviors, aptitudes, and aspirations**.

Dealing with stereotypes is particularly painful when people don't "fit" the stereotypes, when they don't meet what is expected of people of their gender. There are added social pressures on these people to conform, and that creates a lot of suffering!



## Patriarchy

Is a social system based on hierarchical gender relations: **it naturalizes male superiority and female inferiority, sustaining relations of domination / subordination**.

Patriarchal relations are durable, resistant to change and transversal to the generality of human societies, and throughout history it has produced the **invisibility, silencing and the marginalization of women**.

This way, contributing to the change of an unfair social order, to the elimination of inequality, implies questioning asymmetrical power relations and also the deconstruction of stereotypes, which, as we have seen, are at the basis of the perpetuation of historical and structural models of discrimination and act as barriers to the achievement of equality between women and men.



# Look inwards with a gender lens

It's our conviction that the first step to transformation is to recognize in our organizations the inequalities and the mechanisms that produce and reproduce them.

We anticipate that this first step finds, as a barrier, the denial of inequalities. There is a high probability that the members of your organization may consider that there is equality, neutrality in the treatment and that there are no discriminatory practices.

At the end of this first step, we might conclude that this is true. However, it is most probable that there are certain aspects and dimensions that we are ignoring in our day-to-day practice in the organization, since the gender asymmetries are around us, everywhere, even if they go by unnoticed by less aware gazes. The organizations are effectively influenced by the contexts where they operate. They reflect, on a bigger or smaller scale, the social reality, which is unequal.

Describing the “starting point” constitutes the first step, an essential one to plan measures to achieve gender equality. **Thus, in this section, we invite the organizations to look inwards:** to their operating modes, to young men's and women's place, to the initiatives that they promote in the community.

## Do this exercise with your team!

We think that it is important that this self-diagnosis process counts on the participation of several people from the organization and that it is not a solitary exercise. In the first place, because the collective processes are richer, even if they're not necessarily easier.

Secondly, the involvement of several people during this phase of comprehension of the problem leads to a higher probability for them to feel implicated in finding solutions which enhances their commitment to promote gender equality and tackle discrimination.

It is proposed you question the organizations' dynamic, considering different dimensions, in order to identify “critical fields” in which makes sense to promote changes. **On the following pages, you can find a set of questions that intend to guide this self-reflection exercise in the optics of gender.**

At the end of this first step, it is expected for you to be able to **identify the practices, attitudes and actions that lead to inequalities and imbalance** between young women and men in the organization and to **map the prioritized problems** that require your attention.



## Questions for a self-diagnosis



## Recognition of the topic's relevance

- 1** Are there explicit references to gender equality and non-discrimination on the organization's official or public documents?  
Such as statutes, mission, values, activities plans and reports, code of conduct, website, etc.
- 2** Do you usually collect and analyze data separately for women and men?  
For example, when you analyze the number of young men and women that integrate the organization, that participate in the activities, that express satisfaction towards the activities, etc.
- 3** Are the narratives / discussions / comments characterized by gender stereotypes and roles disapproved in the organization?  
For example, that women have more conflicts and are more competitive between each other, that men are rougher and have difficulty multitasking.
- 4** Have the organization's members participated in trainings / awareness activities on the topic of gender equality, promoted by the organization or external entities?
- 5** Is everyone in the organization aware of the existence of gender discrimination in society?



## Leadership and speaking time

- 1** As a general rule, are the number of men and women in the board of directors of your organization proportional to the number of members / employees / volunteers, when it comes to their gender?
- 2** As a general rule, are the number of men and women in project or activity coordination positions proportional to the number of members / employees / volunteers, when it comes to their gender?
- 3** Is the responsibility of coordinating meetings / assemblies ensured proportionally by young men and young women?
- 4** Do women and men find it equally easy to assert their perspectives?
- 5** Are men's "patronizing" speeches and behaviors towards women disapproved of within the activities of your organization?

To explain something in a condescending way, assuming the woman/women's ignorance (mansplaining – see glossary) is an example of patronizing.

## Communication

- 1** Does the organization publicly undertake a commitment towards the promotion of gender equality?
- 2** Do the organization's communication tools and platforms use parity language?  
For example, instead of saying "mankind" choosing to use "humankind".
- 3** Is there content and positioning related to equality published in the communication tools and platforms (website, social media, emails, etc.)?
- 4** Is there a concern to not reproduce gender stereotypes through texts and images in your materials?  
For example, you don't post images of young men in action and young women passive or you publish images of young women doing activities typically associated with the male gender and vice-versa.
- 5** Has the organization been developing or disseminating campaigns / pedagogical materials on the topic of gender equality?



# Moral and sexual harassment

- 1 Are sexist jokes disapproved of in your organization?
- 2 Do you assign severity to behaviors that ridicule and inappropriate comments on looks, clothes and skills aimed at young women?
- 3 Are you confident that there are no sexual harassment (see glossary) situations in your organization?
- 4 Are “catcalls”, libidinous looks and unwanted physical contact with a sexual connotation reprovved in the setting of the organization, if they happen?
- 5 Are there specific measures to deal with situations of gender based violence that might occur in your organization?

For example, there are predicted measures for filing a complaint and sanctions in cases of harassment or discrimination according to gender.

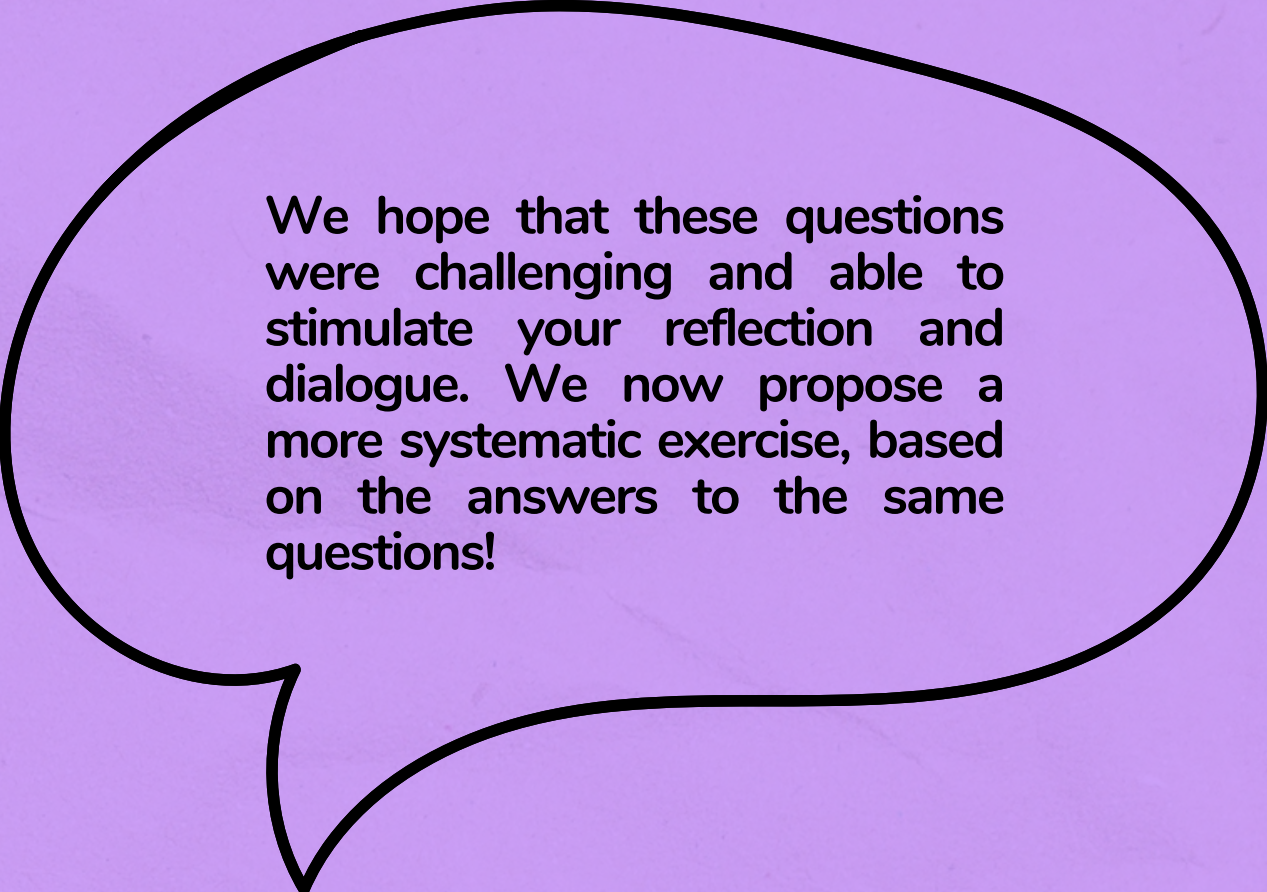
# Activities

- 1 Has the organization developed initiatives and projects with the main goal of promoting gender equality and / or to combat gender-based violence?
- 2 Has there been a concern to invite a balanced number of male and female speakers when it comes to initiatives, such as conferences, lectures or debates, that are promoted by the organization?
- 3 Do you avoid promoting activities aligned with gender stereotypes for young men and young women?  
  
Examples: sports tournaments for boys, dance and beauty contests for girls.
- 4 Are conditions intentionally created so that men and women who participate in the organization's activities have equal visibility, levels of participation and recognition?
- 5 Does the organization collaborate with other entities that are active in the area of gender equality, in order to reinforce the fight for equality?  
  
Examples: take part in manifestations, invite for lectures, subscribe petitions, develop projects in partnership.



# Human resources

- 1** Do you prioritize the recruitment of the underrepresented gender during any recruitment processes?  
When recruiting employees, volunteers, interns, members, etc.
- 2** When distributing tasks, do you avoid conforming to gender roles and traditional expectations of gender?  
Examples of a gendered division of tasks: girls tidy up and clean the space, cook, etc.; boys assemble sound equipment.
- 3** When it comes to benefits, rewards, salaries, is there equality between women and men?
- 4** Are there measures aimed at a balance between work life and personal and home life?  
For example: adjusting schedules so that people can better answer their domestic and family responsibilities; measures for protecting motherhood, fatherhood and family support, etc.
- 5** Has the progression of men and women in your organization evolved at the same rate?



We hope that these questions were challenging and able to stimulate your reflection and dialogue. We now propose a more systematic exercise, based on the answers to the same questions!



We suggest that you **draw the grids that are on the next pages and answer “yes” or “no” to each of the questions** that are organized around 6 dimensions (recognition of the topic’s relevance; leadership and speaking time; communication; moral and sexual harassment; activities; human resources).

Ideally, you should answer “yes” or “no” to all questions. However, sometimes it will be difficult to place your answers in a dichotomous logic. In cases where the answers are in “gray areas”, **identify the strongest tendency** and mark the answer that best expresses your reality.

**A “no” doesn’t always mean that you are doing something wrong.** It is also possible **that not all questions fit the reality of the organization**: for example, if your organization has never promoted events with speakers, question 2 of the “activities” dimension is not appropriate. In that case, simply don't consider the question.

After having answered, you must count the number of “yes” in each dimension, which corresponds to the score you obtained in each one.

## A practical example:

Imagine that in the “Leadership and speaking time” dimension, you answer three questions with “yes” and two questions with “no”, then you would get a score of 3 points (3/5).

After that, and according to the scores you got, fill out the chart (see pages 41 and 42), which will give you a visual image of the dimensions where there is still work to be done when it comes to gender equality.



Yes  
Mostly yes

No  
Mostly no

<b>Recognition of the topic's relevance</b>	1. Are there explicit references to gender equality and non-discrimination on the organization's official or public documents?		
	2. Do you usually collect and analyze data separately for women and men?		
	3. Are the narratives/discussions/comments characterized by gender stereotypes and roles disapproved in the organization?		
	4. Have the organization's members participated in training / awareness activities on the topic of gender equality, promoted by the organization or external entities?		
	5. Is everyone in the organization aware of the existence of gender discrimination in society?		
Score (number of "yes"/number of answers): ___ / ___			



Yes  
Mostly yes

No  
Mostly no

<b>Leadership and speaking time</b>	1. As a general rule, are the number of men and women in the board of directors of your organization proportional to the number of members / employees / volunteers, when it comes to their gender?		
	2. As a general rule, are the number of men and women in project or activity coordination positions proportional to the number of members / employees / volunteers, when it comes to their gender?		
	3. Is the responsibility of coordinating meetings / assemblies ensured proportionally by young men and young women?		
	4. Do women and men find it equally easy to assert their perspectives?		
	5. Are men's "patronizing" speeches and behaviors towards women disapproved of within the activities of your organization?		
Score (number of "yes"/number of answers): __ / __			



Yes  
Mostly yes

No  
Mostly no

<b>Communications</b>	1. Does the organization publicly undertake a commitment towards the promotion of gender equality?		
	2. Do the organization's communication tools and platforms use parity language?		
	3. Is there content and positioning related to equality published in the communication tools and platforms (website, social media, emails, etc.)?		
	4. Is there a concern to not reproduce gender stereotypes through texts and images in your materials?		
	5. Has the organization been developing or disseminating campaigns / pedagogical materials on the topic of gender equality?		
Score (number of "yes"/number of answers): ___ / ___			



Yes  
Mostly yes

No  
Mostly no

<b>Moral and sexual harassment</b>	1. Are sexist jokes disapproved of in your organization?		
	2. Do you assign severity to behaviors that ridicule and inappropriate comments on looks, clothes and skills aimed at young women?		
	3. Are you confident that there are no sexual harassment situations in your organization?		
	4. Are “catcalls”, libidinous looks and unwanted physical contact with a sexual connotation reprovved in the setting of the organization, if they happen?		
	5. Are there specific measures to deal with situations of gender based violence that might occur in your organization?		
Score (number of “yes”/number of answers): ___ / ___			



Yes  
Mostly yes

No  
Mostly no

<b>Activities</b>	1. Has the organization developed initiatives and projects with the main goal of promoting gender equality and / or to combat gender-based violence?		
	2. Has there been a concern to invite a balanced number of male and female speakers when it comes to initiatives, such as conferences, lectures or debates, that are promoted by the organization?		
	3. Do you avoid promoting activities aligned with gender stereotypes for young men and young women?		
	4. Are conditions intentionally created so that men and women who participate in the organization's activities have equal visibility, levels of participation and recognition?		
	5. Does the organization collaborate with other entities that are active in the area of gender equality, in order to reinforce the fight for equality?		
Score (number of “yes”/number of answers): ___ / ___			



Yes  
Mostly yes

No  
Mostly no

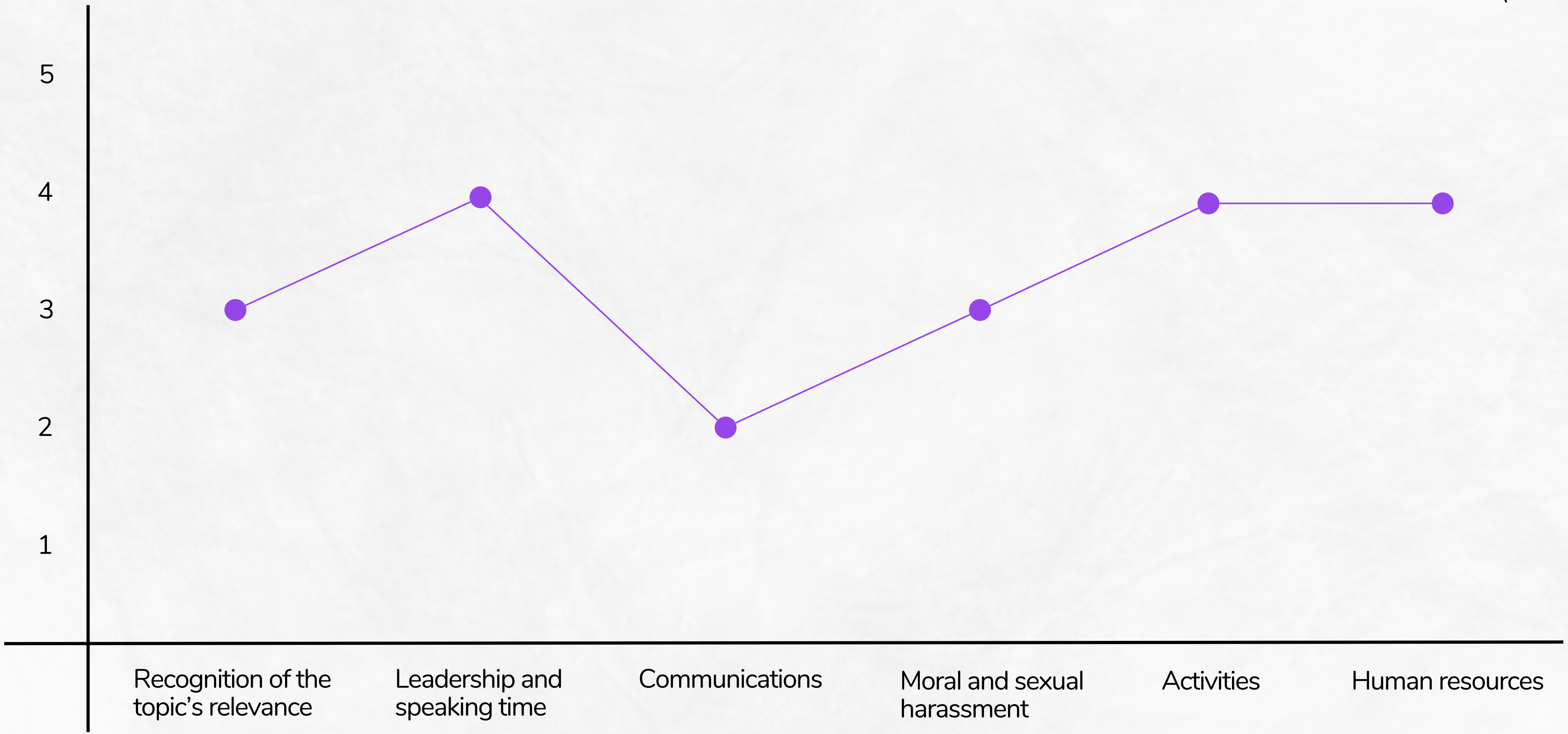
<b>Human Resources</b>	1. Do you prioritize the recruitment of the underrepresented gender during any recruitment processes?		
	2. When distributing tasks, do you avoid conforming to gender roles and traditional expectations of gender?		
	3. When it comes to benefits, rewards, salaries, is there equality between women and men?		
	4. Are there measures aimed at a balance between work life and personal and home life?		
	5. Has the progression of men and women in your organization evolved at the same rate?		

Score (number of “yes”/number of answers): \_\_\_ / \_\_\_











# Explore measures and practices that contribute to achieving equality

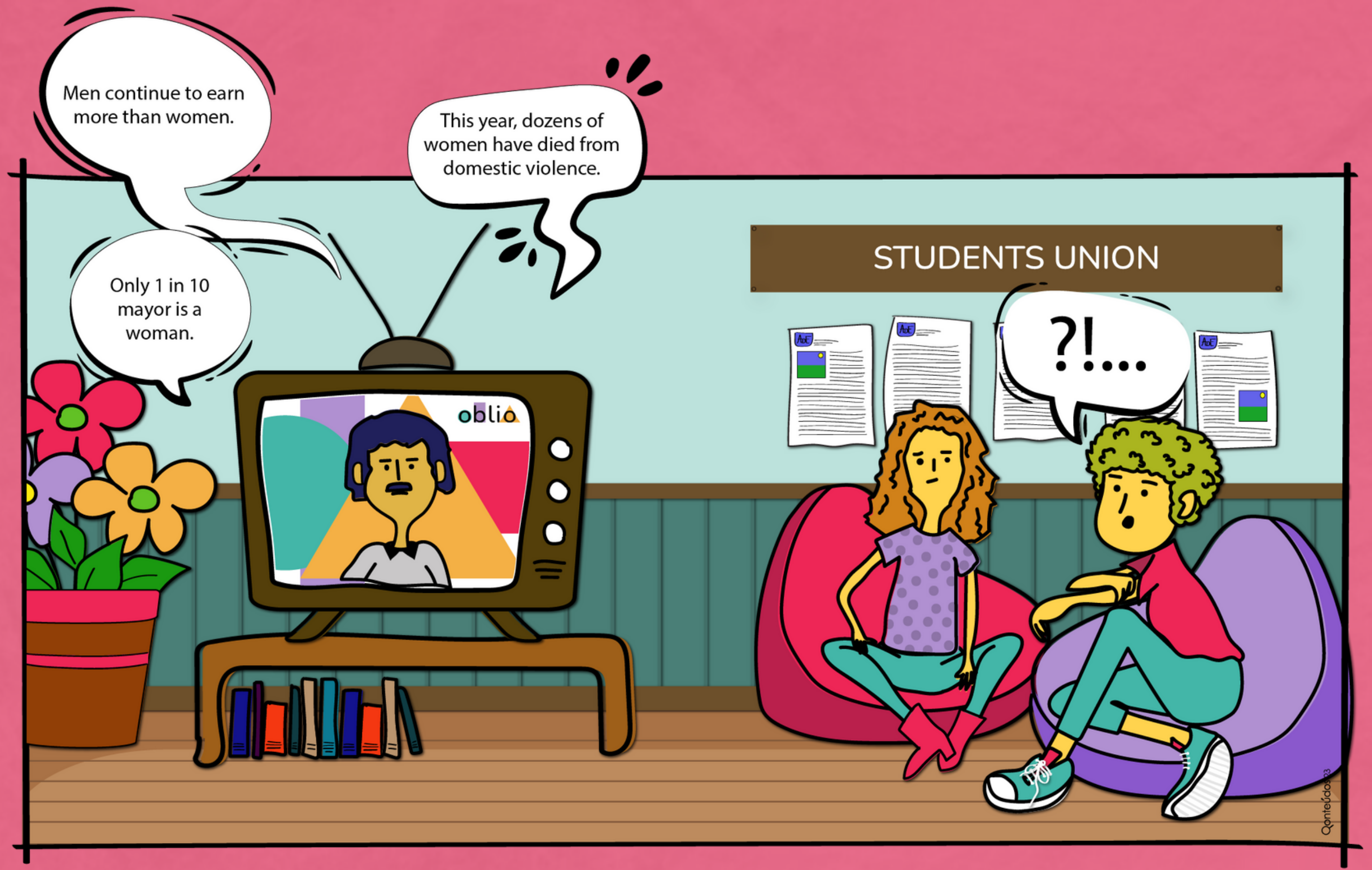
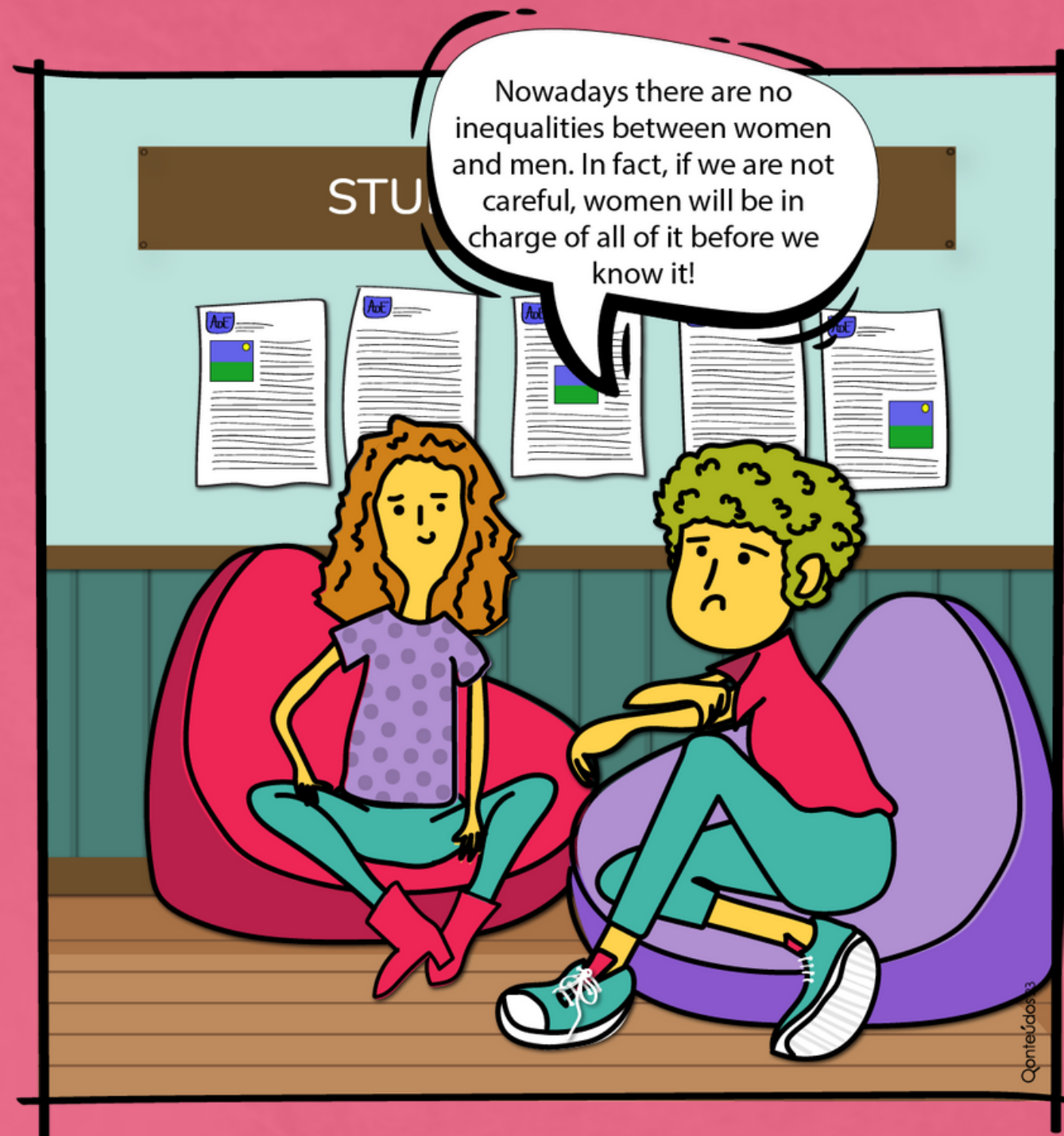
We hope that the previous exercise has been helpful in **identifying the dimensions in which it is worth it to invest so that your organization can become more inclusive and egalitarian.**

This way, to ease this task of elaborating the plan, we present some **concrete measures** and **good practices**, organized around the same dimensions that we contemplated in the self-diagnosis.

We hope that this might inspire you and can be used on the road as references to build equality.



# Recognition of the topic's relevance





## Promote the recognition of inequalities and their negative consequences

The first step in solving a problem is to **promote awareness of its existence and its negative implications**. Recognizing the problem of inequalities is an indispensable impulse to the commitment in the construction of strategies and measures to solve or, at least, minimize it.

Therefore, our first recommendation is to promote awareness about the problem of inequality, **which is so often avoided or even denied**.

There are several ways to contribute to the recognition of gender inequality inside your organization. For example: get informed about the problem, gather and analyze statistical data, organize discussions, watch documentaries on the subject, invite experts, design campaigns and information leaflets, etc.

## Include explicit references to gender equality and non-discrimination in the organization's official documents

Explicitly assume the commitment to equality in the different institutional documents - such as statutes, mission, vision, values, action plans and activity reports, code of conduct, etc. **This gives a clear signal, both to the community and to its members, of the priority given to this cause by the organization**. In addition, formalizing the commitment to the principle of equality and non-discrimination **increases the obligations of current and future management** to create the conditions for the advancement of gender equality.



## Collect and process data separately for women and for men

It is important to collect disaggregated data, presenting it separately for women and men (for example, we have X male volunteers, Y female volunteers).

It may seem like a very difficult exercise, but **collecting quantitative data this way makes it easier to answer questions such as:**

- \\ Is the composition of the leadership team equal?
- \\ What is the distribution of members, when it comes to men and women?
- \\ Do the participants in the association's activities vary according to gender?
- \\ Are the satisfaction levels (for example with the activities) of boys and girls equivalent?
- \\ Are the strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions presented by girls and boys in the evaluations convergent?
- \\ Are there differentiated impacts for boys and girls that come from participating in the life/activities of the organization?
- \\ Do the initiatives benefit boys and girls equally?
- \\ Are there gender pay differences?

This analysis **makes it possible to uncover differences that would be invisible if the data were analyzed as a whole**, without taking the gender variable into account. It allows access, in a more objective and systematic way, to possible differences between men and women/boys and girls, regarding the experiences and impact of their participation in the organization and activities.

At the same time, **it brings input for planning future actions**, which should provide for the correction of inequalities that have been identified.

## Deconstruct discourses that reproduce stereotyped ideas about what it is to be a boy or a girl

Discourses that convey gender stereotypes are very generalized and naturalized in our daily lives. It is not uncommon to hear speeches about the "nature" of women and men, that attribute sensitivity to the first ones and rationality to the second ones. They are likely to appear in your organization. **When this happens, take responsibility for reporting and questioning them.**

It is very important that, in our daily interactions, in the face of these "incidents" we are able to take the opportunity to raise awareness about equality, deconstructing discourses that stop its advancement.



## Par - Respostas Sociais

Par - Respostas Sociais has as its target audience young people with whom and for whom it develops projects in the areas of Education for Development and Global Citizenship, community intervention, training, and consulting.

Although gender equality is not the main focus of their work, Par **shows publicly that they are committed to promoting equality**: in their Statutes, one of the objectives is to "promote equal opportunities and gender equality" and also on their website and social networks this commitment is explicit.

As a team, **they often reflect and debate on the issue of equality** between women and men, they mature and consensualize their positions and seek to mainstream equality issues in the initiatives they promote. They are alert to and fight against sexist and discriminatory speeches and practices that may arise in the course of the organization's activities.

They make possible the **training in the topic of equality** of the people who collaborate in the organization (whether they are members, workers, or volunteers), encouraging them to participate in workshops, webinars, and training courses on various subjects related to gender issues.

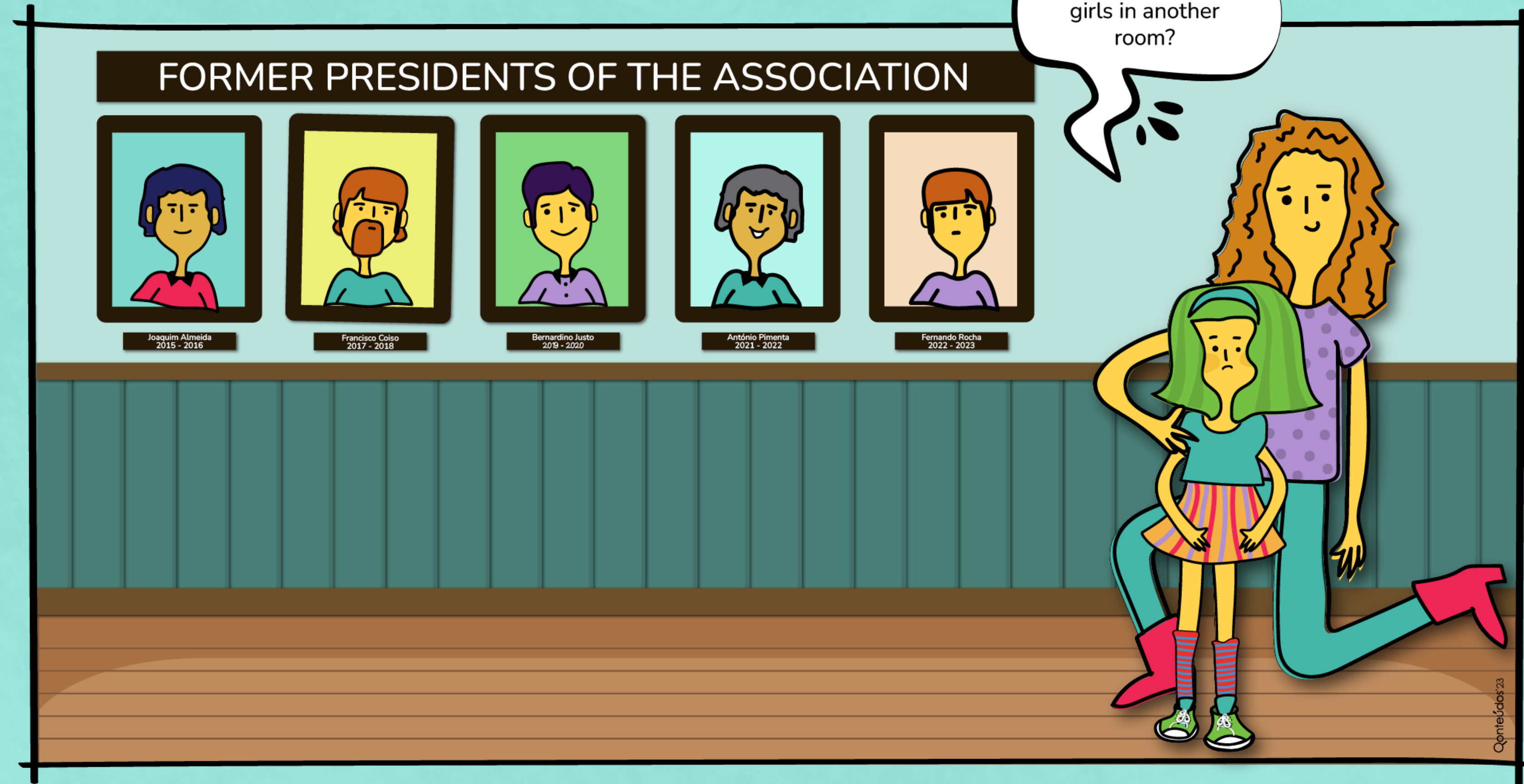
In addition to all this, **Par has developed projects in the area of gender equality** and recently collaborated in the development of a platform for young people to deepen this theme. You can find it [here](#).



Click  
here  
to visit  
Par's  
website



# Leadership and speaking time





## Guarantee an equal representation of women and men in the decision-making charges in the organization

In many organizations it happens that women are underrepresented in decision-making positions. **An organization that wants to be egalitarian must be proactive in ensuring effective parity.**

In this sense, it will be important to **encourage women to take leadership positions** in the organization. It is essential that more women and girls look at themselves as potential leaders and take seriously the possibility of occupying positions of power, just as boys/men do.

When difficulties appear in this involvement, it will be important to listen to the women and girls about the barriers they encounter, so that we can look for ways to overcome them.

**Positive action measures can also be taken to increase the participation of women in leadership positions**, for example, by making it mandatory to have parity lists for the organization's governing bodies, with a minimum percentage for each gender.

In addition to ensuring that the composition of the lists is balanced, from a gender perspective, it is important to make sure that this balance is also visible in the positions with more power and visibility. That is, that there are women and girls at the top of the lists. We often observe that as we move up the hierarchy, the number of women decreases.

## Have women as a spokesperson and representatives of the organization

Although there are many dynamic women in youth organizations, **they are rarely the spokespersons or the representatives of the organizations.** They are not the ones who give interviews, who participate in local meetings, in youth councils, etc. It is usual, even in very feminized contexts, where the institutional representation is male. If you observe this happening in your organization, **it is important to rethink and ensure that women's voices have equal space, recognition and impact!**



## Ensure that women's voice is equally valued

Men often use more speaking time during meetings, assemblies, and public sessions. In addition, some studies provide evidence that **women are more often interrupted** when they are presenting an idea.

Sometimes their male colleague repeats the idea presented by the female in other words, giving the image that the female colleague was not able to explain it. It also happens that the same idea has more acceptance and adherence when it is expressed by a man, than by a woman.

It is equally recurrent for a man to explain in a simple way to a woman something over which she has mastery. This repeated phenomenon has even been given a name: mansplaining (see glossary).

**Observe whether this happens and if so, don't have a passive attitude.** There are small things that can contribute to women becoming progressively more confident in their use of the word and to a greater balance in speaking times.

Some examples of what you can do:

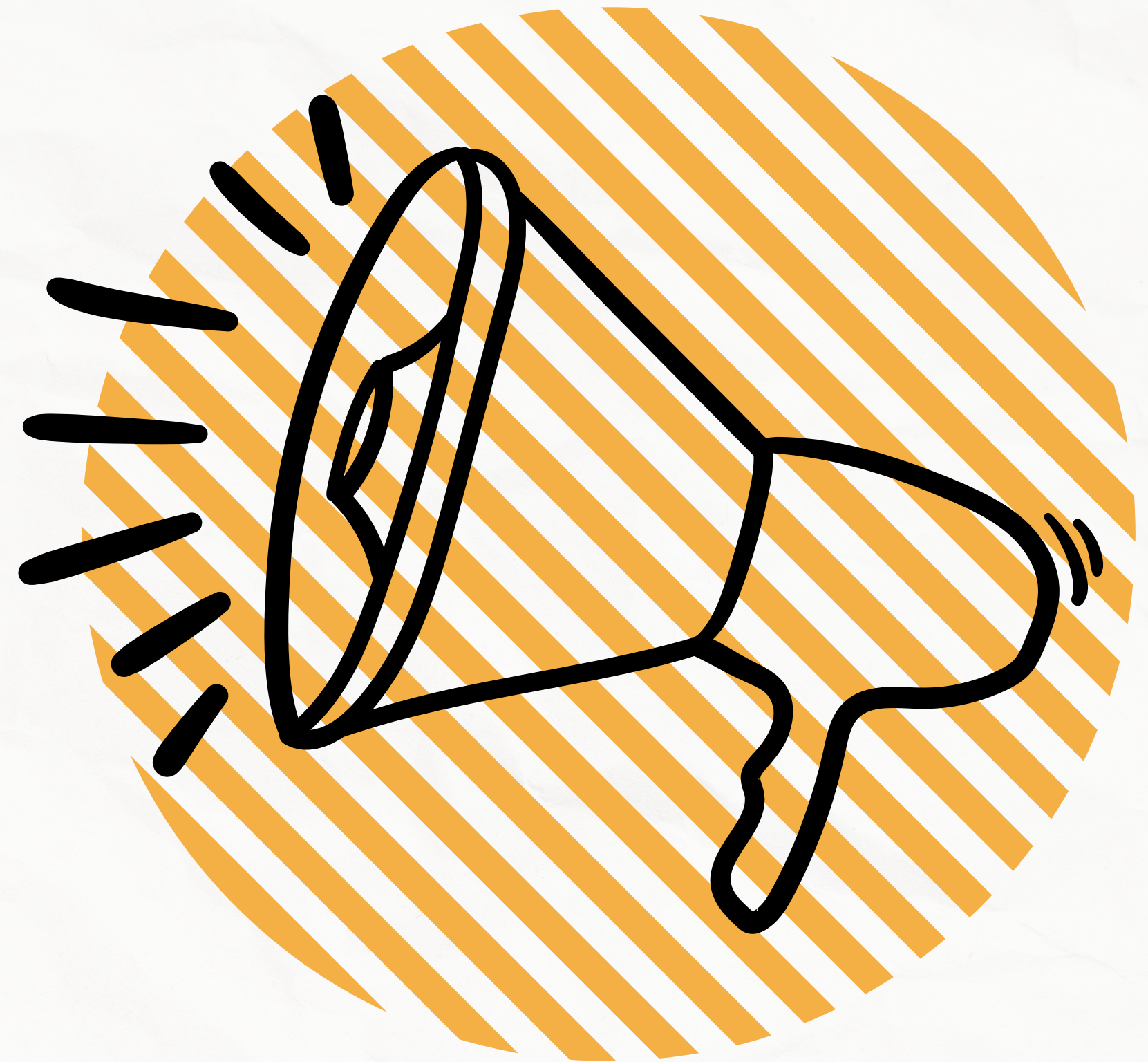
\\ Actively ask for women's input, ask questions directly, and value their interventions;

\\ When a woman is interrupted, propose that she finish her reasoning;

\\ When a woman is underestimated, through mansplaining, point out that the explanation is unnecessary;

\\ Have both women and men coordinate meetings and assemblies;

\\ Etc.





## GASNova

GASNova was founded by a group of students from Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Today, it is an association that uses Education for Development as a way to transform young people and the world.

The association **is led by both women and men**: in the last years, throughout the various mandates, women have assumed an important role in the leadership of the organization. The current board has parity and is chaired by a woman. Also in the departments and in the coordination of activities, leadership is shared.

**Internal dynamics are also favorable to women's leadership and speaking up.** Meetings are usually moderated by two people, at least one of whom is a woman. In these meetings, using participatory dynamics, there is a concern to ensure that the participation levels of men and women are equivalent.

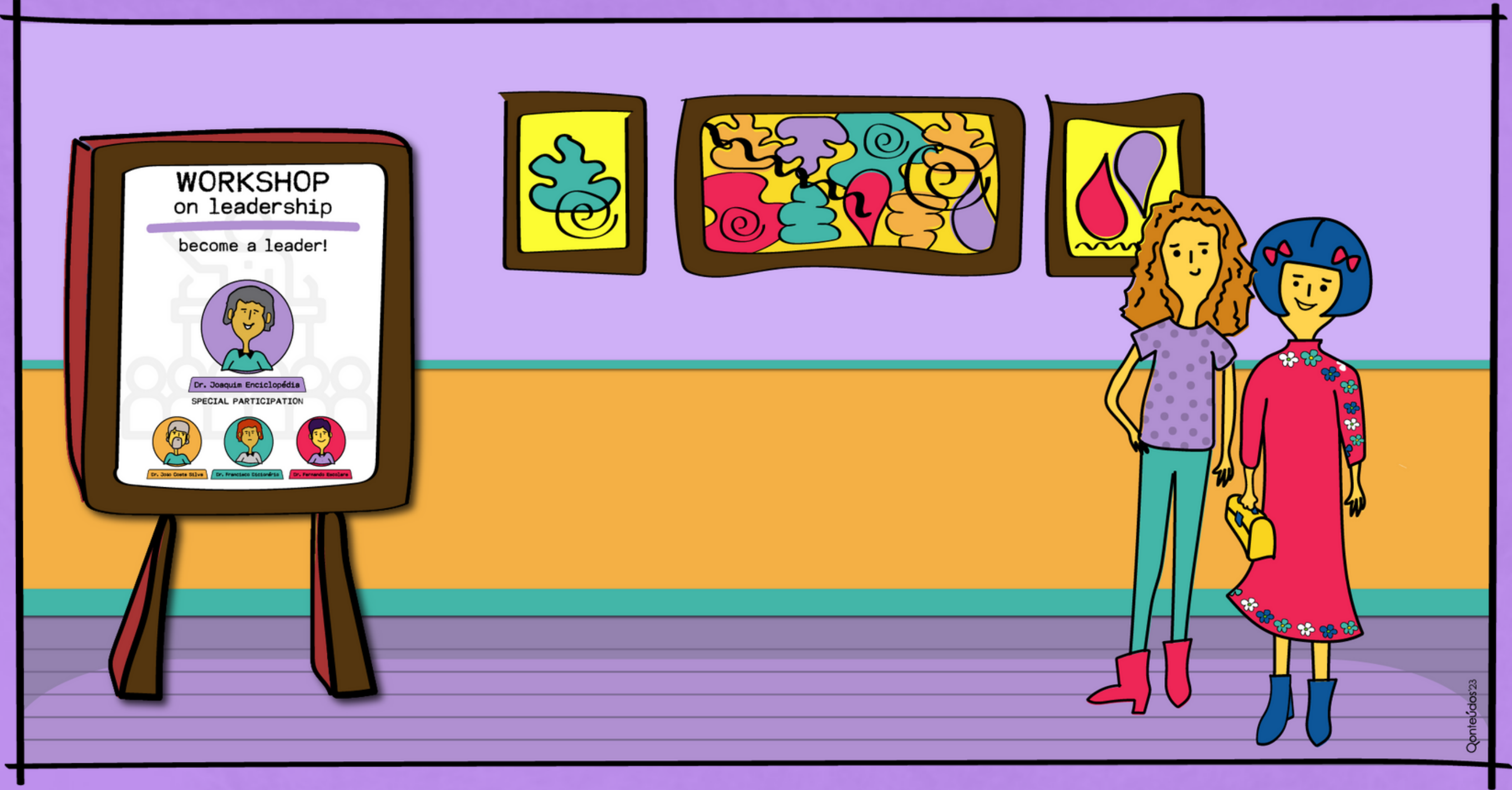
GASNova is a youth organization that promotes the leadership of women and the valuing of their contributions.

Click  
here  
to visit  
GASNova's  
website





# Communications





## Publicly assume the commitment to the promotion of gender equality

There are different ways to give visibility to the identification and commitment of organizations to the values and principles of equality and non-discrimination. **Giving visibility to official or public documents of the organization** (codes of conduct, regulations, mission) in which these values are stated is one of the ways to do it! **Developing and disseminating campaigns, awareness-raising materials and other equality-related content** (concrete actions, positions...) on platforms and social networks is another way to make public the organization's adherence to these ideals.

## Use parity language

In all the organization's documents, online platforms, public speeches, emails, forms and materials produced.

In many languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian, **it is common to use the masculine grammatical gender to refer to both men and women.** For example, it is common to use the word "Man" as a synonym for humankind, whether they are men or women. This use of language, which is common in many countries, is not gender-sensitive and makes women invisible, in a sense, secondary.

We, therefore, propose that you **adopt a parity language**, which ensures the equal treatment in language and that women, just like men, have the right to their "linguistic representation".

**Specifically, we suggest that you dispense the use of the generic masculine.**

In the beginning, it won't be easy, because this change implies an alteration of very ingrained habits, but with training, it will become more natural and spontaneous. **You will find many critical people of this effort because they consider it inconsequential and tiring. Resist and persist: changing the language is changing the thinking.** This is a step, within the reach of all people and organizations, towards the recognition of the equal visibility and equal dignity of women and men.

To ensure the inclusive nature of all internal and external communication, whether verbal or written, it will be important that people within the organization, particularly those responsible for communication, are aware of guidelines for the use of gender-equal language, and are made aware of the added value and meaning of adopting a non-sexist language.



## Ensure diversity and balance in the representation of men and women

The images we have in the organization's publications (including those online) should, whenever possible, **ensure the balanced presence of both men and women**, making sure that neither is invisibilized and that both have equal prominence and centrality.

It is important that the images selected are **representative of reality, which is diverse!** To do so, it is essential that you consider, right from the start, the diversity of appearances, recognizing that women are not all the same and neither are men: representing different ethnicities, origins and backgrounds, physical shapes, etc., trying not to submit to normative standards of beauty.

## Use images free of gender stereotypes

It makes no sense to the cause of equality to use visual content that includes boys and girls, if the representations we convey of each are stereotyped. **When choosing the visual elements to include in your communication, avoid aligning them with what is traditionally considered "appropriate" for women and men.**

Stereotypes are perpetuated, even if in a subtle and unconscious way, when, for example, we mostly use images of boys in leadership positions, in sports competitions, using new technologies, and when we represent girls performing domestic and caring activities, paying attention to their appearance, or in situations where they are passive and "watching" or listening.

**It is important to diversify the images:** to have boys and girls performing the same activities and cooperating with each other, and to include images that challenge stereotypes, in which girls and boys are in activities, contexts, and roles that are not usually associated with their gender. These less conventional representations stimulate new ways of thinking about the world and the emergence of new, more egalitarian, and emancipating models.

**Care must also be taken to use images that dignify women.** We draw particular attention to the use of images where women are objectified, presented as objects of male desire. We also leave a note about photographs of women with assault marks to raise awareness of the problem of violence against women. These impactful and emotionally charged images present women in a situation of extreme vulnerability, which does not empower the victimized women, and should be avoided.





## Use visual elements not connoted with gender

There are also other visual elements strongly attached to the "feminine" and "masculine" notions, such as colors, symbols, and graphics... **It makes sense not to reinforce these trends and to innovate:** for example, in an infographic or similar materials, avoid blue to refer to boys and pink to girls, or use icons like high heels for women, etc.



## Feminist Lorca

Feminist Lorca is a Spanish organization that focus on promoting citizen participation and equality. Through different activities throughout the year, **Feminist Lorca raises awareness for gender equality, sensitizing the local population.** To give a more concrete example: the organization of the **8M** (March 8 - International Women's Day) and **25N** (November 25 - International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women), framed in **marches and rallies attended by students and young women**, in coordination with other local entities and the city council. On the days close to these dates, various communications are made through social networks and the media, which makes it reach more people. Gatherings and sorority workshops are also organized, to raise their voices and to achieve a society free of violence and with real and effective equality between men and women, demonstrating how necessary feminism continues to be. The most notable effect of their work is the increasing adherence and support of the population to the feminist movement.



Click here  
to visit  
Feminist Lorca  
instagram page



# Moral and sexual harassment





## Pay attention and stop harassment

It is important that the organization becomes a safe environment, where no one can humiliate or adopt an abusive treatment, where any moral and sexual harassment behavior is repudiated.

**Moral harassment takes the form of behavior such as:** humiliating, ridiculing, despising, shouting, ignoring, systematically isolating someone, defaming, constantly criticizing... **As far as sexual harassment is concerned, let's take the example of behaviors such as:** inappropriate comments about appearance with a sexual meaning, insistence on unwelcomed invitations, physical contact, unwanted looks and conversations, unwanted explicit sexual proposals, and offensive sexual jokes.

It is common that in organizations there are people who suffer, episodically or continuously over time, behaviors such as the ones that we mentioned before, which affect their dignity and place them in a vulnerable position. **It should be noted that women and girls are disproportionately exposed to sexual harassment.** Unfortunately, it is also common to underestimate the seriousness of these behaviors and, frequently, “normalize” and tolerate them.

**It is fundamental to interpret the signs and react.** The idea is that, as an organization, you move towards a zero-tolerance level for sexual and moral harassment!

## Raise awareness of the reality of harassment

Promoting a culture based on respect, equality, cooperation, and harassment-free may involve creating spaces for reflection and learning (awareness-raising actions, lectures, training lessons, conferences, etc.).

It is essential that everyone in the organization has the opportunity to **learn how to identify abusive behaviors and recognize the harm resulting from moral and sexual harassment.** It is also important that they recognize the different experiences of girls and boys.

In addition to recognizing and understanding the problem, it is essential to **equip people with the tools to actively prevent and respond** to situations of harassment that they experience or witness.

These awareness-raising processes are very important as they create conditions for victims of harassment to feel more protected and encouraged to report and talk about their experiences. At the same time, it promotes greater involvement and accountability of witnesses.



## Listen to those involved in the organization and its activities

**Not being aware of any situation of harassment in your organization does not mean that none has ever occurred.** Moral and sexual harassment is not a subject that arises organically, and even less so, the reporting of specific episodes. It is a taboo subject, which makes people uncomfortable and is often experienced in silence.

That's why it is important to find ways to **continuously evaluate the quality of relations in the organization**, between members, and also between the people participating in the activities. These listening mechanisms can "set off alarm bells" regarding cases of harassment.

### Concretely, consider doing:

- \\ Periodic satisfaction questionnaires to association members, where they include the relational dimension;
- \\ Evaluation forms of the activities, sent afterward to the people who participated, questioning the group environment, the attitude of the people who participated and who are part of the organization, leaving space for reports of incidents that may have occurred.

## Establish rules and procedures

It could be an important step to **elaborate a document with reference to the problem of moral and sexual harassment**, for example, a code of conduct. It should:

- \\ Contain a clarification of what is meant by moral and sexual harassment;
- \\ Make explicit the disapproval of sexual and moral harassment behaviors and the firm commitment of the organization to prevent these situations;
- \\ Clarify how harassment situations can be reported and denounced, guaranteeing that there will be no reprisals for those who file a complaint (for example, by providing a specific form for this purpose, defining a specifically trained team to which people can turn to, and providing for the denunciation by witnesses);
- \\ Explain the mechanisms for investigating and resolving situations;
- \\ Describe the consequences for those who don't comply with the code of conduct;
- \\ Define the forms of support for victims (for example, facilitating access to services of psychological support or legal aid).

Establishing rules and procedures in this area is a very responsible exercise, so **it's important that you contact other entities, specialized in the subject, which can support you during the process.** The elaboration of a document like this **should include women's perspectives and be led by women**, the people most affected by the phenomenon.

This resource should be known by all the people who are part of or are related to the organization and, that way, they should make an active effort to publicize it.



## E-Romnja

E-Romnja is a Roma feminist, a-political and non-profit organization that fights for the rights of Roma women and girls. Through their activities, they introduce the gender perspective in all projects and programs designed for Roma. Moreover, they **work together with local and national authorities to improve policies and measures** taken in the areas of the labor market, education, health, justice, culture or any other field that could bring security and protection for Roma women and not only. Most of their work is taking place within the Roma community, where they **address issues such as violence and sexual harassment towards women**. Through discussions, workshops and public events with both men and women they tackle aspects on gender equality that creates a safer environment for women within their communities.

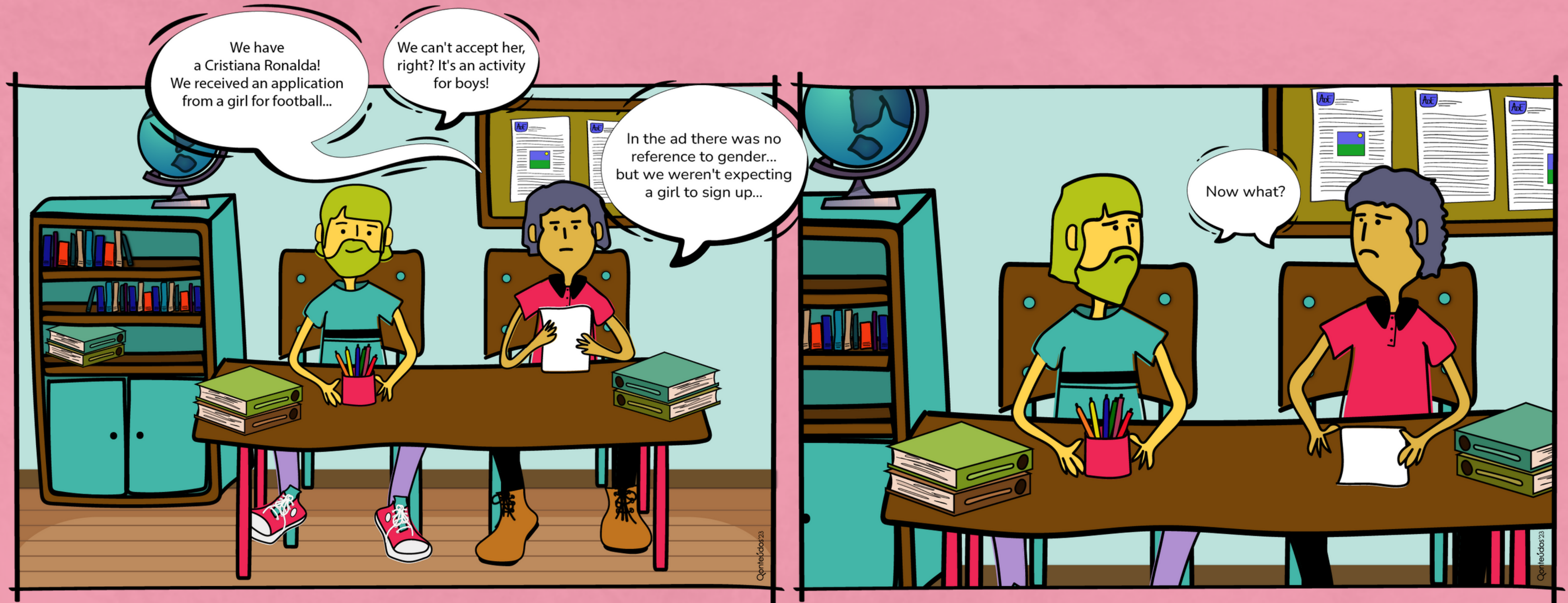


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website





# Activities





## **Develop initiatives and projects aimed at promoting equality and/or combating gender violence**

Even if the organization's main objective isn't to promote equality and combat gender violence, **it may be within your reach to develop initiatives, more or less punctual, small or larger, that contribute to this goal.**

Awareness-raising actions; conferences; debates; photo exhibitions; flash mobs; online and offline campaigns; games/quizzes, are examples of initiatives you can promote to raise awareness about the problem of discrimination and gender inequalities.

Themes like domestic and dating violence (psychological, physical, sexual and online); harassment in public spaces; inequalities in political power, employment and school; inequalities in the distribution of domestic and care work; pornography; prostitution; human trafficking, are examples of themes that make sense to deepen!

These kinds of initiatives are very relevant at any time of the year, but there are specific days that shouldn't go unnoticed, particularly: the International Women's Day (March 8), the International Day of the Girl (October 11), the International Day for the End of Violence Against Women (November 25), the International Human Rights Day (December 10) or the European Equal Pay Day (which varies from year to year).

**When you are thinking about your action plan for the next year or semester, consider promoting activities for equality!**

## **Collaborate with organizations for equality**

One way to contribute to the strengthening of the fight for equality is to join forces. That is why **we propose to collaborate with other active organizations in promoting equality**. Partnerships with feminist organizations **can be especially helpful if you are just starting out in the area of equality** and feel that you do not have enough knowledge on the subject yet. But even if you already have some background of intervention in this area, these collaborations can be beneficial, **as they increase the visibility and impact of the initiatives.**

All the activities proposed in the previous point can be developed in collaboration with other organizations, for example, inviting speakers and disseminating their campaigns, developing projects in partnership, among others. Sometimes, strengthening the feminist struggle can simply mean participating in rallies or marches, signing a petition or an open letter from another organization that demands more rights or action on a certain issue.



## When inviting external people to speak at the organization's events, make sure that a balanced number of men and women are involved

Often, at conferences, lectures and debates, the panel of speakers is quite masculinized. **There are more men than women speaking on a wide variety of subjects, and we often see panels consisting exclusively of men.**

This imbalance raises several problems. First, **the absence of women's contributions makes the reading of the issues biased**, as they are always read through the male gaze, which invisibilizes the perspectives, experiences, and knowledge of women, who are the other half of society. Second, **the girls and women who attend don't see themselves represented**. And finally, it **perpetuates the idea that only men have competence and something relevant to say**.

It is worth striving to promote initiatives that take this balance into consideration, inviting women and men to speak and take the floor. It may be more difficult to mobilize women, since, as we explored in chapter 1, they often have less time available because they are responsible for most of the domestic and care work. Also, culturally, women are less encouraged (and feel less comfort) to be in places of prominence and visibility. If you have the experience that it is more difficult to listen to women, you need to invest more to make it possible!

## Avoid promoting gender stereotyped activities for boys and girls

Frequently, we see activities where only boys or only girls participate: football tournaments or programming workshops with only boys, or dance tournaments and make-up workshops with only girls. Usually, the activities are not gender exclusiver but, in fact, only boys or only girls participate.

**It is important to go against this tendency and make active efforts so that everyone feels invited and encouraged to participate in the activities.** This effort can be made at the time of dissemination, by making explicit reference to the participation of all people, by using images that include the usually underrepresented gender, or by establishing more personalized contacts. Perhaps, more girls would even like to participate in a video game tournament, because traditionally only boys participate, and they may never have the opportunity to do so. And maybe more boys would like to participate in a session on fashion design, but because it is a context associated with the feminine, they don't. **Encouraging their participation can go a long way to making it more organic in the future.**

If you should avoid promoting activities aligned with gender stereotypes, **that doesn't mean you should not create exclusive spaces for girls and others for boys.** For example, a conversation circle with boys about masculinities may be a good way to raise awareness and capacitate them for equality; just as a session about sexual and reproductive rights may be much more meaningful if it takes place in a space exclusively for women.





## Ensure that the participants get involved equally, have the same visibility and recognition in the initiatives promoted by the organization

In a mixed group of participants, it often happens that boys speak more, intervene more and for longer periods of time, and girls adopt a more listening attitude and are less proactive in intervening. At the same time, when there are activities in which it is necessary to distribute space maintenance tasks (such as tidying up the room, washing the dishes, etc.), the girls assume more quickly these functions as their responsibility, and a less active participation of the boys is noted.

**These differences reflect the dynamics of our society, in general.** They are a socialization product of boys and girls, who are stimulated to assume different roles in the public and private space. This makes boys and girls participate differently in the activities and, **if these dynamics are not questioned and opposed, there is the risk that the initiatives you promote contribute to solidifying the social roles that limit these boys and girls.**

That's the reason why **it is worth creating the conditions for equal participation of boys and girls**, for example:

- \\ In some activities, divide participants into small groups, in order to reduce the level of exposure (as opposed to speaking in plenary), and propose that two people be elected as spokespersons;
- \\ If the discussion is monopolized for some of the participants of the group, you should moderate it, asking directly questions to other people that aren't participating that much;

- \\ Provide a moment for distribution of tasks for the care of the space, creating groups for this purpose that include everyone;
- \\ If, even so, the distribution of tasks is unequal, face the issue and ask people who are less involved to assume concrete tasks.



## Federación de Organizaciones de Mujeres de Lorca

Federation of Women's Organizations of Lorca aims to represent and join every women's organizations in Lorca. Nowadays, 45 organizations are part of the federation. They carry out activities throughout the whole year both for its belonging associations and for the general public, focused on the search for real equality.

In the last 3 years, the federation has been carrying out a **project in high schools** called "Opening doors, closing taboos" that focus on talks related to **equality, violence and mental health**. It was implemented once the need for an education in egalitarian values in adolescence was detected, due to the normalization of various dangerous dynamics at that stage. This practice is based on various proposals for talks, where the educational center chooses what topics they want to deal with and at what educational level they want to implement it.

These activities provided a current vision of adolescence in Lorca and of the gender equality issues in the community. The results of this project showed that there is a **need for action** and to continue holding these talks because, although certain concepts are already known, they should be internalized from an early age.

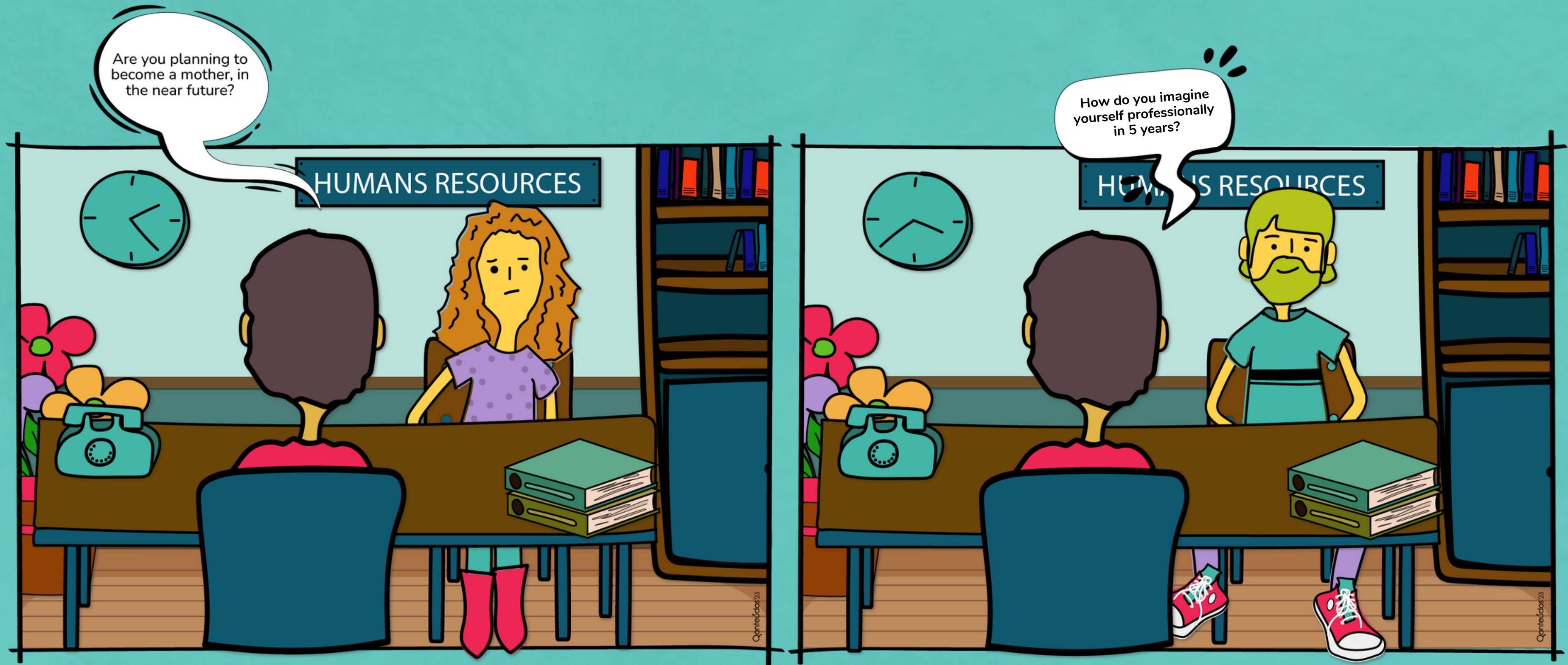


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# Human resources





## When recruiting new people, ensure that the same criteria are applied to women as to men

When recruiting new employees or volunteers, it must be ensured during the process that the **same evaluation criteria are applied to women and men**. These criteria, which should be clear and objective, should be discussed and established before the recruitment processes.

Also, the interview script should be the same for both women and men, ensuring that there is **no discrimination in the course of the interview**. We often hear from women who have been asked whether they intend on having children in the near future, for example... These kinds of questions are unacceptable and in most countries illegal, so make sure that the person or team responsible for conducting the interview and reviewing the applications is capable and gender sensitive.

However, in some cases you may need to take **positive discrimination measures**. For example, if your organization has only girls as volunteers, or if your staff are all men, you may need to consider prioritizing the recruitment of people of the under-represented gender, or even setting quotas.

## Manage the careers of people working in the organization fairly and transparently

Despite the increasing qualification of women, the **glass ceiling phenomenon** (or vertical segregation - see the glossary) **continues to be seen in the various sectors of activity**. Even in those where there are more women than men, we often see a disproportionate presence of men in leading, more prominent and better paid positions.

The youth sector is not necessarily immune to this trend. If you have paid human resources in your organization, it is worth stopping to think about this issue. Analyze the history of the paths taken by workers in the organization, comparing the paths and evolution of women and men in order to **identify possible asymmetries and, if necessary, make corrections**.

Remuneration (salaries, bonus, benefits, etc.) should also be considered in this analysis: evaluate whether there are pay gaps between women and men, and correct and avoid them in the future. It is important that career and pay progression processes are transparent.



## Balance the distribution of women and men for the different functions and sectors in the organization

Differentiation of tasks according to gender is common. This “**horizontal segregation**” (see glossary), often based on stereotypes, means that tasks, functions and sectors considered feminine are assigned to women, and masculine ones to men. It is common for men to take care of the bills, equipment, and women to take care of shopping, food, and activities for children.

**Analyze who does what in the organization** and see if there are tasks that concentrate more girls or more boys. If this happens, if these trends are observed in your organization, try to stop them! Encourage men to get involved in more feminized activities and women to get involved in more masculinized activities.

## Make it easier for people in the organization to balance their work with their personal and family life

Predicting and implementing measures to simplify the lives of people that work in your organization by making it easier for them to **balance their personal and family lives**, is a measure that contributes to the promotion of equality. This is because, as we know from statistics everywhere, women are the ones who assume most care responsibilities (of the house, of family, of dependent people, etc.), which prevents them from participating as actively in the public sphere as men do.

The inexistence of measures that promote work-life balance tends to increase the asymmetries between men and women in organizations. **Therefore, we present concrete proposals that could facilitate this balance:**

- \\ As much as possible, workers and volunteers should have the autonomy to manage their working schedule, in order for them to be able to balance the family with the organization's requirements. Hours Banks, flexible schedules, aggregation of the week of work, are examples of methods that can be adopted;
- \\ Where possible, give the chance to work part-time can also be a good solution in certain phases of life, that are particularly demanding in personal or family life;
- \\ The possibility to work remotely may also facilitate this balance;
- \\ Support and encourage the use of maternity and paternity leaves and adopt a supportive and understanding attitude, especially in this phase of life that requires particular dedication to family;
- \\ Finding solutions so that people with dependent children can participate in initiatives outside of conventional schedules: for example, organizing a “children's corner” at a meeting in the evening or on a weekend;
- \\ Fight against a widespread culture that associates productivity with long working hours and physical presence and that sees family responsibilities as constraints;
- \\ Respect break times, by avoiding making phone calls or sending messages and emails outside working hours. Avoid making excessive work hours a common practice.



## Voluntari pentru Idei și Proiecte (VIP)

Volunteers for Ideas and Projects is a student association that was established in 1998 in Bucharest. Each member of the association is part of a single community: Business Club, Econosofia, International Affairs or Leadership Development and can be part of more than one working department from the following: Human Resources, Business Development, Public Relations, Marketing, Creative.

One of the core values of VIP is Ethics, alongside Professionalism, Initiative, Leadership and Teamwork. These values are being reflected in the way new volunteers are recruited and how each community and each department is managed. During the recruitment period that takes place every year in October, the human resources department together with the marketing department are focusing on ensuring gender equality, by **reaching and recruiting both men and women** students.

Moreover, each community and department chooses a leader for every year and since it has been established the **management of this student association has been represented equally by men and women**.

VIP's culture shows a great example of how both male and female members can be recruited and can access leadership positions.

Click  
here  
to visit  
VIP's  
website





# Envision changes in your organization

In the previous chapter, **we shared a set of measures and good practices that can be adopted by youth organizations** committed to become more equal and inclusive.

Some of these measures will not be feasible or suitable for your organization, but there are probably others that can be adopted and **adapted to your reality**, and still **others that you can imagine**.

We now propose a more systematic planning exercise: **we suggest that you develop an equality action plan**. This plan should be the result of a **collective process**: it is important that several people get together to decide what changes they want to see happen in the organization. More heads think better and those who are involved in planning are more likely to be more committed to the actions and changes to be implemented.

The organization's management cannot be exempted from participating in the conception of this plan. It is very important that they are involved in this project from the very beginning and that they make a consistent commitment to this action plan.

The plan should be **developed from the gaps and needs identified in the self-diagnosis**. Pay special attention to the "no" answers and consider whether it makes sense to actively seek measures/actions to turn those "no's" into "yes's" in the future.

For example, if you answered "no" in the self-diagnostic to the question "Are there specific measures to deal with gender-based violence situations that may occur in your organization?", you could integrate the measure "Establish rules and procedures" in the plan.

To facilitate this task of developing the equality plan, **we share with you a very simple matrix that you can use in this exercise**.



Dimension of analysis	Action / measure <b>What?</b>	Procedures / stages <b>How and when?</b>	People responsible and people who are involved <b>Who?</b>	Financial, technical and logistical resources <b>What do we need to implement this action/measure?</b>	Evidence/outcome indicators <b>How can we know if the implementation was successful?</b>



In the **first column** you should include the intervention dimension (recognition of the importance of the problem, leadership and speaking time, communication, activities, sexual and moral harassment or human resources).

In the **second column** you can describe the measure/action that you have decided to implement.

In the **third column** you should describe, in some detail, the steps and diligences you will take to implement this measure, drawing a timeline.

In the **fourth column** you should write the name(s) of the person / people who will take responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the measure / action and of other people that will be needed in the implementation of the measure / action.

A **fifth column** follows, where you can list the resources to be mobilized (financial, technical, logistical) in the implementation process of each measure/action.

There is a **final column** where you should put the result indicators. The idea is to answer the question: how can we see that the measure/action was successfully carried out?

We share an **example** that we hope will help you understand the action plan process!



Dimension of analysis	Action / measure <b>What?</b>	Procedures / stages <b>How and when?</b>	People responsible and people who are involved <b>Who?</b>	Financial, technical and logistical resources <b>What do we need to implement this action/measure?</b>	Evidence/outcome indicators <b>How can we know if the implementation was successful?</b>
Recognition of the problem	Awareness-raising action on gender equality for members of the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Contact NGO specialist in the area (Sept)</li><li>- Prepare dissemination materials (Oct)</li><li>- Publicize the session</li><li>- Manage registrations (Oct and Nov)</li><li>- Ensure logistical aspects (Dec)</li><li>- Evaluate the session (Dec)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sarah and Richard coordinate the action</li><li>- Everyone in the organization is invited to participate.</li><li>- The communication department will spread the word and mobilize the members</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Budget for coffee break</li><li>- Room for the action</li><li>- Budget to pay for travel and meals for the people from the invited NGO</li><li>- Projector and computer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Awareness action carried out</li><li>- Participants identify learnings and changes</li><li>- Speeches of the organization's members more egalitarian</li></ul>



# Act for equality

Once concrete actions have been agreed upon, decisions have been made about how and when to implement them, responsible people and those to be involved have been defined, necessary resources and indicators of achievement have been identified, **we have an action plan for equality!** Now it is important to make sure that it does not remain in a drawer and that **it serves the purpose for which it was designed.**

Just as we proposed regarding the preparation of the plan, the implementation process should also be **collective**: it is essential to involve the organization's management, but also the other members of the organization who, whenever possible, should be mobilized and called upon to commit to the implementation of measures. It is our conviction that **change will be faster and more consistent the more the members of the organization see themselves and are invested as agents of change.**

A plan works like a road map. **Resistance, difficulties and unforeseen events will probably arise along the way**, which condition and require deviations from the route inscribed on the "map". For all these reasons, it is essential that regular moments are set aside to jointly **analyze the progress of the plan's implementation.** It is important to identify deviations and obstacles as early as possible and to develop strategies to overcome barriers and ensure the implementation of the plan.

We recommend that you **ensure clear and consistent communication**: everyone in the organization should be aware of the Equality Action Plan and the measures it contains. It is important that you communicate the progress in the implementation of the plan, making visible the added value brought by the implemented actions and measures. **It is also important to celebrate the achievements!**

It's crucial to say that in addition to implementing the concrete and specific measures to promote equality that are included in the plan, **we need to be able to mainstream equality issues** (see the glossary for the concept of gender mainstreaming).

The concern for ensuring **equality and non-discrimination must be present in everything that is done and in everything that happens** in the organization!



# Glossary

**1. Direct discrimination:** where one person is treated less favorably on grounds such as sex and gender, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation. (EIGE, 2023)

**2. Domestic violence:** All acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit, irrespective of biological or legal family ties, or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence as the victim. (EIGE, 2023)

**3. Empowerment of women:** process by which women gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices. (EIGE, 2023)

**4. Equality:** ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018)

**5. Feminism:** movement for social, cultural, political and economic equality of women and men. It is a campaign against gender inequalities and it strives for equal rights for women. Feminism can be also defined as the right to enough information available to every single woman so that she can make a choice to live a life which is not discriminatory and which works within the principles of social, cultural, political and economic equality and independence. Feminism can be also defined as a global phenomenon which addresses various issues related to women across the world in a specific manner as applicable to a particular culture or society. Though the issues related to feminism may differ for different societies and cultures, they are broadly tied together with the underlying philosophy of achieving equality of gender in every sphere of life. So feminism cannot be tied to any narrow definitions based on a particular class, race or religion. (Christodoulou, 2005. Revised 2009)



**6. Gender:** roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more, modify gender roles. The concept of gender is vital because, applied to social analysis, it reveals how women's subordination (or men's domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever. (UNESCO, 2003)

**7. Gender equality:** the concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in the home, community and society. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. (UNICEF, 2017)

**8. Gender expression:** people's manifestation of their gender identity, and the one that is perceived by others (EIGE, 2023).

**9. Gender identity:** Each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms. (EIGE, 2023)

**10. Gender mainstreaming:** the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making. (EIGE, 2023)

**11. Gender Pay Gap:** Percentage of men's earnings and represents the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of female and male employees. (EIGE, 2023)

**12. Gender perspective:** is a way of understanding how gender may be addressed or related to a particular issue, and applying this to the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs. It is the notion that problems and solutions should be examined with sensitivity to the implications of gender in mind. (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2006)

**13. Gender relations:** constitute, and are constructed by, a range of institutions such as the family, legal systems, or the market. Gender relations are hierarchical relations of power between women and men and tend to disadvantage women. These hierarchies are often accepted as "natural" but are socially determined, culturally-based relations, and as such are subject to change over time. (Khosla & Barth, 2008)

**14. Gender roles:** social and behavioral norms which, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. (EIGE, 2023)



**15. Gender stereotype:** generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives. (United Nations, 2023)

**16. Gender-based violence:** Violence directed against a person because of that person's gender, gender identity or gender expression, or which affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. (EIGE, 2023)

**17. Glass ceiling:** artificial impediments and invisible barriers that militate against women's access to top decision-making and managerial positions in an organization, whether public or private and in whatever domain. (EIGE, 2023)

**18. Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to the sex of a person occurring with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of that person, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. (EIGE, 2023)

**19. Horizontal segregation:** concentration of women and men in different sectors and occupations. (EIGE, 2023)

**20. Indirect discrimination:** where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of one sex at a particular disadvantage compared with persons of the other sex, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim, and the means for achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary. (EIGE, 2023)

**21. Intersectionality:** a tool for analysis, advocacy and policy development that addresses multiple discriminations and helps us understand how different sets of identities impact on access to rights and opportunities. It is about recognizing that women experience discrimination and violations of human rights not only on the basis of their gender, but also due to other unequal power relations due to their race, ethnicity, caste, class, age, ability/disability, sexual orientation, religion, and a multiplicity of other factors including whether they are indigenous or not. (Khosla & Barth, 2008)

**22. Mansplaining:** the act of explaining something to someone in a way that suggests that they are stupid, used especially when a man explains something to a woman that she already understands. (Cambridge, 2023)

**23. Nonviolent communication:** it guides us to reframe the way we express ourselves and listen to others by focusing our consciousness on four areas: what we are observing, feeling, and needing, and what we are requesting to enrich our lives. NVC fosters deep listening, respect, and empathy and engenders a mutual desire to give from the heart. (Rosenberg, 2015)

**24. Patriarchy:** social system of masculine domination over women. (EIGE, 2023)

**25. Positive actions:** special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women. (United Nations General Assembly, 1979)

**26. Prejudices:** attitudes and feelings – whether positive or negative and whether conscious or nonconscious – that people have about members of other groups, which may be based on preconceived ideas and influenced by elements such as gender, race, class, personal characteristics or other factors. (EIGE, 2023)



**27. Reconciliation of work, family and private life:** objective pertaining to gender equality that requires the introduction of family and parental leave schemes, child and elderly care arrangements, and the development of a working environment which facilitates the combination of work, family and private life for women and men. (EIGE, 2023)

**28. Sex:** biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as female or male. (EIGE, 2023)

**29. Sex and gender-based discrimination:** discrimination occurring due to interaction between sex (as the biological characteristics of women and men) and their socially constructed identities, attributes and roles and society's social and cultural meaning for biological differences between women and men. (EIGE, 2023)

**30. Sexism:** any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behavior based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline, with the purpose or effect of: violating the inherent dignity or rights of a person or a group of persons; resulting in physical, sexual, psychological or socio-economic harm or suffering to a person or a group of persons; creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; constituting a barrier to the autonomy and full realization of human rights by a person or a group of persons; or maintaining and reinforcing gender stereotypes. (Committee of Ministers, 2019)

**31. Sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. (EIGE, 2023)

**32. Vertical segregation:** concentration of women and men in different grades, levels of responsibility or positions. (EIGE, 2023)

**33. Violence against women:** violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women including all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (EIGE, 2023)



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