

MEMO FOR YOUTH NGOs

on working with gender equality and LGBT issues

In our NGOs we communicate with different people. Many of them are heterosexual and cisgender or experience other privileges. But many are not. If you yourself have never felt discriminated but want to be an ally or for people from your audience or team, here are a few tips on how to make space safer.

1. Avoid questions about gender in questionnaires

Why do you need this information? If nothing depends on the answer, remove this question. If this information is mandatory for you, leave space for other options besides “M” and “F”: the “Other” column, the empty string, etc. There is no need to list gender categories - there is always the risk of missing something and leaving someone's identity behind. Do not use the category "sex" in the questionnaire.

2. If possible, avoid passport data during registration

If collecting passport data is a higher authority requirement, try to speak with the management: find out, for example, whether guests can fill out forms voluntarily. Always warn guests about why such information is collected, who receives it and how confidentiality is it maintained.

If guest passport details are needed for formal procedures (ticket bookings, check-in, etc.), please inform in advance and ensure guests' confidentiality. If possible, offer the option of self-buying a ticket with a subsequent refund.

3. Avoid misgendering

Don't decide "by eye" in what way to contact the person. To avoid confusion with the endings (if your language is gender sensitive), ask all guests to indicate their name and the pronoun which they should be addressed. Use the pronoun which people asked them to call, and not the one that seems more appropriate to you.

4. If possible, make the toilets gender-neutral in the office

The easiest way to avoid inappropriate separation between “M” and “F” is to organize gender-neutral toilets.

If toilets cannot be changed (for example, a shared toilet on the floor and xenophobic neighbours), notify about this at the beginning of the event. Tell us where there are men and women toilets in the building, which of them are more secluded, and also encourage people not to be afraid to use the toilet they need.

5. Do not divide games and exercises by gender, avoid gendered references

6. Use security contract and other markers of friendliness

7. Make a plan for a crisis situation

Think in a team about how you will respond to the open manifestations of homophobia or transphobia in the discussion. Prepare in advance a phrase that can stop the discussion in a homophobic or transphobic vein.

8. Develop a gender culture in the team

9. Speak in a tolerant way

How not to fall into the trap of hate speech? The answer is - watch carefully what words, especially with regard to vulnerable groups, you use.

Some organizations have already launched Dictionary of discrimination, created non-violent language list – contact with such organisations and change the language of your organization for the better.

10. Use gender neutral lexis (if your language is gender sensitive)

If you want to include all possible gender in its communication, it is possible to use gendergap

11. Do not get fooled by household sexism

Who washes the dishes after a coffee break? And who moves the tables? Who cleans the space and who takes out the garbage? Note that household responsibilities should not be divided by gender in your office and on your events.

12. Be gender equal everywhere

Look who's headed to your organization. All the important decisions are made by only a man / men? "The top" of organization and management positions mainly taken by men?