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READINESS WHILE ADVANCING RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT (BMAP FORWARD)

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE MEDIA: The path towards inclusivity and equality



Gender transformative communication in the media: The path towards inclusivity and equality

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1. Introduction

This publication was created within the Balkan Media Assistance Program to Foster Organizational Readiness While Advancing Resilient Development (BMAP Forward).

After the study "Gender equality in the media" was carried out, through which the authors analyzed the requirements of the key media partners of BMAP Forward, and offered guidelines and recommendations for long-term, significant improvement in the field of gender equality in the media, we considered it important to take another step towards the proposals of new approaches that can contribute to the common goal, which is a more equal and inclusive society, free from prejudice and violence. In fact, our goal is to offer a new perspective of organizing and approaching the everyday way of life, business and activity. Considering the fact that we are far from achieving the goal of gender equality by 2030, as stated in the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is necessary to transform established patterns of action and adopt new approaches so that we all try together to contribute to the achievement of the goals of gender equality in the future.

The purpose of this publication is to provide resources that can help find specific solutions to specific situations. Our goal is to offer our media partners a comprehensive understanding of a gender transformative approach to communication in the media. This approach is not only a theoretical concept, it is a tool that can transform the way the media perceive, present and communicate, aware of the existence of gender inequality and the inclusion of the wider context that causes and leads to it.

Through an in-depth look at a gender transformative approach, we provide key information how the media can become agents of change.

Together with our media partners, we want to build an environment in which words and media activity have the power to stimulate positive social changes, and therefore the aim of this publication is to call for cooperation, dialogue and action towards a more inclusive and equal media space.

2. Glossary

In order to devote ourselves in more detail to the topic of gender transformative communication in the media, it is crucial that we first understand the basic concepts that form the basis of this topic. This chapter serves as a guide to those key terms, providing definitions to help you better understand and interpret the concepts and ideas discussed below. From defining the difference between sex and gender, to understanding and perpetuating gender norms, stereotypes and prejudices, this glossary is your starting point for navigating the complex and dynamic world of gender transformative communication.¹

Sex and gender

Sex refers to the categorization of persons based on biological characteristics, which can be male, female or intersex. At birth, a person is usually assigned a binary gender, either male or female, based mostly on the appearance of the external genitalia. If the external genitalia are not typical in the commonly accepted normed understanding, other components of sex (internal genitalia, sex chromosome and hormone) are taken into account for the assignment of sex.

On the other hand, **gender** is a social construct, which defines socially determined roles, positions, statuses and differences between people in public and private life, based on sex.

Gender norms

Gender norms represent the rules and expectations that society has for people. Gender norms dictate the socially constructed roles and tasks expected of a person based on whether a person identifies as female or male. What shapes gender norms are stereotypes and prejudices, which are fixed beliefs about the role of men and women in the society.

Stereotypes and prejudices

Stereotypes are generalizations about a group of people based on the assumption that all persons of that or some other group have certain characteristics that are unique to them and by which they differ from others.

Prejudices are preconceived attitudes or beliefs about a person or a group of persons based on their identities or personal characteristics. Those views are not based on valid and credible experience or on rational and well-founded arguments.

Gender equality

Gender equality implies equality of rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all persons, regardless of their gender. It includes recognizing, respecting and encouraging diversity between the sexes and working to eliminate gender-based discrimination. The goal of gender equality is not only to ensure that men and women have equal rights, but also to

¹ Definitions are taken from several publications listed in the References section.

work to reduce existing social inequalities and promote fairness in all areas of life, including education, employment, politics, and social life.

Gender transformative communication

Gender transformative communication refers to an approach to communication that aims to promote gender equality, deconstruct gender norms and roles, and promote positive social change in the context of gender-related issues. This approach recognizes the power of communication in shaping attitudes, norms and social beliefs and uses it as a tool to promote gender justice.

3. Gender transformative approach, communication, and relevance

3.1. What are gender transformative approach and communication

In today's society, the issue of gender inequality is attracting an increasing attention, prompting a deeper consideration of the systemic and cultural dynamics that shape the lives of women and men. Society faces a serious challenge in the fight against gender inequality, both in social and economic, as well as political aspects of life, whilst recognition of its deep-rooted causes becomes crucial to achieving a more equal society.

Various dimensions of gender inequality pervade our everyday lives, from traditional gender roles to inequality in the workplace through both positions of power and unequal wages, from stereotypes in media reporting to unequal access to education. Gender inequality manifests itself in different ways, creating a complex and interconnected system of restrictions and discrimination.

Recognizing gender inequality is the first step, but sometimes that step is the most difficult one to take. The privileged positions we may find ourselves in can cloud our reality to the point that it is difficult for us to recognize gender inequality. This means that gender inequality often persists despite our best efforts to recognize and be aware of it. Gender inequality prevents equal opportunities for women (as well as other groups that are discriminated or marginalized). The recognition of gender inequality goes beyond the basic recognition of the problem, it is a call for a deeper understanding and confrontation with the causes that lie in the foundations of gender inequality. Only through a thorough analysis can we form strategies that will encourage the transformation of social norms and institutions.

In this context, a gender transformative approach to communication can open the door to creating a society that encourages equal participation, supports diversity, and strongly advocates for justice and equality, regardless of gender. This evolution in the approach to gender equality promises deeper and more lasting changes in society, laying the foundations for a more inclusive future.

The issue of gender transformative approach and communication has been present in various spheres of social action for more than thirty years, and in the last decade there have been more and more scientific works, research and reports covering this topic. Much has already been accepted and adapted, but the need for the integration of this approach in all spheres of human activity is still present.

A gender transformative approach refers to strategies, policies or initiatives aimed at creating positive and profound changes in society through recognizing, confronting and transforming gender inequalities and norms. This approach goes beyond just recognizing the problem of gender inequality and seeks to fundamentally change the systems, institutions and social norms that contribute to gender inequalities.

Elisabeth Rottach and Sidney Ruth Schuler defined a gender transformative approach back in 2009 (although this is not the first time this concept has been mentioned), as: *"Gender transformative approaches actively seek to examine, question and change rigid gender norms and power imbalances... Gender transformative approaches encourage critical*

awareness among men and women about gender-specific roles and norms; promote the position of women; challenge the distribution of resources and the division of duties between men and women; and/or deal with power relations between women and others in the community."

According to the report "Building Coalitions, Creating Change: An Agenda for Gender Transformation" published in 2012, the authors state that: *"Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) goes beyond just considering the symptoms of gender inequality, and addresses social norms, attitudes, behaviors and the social systems that lie beneath them."*

In the publication "Measuring Gender Transformative Change: A Review of Literature and Perspective Practices", published in 2015, it is stated that: *"Gender transformative changes and empowerment processes are ultimately about the transformation of unequal power relations and structures and norms (both visible and invisible) that they support"*.

In a publication published in 2019 and entitled "Gender-transformative adaptation to climate change: advancing social equity" a group of authors talk about gender-transformative adaptation that aims to *"transform power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce social and gender-specific inequalities. In particular, it intends to change discriminatory political, social and economic practices and patriarchal norms that hinder positive adaptation in climate change contexts... It offers a holistic multidimensional approach and goes beyond programs that fundamentally hide and ignore deep-rooted power relations and structures"*.

As we can see, the ways of defining this approach have changed and adapted over the years in which experience was gathered from practice in relation to transformative techniques that promote gender equality. At their core, they all have the same goal, which is to change perspective, behavior and action.

Gender transformative communication aims to change behavior, attitudes and beliefs about gender. It opposes discriminatory gender norms through images, language or other communication tools. This type of communication includes support for approaches that are oriented towards the abolition of gender inequalities and the promotion of gender equality.

The elements that shape gender transformative communication are:

1. Awareness of gender inequalities

This approach emphasizes recognizing and confronting gender inequalities in all aspects of society, including media, education, culture, sports, the work environment and politics. A person who is aware of gender inequalities understands that there are systemic differences and inequalities between men and women that arise from cultural, social, economic and political dynamics.

2. Suppression of gender-based stereotypes

The approach to gender transformative communication works on the deconstruction of traditional gender stereotypes that limit the freedom of expression and opportunities of individuals, especially women. Gender stereotypes are often based on social constructs

that prescribe how men and women should behave, which can limit freedom of expression and choices in life.

3. Increasing the visibility of women's perspectives

This approach encourages increasing the visibility of women's perspectives and experiences in media, literature, art, sports, culture and other segments. Often female perspectives are marginalized or ignored in social discourses, media and other spheres of public life. By increasing the visibility of female perspectives, we create space for an authentic portrayal of female lives, challenges and achievements. Only women can talk about the female experience.

4. Active opposition to gender discrimination

This approach offers an active fight against gender discrimination and advocates the fair representation of women in all spheres of public life, including politics, science, culture, art and all other spheres of life. This approach fights against unfair and unequal practices, norms and policies that arise from social constructions of what constitutes a man or a woman.

5. Criticism of capitalist and patriarchal structures

Although this issue may seem too complex, an approach to gender transformative communication must also include the deconstruction of structures that are capitalist and patriarchal. As far as the dismantling of these structures is achieved, at least on a conscious level, it will be significant for the contribution to gender equality.

3.2. Why is gender transformative communication useful

Communication is an important activity that we carry out even unconsciously at every moment of our lives. As such, it plays a key role in shaping our society and culture. As a means by which we transmit information, express emotions, share ideas and create connections, it can have the power to shape and transform our understanding of everything around us, including issues of gender and gender equality.

It is gender transformative communication that uses this power of communication to promote gender equality and deconstruct gender norms. This approach does not stop at superficial changes, but tends to reshape the space in which knowledge is created, creating new approaches about who has the right to tell the story and how.

The usefulness is not only in raising awareness, but also in encouraging real transformation.

Gender transformative communication reduces the perpetuation of gender discrimination, helps build self-confidence and skills to negotiate personal and organizational choices and demand equal access and control over resources.

It contributes to equalizing opportunities and breaking traditional norms. Therefore, this approach actively works to break the shackles of traditional gender-imposed norms. Focused on creating a space where men and women are truly equal, this communication emphasizes the importance of valuing the contribution of each individual, regardless of

gender. But to achieve this in practice, the awareness of unequal opportunities and the influence of social norms must be recognized.

The usefulness is also reflected in encouraging diversity in gender identities and expression, which is not limited to the binary male-female model, but raises awareness and understanding of the spectrum of existing identities and the importance of respecting and recognizing them. It increases awareness of different perspectives and experiences related to gender, creating an inclusive society that recognizes the richness of diversity. By rejecting established prejudices about the roles of men and women, this type of communication contributes to the creation of a more inclusive society without imposed restrictions.

Gender transformative communication acts as an educational instrument that raises awareness of the issues that different gender groups are faced with. It encourages individuals to understand the complexity of gender equality and the importance of active participation in the fight for achieving it.

This type of communication is not just an abstract theory, but strives for concrete changes in society. It shapes positive attitudes, promotes social awareness and plays a key role in creating policies and laws that support gender equality.

By integrating gender-aware approaches in journalism and media, gender transformative communication contributes to increasing the quality of information. More accurate, balanced and relevant information is created that better reflects reality and encourages critical thinking.

Finally, the usefulness of this approach is reflected in the possibility of creating a society that values diversity and encourages equal participation, which contributes to strengthening social cohesion. Gender transformative communication becomes a catalyst for social change.

4. Principles of gender transformative communication

Clear principles of gender transformative communication can provide significant benefits for mission-oriented organizations. They can help them to focus more directly on their goal, and to more clearly deconstruct gender norms in order to reduce prejudice and encourage wider positive change in society.

Many companies and organizations encourage the use of the principles to promote productivity, increase job satisfaction and foster professional success. The principles are like guidelines, they help managers, editors and their teams to create, develop and maintain organizational cultures that help business growth. Through a process of research and action, principles can not only build knowledge, but recognize that this approach has the potential to transform societies. Principles can help keep a strategy alive and agile, especially when faced with new opportunities or dynamics, serving as a foundation for decision-making, shaping the work atmosphere and guiding behavior within an organization or society.

Below I list five principles that are part of the article "Gender transformative approaches in international development: a brief history and five unifying principles" published in the journal "International Women's Studies International Forum" in November 2020.

The article, among other things, includes identifying five unifying principles to support future research and practice that incorporates a gender transformative approach.

1. Principle: Motivation towards profound gender transformations

The first principle focuses on the analysis of the program's motivation, which should be oriented towards long-term changes, ideally imbued with feminist ideals. This approach comes from the desire for revolutionary transformations of deep-rooted gender inequality. A key element is critical awareness that encourages the perception of discriminatory norms and practices, motivating the individual to intervene to change those norms.

A transformational approach goes beyond traditional theories, arguing that improvements in development outcomes can be tools for reshaping gender inequality, rather than just being a means of improving well-being or efficiency. This perspective recognizes human development as the ultimate goal and advocates a transformative agenda of gender equality for long-term social changes. Applying this principle in implementation and evaluation requires contextual understanding and emphasizes the need for personal and professional transformation. Contemporary feminist literature views research and evaluation as a political tool to promote social justice and the visibility of gender discrimination, emphasizing the need to partner with local feminist organizations for a better contextualized fight against inequality.

2. Principle: Focused on systems that perpetuate inequalities

In order to achieve true transformation, it is important to pay attention to all the places where inequality is present, which is continuously repeated. This must include all spheres of an individual, before they even enter the business environment. Therefore, true transformation should be in all spheres, because the perpetuation of inequality in one sphere can have enormous consequences to another. Such multi-layered and intersectional thinking is part of systemic approaches to transformation. Analyzing all existing gender

dimensions through a systemic paradigm, we help identify areas or entry points that can be used to perpetuate inequality, and offer solutions that can help bring awareness to those points and create a response to failures. When we see the areas where, most often unconsciously, the perpetuation of inequality takes place, we can change the paradigms of the system (its goals, structure, rules...) and ultimately overcome the existing paradigms.

Systems that perpetuate inequalities are often deeply rooted in society and can manifest in different ways. Awareness of the perpetuation of inequality in these spheres can contribute to its deconstruction and ultimately the absence of repetition. Some spheres where the perpetuation of inequality is present are economic, sports, educational, health, legal, social and political.

These systems of inequality are often interconnected and can reinforce each other. For example, economic inequality can limit access to quality education, which can further lead to reduced employment opportunities in the future.

3. Principle: Based on strategic gender-specific interests

We are talking here about identifiable concepts that have strategic outcomes related to power, structures, norms, attitudes and gender-specific relations. They refer to the attempt to influence the gender distribution of work, power and control of women, and traditionally defined norms and roles. Through the creation of principles that are based on strategic gender-specific interests, it is possible to change the power relationship between women and men. What the creation of such goals contributes to is addressing not only the consequences of existing inequalities, but also the very causes that lead to those consequences. Those causes relate to real challenges in women's rights that perpetuate gender discrimination and are rooted in behaviors, attitudes and cultural norms.

With such strategic approaches, organizations contribute to individual and collective knowledge, skills, attitudes and action. Relationships explore the dynamics of negotiation and cooperation, as well as expectations between people in organizations, groups, communities. Clear structures that are established through a strategic approach contribute to the regulation of collective and individual practices that will eventually be freed from the perpetuation of inequality.

What should be the first step in creating strategic gender-specific interests is a gender analysis, in order to increase the understanding of relevant aspects, relationships and structures within the organization.

4. Principle: Recognition and valuation of different identities

The richness is in diversity. This is such a simple statement, yet so often misunderstood. Transformational changes towards gender equality are intertwined with a number of aspects such as nationality, race, culture, religion, marital status, age, physical ability, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, class. It is necessary to recognize the diversity of individuals and consider how all forms of oppression are connected. In order to successfully work on recognizing and valuation of different identities, it is important to pay attention so that the focus does not shift primarily to people characteristics, but to understanding the structural processes that create and perpetuate inequalities.

By incorporating an intersectional approach into design, research methods, and action, gender transformative interventions can potentially be enhanced. Awareness of the intertwining of identities can give us a clearer context of the position in which a certain person finds themselves. For example, if a person is both LGBTIQ and with disabilities, it is more likely that they did not have the same initial opportunities to achieve a certain status in society. However, if that person is also of rich social status, their opportunities may have been better than that of a young single mother who has not been educated and lives in a rural area. By taking into account the understanding of structural dynamics, we can have a much clearer picture of the context and life of a particular person.

5. Principle: Acceptance of transformational methodological practices

Accepting transformational methodological practices means adopting new ways of creating and acting, through reliance on feminist participation. The adoption of such practices opens up space for reflection, which is necessary to enable the questioning of how certain frameworks can determine how we see ourselves and others, and what implications this can have for the creation of knowledge and practices. Allowing (self) reflection requires an "ethic of openness and vulnerability", which provides an awareness of relationships and interdependence with others. This principle questions the dynamics of power in the production of knowledge and encourages a greater diversity of voices that have not had the opportunity to be visible until now. The question arises as to who possesses the knowledge and has the power to raise awareness of the positions and open opportunities for the active participation of those who until then were in the background.

5. Gender transformative communication in the media

This chapter will explore how the media can act as a platform for the transformation of gender norms, with a focus on the internal structure of the media, and the importance of the language and equipment of media reporting.

5.1. Internal structure and external communication

Often the internal organizational structure is the place that in the best way exemplifies gender inequality through positions of power and decision makers. Unequal opportunities are reflected in all aspects of activity, often leaving women in the background.

Gender imbalance in organizations is a complex phenomenon that can be seen in the organizations' structures, processes and practices. It is often expressed through human resources because human resources practices, i.e. policy, decision-making or their application affect the employment, training, salary and promotion of women. Various studies show that men are most often in positions of power and decision-making, and even when there are women, they often perpetuate patriarchal patterns of behavior, which are no different from the men in those positions.

The internal organizational structure can reflect gender imbalance and inequality in different ways, and some of the key elements are:

- distribution of power and positions;
- wage differences
- diversity in management positions
- workplace culture
- employment and career development policies
- lack of equality in decision-making.

If there is an imbalance in the distribution of power and positions in the organization, it can result in gender imbalance. For example, if most senior management positions are reserved for men, while women are often concentrated in lower hierarchical levels, this indicates gender imbalance in the hierarchical structure. Awareness of these imbalances is the first step in the transformational model of action.

Gender inequality is often reflected in salaries within the organization. If there are significant differences in wages between male and female employees who perform similar or the same jobs and have similar responsibilities, this indicates a problem of gender inequality in the organizational structure.

If an organization does not have enough women in leadership positions or includes very few individuals who identify outside of the gender binary, this may indicate a lack of diversity in management structures.

Gender inequality is often reflected in the work culture of the organization. If there is a hostile or discriminatory environment towards a certain gender or other characteristic, it can result in low representation of these people in the organization or their limited opportunities for advancement.

The absence of clear policies that promote gender equality in employment, promotion and career development can make it difficult for women (or others) to realize their full potential and achieve high positions.

Ultimately, if women do not have equal access to organizational decision-making processes, or if their voices are systematically ignored, this can result in an imbalance in influence and decision-making. On the other hand, it is not enough to include women in positions of power, it is important to continue to be aware of the possibility of perpetuating patriarchal norms.

Addressing these issues requires a conscious effort by the organization to ensure a fair and equitable internal structure that fosters diversity and inclusiveness. This includes implementing policies that support gender equality, eliminating discrimination and creating a culture of equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender.

Adopting a systemic and strategic approach to gender transformative communication in the media leads to changes in these imbalances and a more inclusive work environment that provides equal opportunities and understanding for each individual.

The internal organization of staff and the adoption of a gender transformative communication approach will also affect external communication, especially when it comes to media content and access to media coverage.

Considering that gender transformative communication tends to change behavior, attitudes and beliefs about gender, causing a present imbalance in power positions, it cannot but have an impact on what journalists ultimately report on. This approach can influence the way stories are portrayed in the media. One out of five experts interviewed by the media are women, according to the organization International Media Support. For example, encouraging women's narrative voice in traditionally male fields can be another way to achieve gender transformation. Therefore, instead of the media constantly inviting standard speakers in certain fields, especially those that are stereotypically thought to be "male professions", respecting the approach of gender-transformative communication, they can certainly find different (female) voices who can speak professionally about these topics. On the other hand, the very approach to topics and the way in which they are reported becomes significantly different with changes in behavior and attitudes, so the application of knowledge and awareness of different opportunities and possibilities could help journalists to better understand the context, causes and consequences of topics about that they write about.

A third view of the external influence of gender-transformative communication can also be observed through the way media content is produced and distributed, creating new narratives about who has the right to tell the story and how.

Reporting through the principles of gender transformative communication can encourage audiences to question their perspectives on gender, and gender roles. If the public increasingly hears the opinions of women in various positions, especially those that were not present until then, the media contributes to breaking prejudices that women do not exist in those spheres or that these jobs are reserved only for men. The same goes for the reverse reporting on jobs that are stereotypically recognized as only female - including men in conversations about those jobs helps break down prejudice.

5.2. Gender transformative language and examples

Gender transformative communication in the media significantly influences language use, encouraging changes in vocabulary and sentence construction to support gender equality. This can also be reflected in the use of gender-neutral language. For example, instead of using "man" to describe people in general, a neutral term like "person" can be used.

Below are some examples that can serve as an illustration and a new perspective of using the neutral language of the gender transformative approach when reporting:

Instead of: "stewardess" or "steward", use "flight attendant";

Instead of: "firemen" use "firefighters";

Instead of: "nurse" or "medical staff", use "healthcare professional";

Instead of: "housewife" or "househusband", use "homemaker";

Instead of: "son" or "daughter", use "child" if you do not know who is being identified;

Instead of: "a man with a bag" or "a woman with a hat", use "a person with a bag" or "a person with a hat".

In addition to neutral language, using inclusive terms that encompass different gender identities can create space for all people, regardless of their gender.

Example: Instead of "all men and women", use "all people" or "all persons".

Rejecting the binary model in language encourages recognition of the diversity of gender identities. Also, avoiding language constructions that support gender stereotypes helps deconstruct prejudice.

Example: Instead of "male jobs" and "female jobs", use "jobs open to all" or "jobs in all sectors", or just "jobs".

When we talk about highlighting the professional titles of people, it would be important to ask those people exactly how they want to be signed. Avoid introducing people who identify as women using professional titles in the masculine gender.

Example: when talking about women: Instead of "president" use "female president", "politician" use "female politician", "professor" use "female professor", "director" use "female director", "miner" use "female miner" and alike.

These examples illustrate how gender transformative communication changes language to be more inclusive and gender neutral and to reduce prejudice. Such changes in the language contribute to the creation of a media environment that reflects the diversity of gender identities and supports gender equality.

5.3. Gender transformative visual material

Gender transformative visual material refers to photographs, video, illustrations, graphics, artwork and other media representations, which are intended to support and promote gender equality and diversity. These images aim to convey positive and inclusive messages about different genders, avoiding stereotypes and prejudice, whilst promoting awareness of the diversity of gender identities.

Gender-transformative visual material is one that actively challenges and changes gender-biased norms. For example, using images showing women in positions of power in politics or men doing household chores can be one way to achieve this. But only if these positions are considered more "feminine" or "masculine" in that society. Thus, it is important to always include context and a broader perspective before deciding to use any visual material in order to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and not participating in deepening stereotypes.

Such visual material can be used in a variety of contexts, including art, sports, politics, economics, science, technology, and other spheres. Specific examples vary depending on the sphere being written about.

Key characteristics of gender transformative visual materials include diversity of gender identities, deviation from stereotypes, equal and positive representation of women and men, inclusiveness in different contexts, representation of gender dynamics, empowerment and self-confidence.

According to the available research in the world and in the Western Balkans, men are more often represented in the media, both through media content and accompanying materials (photos, videos, illustrations...) even when the topic it is not directly about a specific man or a group of men.

Here are some examples of photographs that incorporate a gender transformative approach, and take into account everything that has been said so far:



If we are talking about socio-political issues, the illustrations should include all actors equally. In order to have a transformative influence on the deconstruction of norms, it is preferable that women are shown speaking in the visuals.



If speaking generally about political issues that do not mention specific people, visuals can include women (and men) in politics in order to break prejudice that they do not exist or that they have no place there.



If talking about sports in general, the illustrations should show women in different sports, in order to encourage other women to get involved through media representation, that is, to send a clear message that sports include women.



If talking about technology or science in general, the illustrations should show more women in different positions, so that the audience has an idea that women are an equal part of these professions.



When reporting on work, professions and employment in general, by illustrating older people in photographs, you contribute to breaking down prejudice and contribute to their visibility and inclusivity.



Why should people with disabilities not be in the photos when talking about any topic in general, and not only when reporting on a specific topic related to people with disabilities.

These visuals have the power to influence changing social norms and attitudes about gender and create an inclusive and aware society. They play an important role in supporting positive changes in the perception and acceptance of the diversity of gender identities. Media can use visuals that actively challenge gender stereotypes. For example, instead of portraying women in stereotypical and hypersexualized roles, the media can show strong, independent female figures, in the same way men are portrayed.

The integration of such visuals into media reporting helps create a balanced and informed representation of men and women, as well as the diversity of all people, regardless of their gender or gender identity.

6. Quiz: Check your understanding of gender transformative media communication

This last chapter gives you the opportunity to test your understanding of this topic in a fun and educational way and further establish your knowledge about gender equality in the media world.

Gender transformative communication is not only a concept, but also a tool that can shape society, change norms and contribute to the creation of a more inclusive media space. Through these questions, we will explore different aspects of this approach, including definitions, principles, manifestation in media organizations, language, images and how media can support gender equality.

The quiz has 15 questions that will test your knowledge and stimulate thinking about the importance of inclusivity, gender neutrality and supporting diversity in the media. Good luck!

1. What does the term "gender transformative approach" mean in the context of the media?
 - a) Just a change in the number of male and female employees
 - b) Strategy for creating positive changes in society through recognizing, confronting and transforming gender inequalities and norms
 - c) Maintenance of existing gender norms
2. How is gender transformative communication manifested within media organizations?
By:
 - a) Increasing stereotypes in reporting
 - b) Encouraging inclusiveness and diversity in reporting and within the newsroom
 - c) Ignoring gender-aware approaches
3. What are the three key components of gender transformative language?
 - a) Binary, stereotypes, discrimination
 - b) Traditionality, exclusivity, normativity
 - c) Neutrality, inclusiveness, empowerment
4. What does gender transformative photography mean?
 - a) Shows the diversity of gender identities and promotes positive messages
 - b) Shows clear differences between men and women so that everyone knows where they belong

c) Follows traditional gender stereotypes and norms to which society is accustomed

5. What are the advantages of integrating gender transformative communication into media content?

a) Increase of stereotypes and misunderstanding

b) Promotion of patriarchal behavior patterns of all genders

c) Creation of a more inclusive society, enhancement of social cohesion, promotion of equality

6. Which of the following principles reflect a gender transformative approach in journalism?

a) Motivation towards maintaining deep-rooted gender roles

b) Focus on systems that perpetuate inequality

c) Principle of maintaining clear positions that belong to men as opposed to those that belong to women

7. How can gender-aware communication within a media organization be encouraged?

a) By ignoring diversity among employees

b) With education, workshops and diversity support

c) By maintaining the status quo

8. What should gender transformative photography look like in the media context?

a) It shows men more often, because they are realistically and more often in the positions that are being reported on

b) It shows the diversity of identities and avoids stereotypes

c) It follows traditional gender norms

9. How can the media support gender equality in reporting?

a) Dealing exclusively with the problems that women have in the sphere of maternity leave, housework, motherhood and alike

b) By promoting positive stories about women and men

c) By promoting positive stories about different identities related to sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, class, economic status and alike

10. What are gender norms?

a) These are the rules and expectations that society has from people and they dictate social roles and tasks

b) These are norms that are unchangeable and we should all treat them with respect

c) They indicate the rules of behavior in society that are natural for men and women

11. How can the media use gender transformative communication to support diversity in political reporting?

a) By reporting on the basis of presented political plans

b) By actively promoting stories about politicians and policies that promote diversity or presenting policies that are inclusive if they do not exist as such in current political circles

c) By inviting men who are in politics to speak in the media about their political approach, because there are certainly no women

12. How can gender transformative language be encouraged in media content?

a) By actively applying inclusive expressions and gender neutrality

b) By using exclusively traditional expressions

c) By ignoring language changes because it is more powerful to say a politician or a doctor than a female politician or a female doctor, we do it for the sake of women because then they feel more powerful

13. How can the media promote gender equality in advertising?

a) By using exclusively traditional gender roles in advertisements

b) By showing the diversity of gender roles and identities in advertisements

c) By ignoring gender aspects in advertising and perpetuating stereotypes

14. Why is inclusivity in media content important in the context of gender equality?

a) Because it does not affect the perception of gender identities

b) Because it maintains existing norms

c) Because it contributes to the creation of a society that values diversity of identity

15. How can gender transformative communication contribute to the reduction of gender-based stereotypes in the media?

a) By maintaining traditional depictions of men and women

b) By actively avoiding stereotypes and promoting diversity in stories, language and images

c) Ignoring stereotypes and focusing exclusively on sensational stories

The answers are in the footnote.²

² Answers to the quiz: 1. b, 2. b, 3. c, 4. a, 5. c, 6. c, 7. b, 8. b, 9. c, 10. a, 11. b, 12. a, 13. b, 14. c, 15. b

7. Conclusion

A gender transformative approach refers to strategies, policies or initiatives aimed at creating positive and profound changes in society through recognizing, confronting and transforming gender inequalities and norms. In addition to recognizing the problem, this approach seeks to fundamentally change the systems, institutions and social norms that contribute to gender inequalities. Through this publication, we have explored the essential aspects of this approach, providing a perspective that can serve as a catalyst for positive social and media change.

When it comes to gender transformative communication, it aims to change behavior, attitudes and beliefs about gender. It opposes discriminatory gender norms through images, language or other communication tools.

As a contribution to this, we remind you of the BMAP FORWARD initiative of FEMBASE, which tries to solve the problem of the constant lack of women's voices in the media in the Western Balkans.

Gender transformative communication provides support for approaches that are oriented towards the abolition of gender inequalities and the promotion of gender equality, and is characterized by several key elements: awareness of gender inequalities, suppression of gender-based stereotypes, increasing the visibility of women's perspectives, active opposition to gender discrimination, and criticism of capitalist and patriarchal structure.

This approach to communication contributes to equalizing opportunities and breaking traditional norms. Focused on creating a space where men and women are truly equal, this communication emphasizes the importance of valuing the contribution of each individual, regardless of gender. But to achieve this in practice, the awareness of unequal opportunities and the influence of social norms must be recognized. By integrating gender aware approaches in journalism and media, gender transformative communication contributes to increasing the quality of information. More accurate, balanced and relevant information is created that better reflects reality and encourages critical thinking.

The five basic principles of gender transformative communication are: motivation towards deep gender transformations, focus on systems that perpetuate inequalities, being based on strategic gender-specific interests, recognizing and valuing different identities, and accepting transformational methodological practices.

Concrete media can act as a platform for the transformation of gender norms, along with the transformation of the internal organizational structure in their media, and directly through the way of reporting, the conscious and conscientious use of language and visual equipment of media reporting.

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