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Inclusive Communication Toolkit

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01 Introduction

In the framework of the **Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Policy**, ALDA has drafted an **Inclusive Communication Toolkit**, in order to further apply the proposals of the policy and to broaden the awareness about the importance of inclusive language in the workspace and beyond.

The toolkit also aims to provide some guidelines on job advertisement and interviews, on the communication and dissemination sphere and on how to create consent forms, surveys and databases using an inclusive approach.

The inclusive language toolkit has to be understood as a powerful means **to avoid using a stereotyped language**. At the same time, language can be used to challenge social structures that marginalize people or groups, and to support them in exercising their rights. This translates into **awareness of the way we talk about intersectional power issues related to gender, race, sexuality, inequality and disability**, and communicating about people of different identities or groups that may experience discrimination.

The importance of language

When it comes to inclusive language, several factors must be taken into account. In addition to gender inclusivity - which in this case means using a language that also includes women and non-binary people (i.e. people who may or may not recognise themselves in one gender) - ethnic minorities and disabilities must be considered too.

Inclusive language is used precisely not to exclude anyone, and to make everyone feel part of the conversation without discrimination of any kind.[1] On the contrary, non-inclusiveness translates into androcentrism, i.e. using language that refers mainly to cisgender, white men without disabilities, excluding diverse people.

In English, as well as in many other languages, the generic use of masculine nouns/pronouns to refer to other genders creates a gender bias.[2] Feminist linguists and critics try to break this habit by proposing gender-neutral language to convey the inclusion of all genders. Using inclusive language may thus result in not using the exact same set of words in all contexts and for all people.

1. Inclusive language to respect all people

Inclusive language recognises the humanity of all people and **allows their self-determination**. It invites people to participate in the conversation and respect their identities. It is useful to **promote equal opportunities**, avoiding stereotypes and limiting people's potential.

The inclusive language is also context-dependent because some words might be considered harmful in certain situations. An example is the use of pronouns while talking with trans individuals. They might feel comfortable with the use of certain pronouns in the private sphere but might not feel safe being referred to in the same way in the public space.

2. Inclusive language communicates a message through a precise terminology

Using precise terms to distinguish multiple experiences is more inclusive than to use vague terms. Metaphors and other figures of speech should also be reflected on, to ensure that they do not constitute harmful or misleading connections. **Using precise and inclusive language improves the efficacy of the message as it might reduce the distance between the speaker of the message and the receiver.**

3. Inclusive language acknowledges diversity

Inclusive language is helpful in reducing certain inequalities that some people experience, without neither silencing nor accentuating their diversity. Each of us brings a result of different identities and life experiences, and **inclusive language helps recognising the unique experiences of the individual or the group** that is talked about. Acknowledging diversity also requires the suspension of our assumptions: it is important to learn about an individual's unique experiences rather than forming assumptions based on their identities.

4. Inclusive language involves continual improvement

Language will change over time, **we should be ready to shift with those changes and approach the topic with humility**. We should be ready to always learn more and be willing to make changes to improve. We should be open to understand why certain terms might be harmful and make an effort to use a more inclusive language. Inclusive language is about taking advantage of opportunities to use more effective words and phrases in our communication[3]

1.1 Key Questions to assess inclusivity

1. Does this term perpetuate stereotypes or harmful behavior?

Use **specific terms for specific groups or experiences**. This acknowledges the unique and intersectional experiences of different individuals and groups.

Dominant narratives often reflect the perspectives of people with power, but they may be misleading.

2. Does this term have a harmful history or association?

Using racist or otherwise discriminatory terminology or simply language linked to negative stereotypes might lead to **encouraging harmful language.**

Language has an impact on society and can perpetuate bias or stereotypes. Avoid using language that contains harmful stereotypes or metaphors.

3. Does this term make everyone feel respected and included?

Using terms that have ties to specific identity groups to describe broader or more general experiences can also be harmful, as it minimizes the diversity of individuals' different experiences.

4. Does this term have the same meaning for all people? Is it accurate and effective?

Precise terms eliminate ambiguity and overgeneralization.

Effective communication means that the audience is able to understand the intended meaning of the author, speaker, or signer. In some cases, the language used may cause certain audience members to feel harm or distress.

5. Can we find an alternate term to express the same concept?

Strive to search for alternative terms that are more inclusive and less connoted to a language that derives from a partisan or Eurocentric and ableist vision.

1.2 Strategies to adopt a more inclusive language

Some guiding questions can help determine whether a term is inclusive. These questions can be applied to language used across contexts, whether in the workplace, in code or datasets, or in interpersonal communication. In considering these questions, think not just about the specific term, but also the context in which it is used. In some cases, terms may be inclusive and appropriate for certain contexts, but not for others.

- Does this term center dominant groups as the default and/or perpetuate harmful stereotypes?
- Does this term have a harmful history or association?
- Does this term contribute to communication in which everyone feels respected and seen?
- Does this term convey the intended meaning to all people precisely and effectively?
- Can we find an alternative term that does a better job, and does the person or group we refer to have a preferred term?

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1.3 **Users Inclusive communication guidelines**

When making decisions regarding images and design, apply the Inclusive Communication Toolkit Guidelines to ensure coherence with ALDA's values.

- Choose images of **people that are diverse** in terms of:
    - Gender,
    - Ability or disability,
    - Age,
    - Ethnicity,

Ensuring that specific groups feel visually represented.

- People depicted should be photographed in their **natural environment** and **spontaneous poses.**

- Choose to avoid photos in which only women or only men, only white people or only minorities are represented if the target of your campaign is not limited to them but is instead mixed and open.

- Show women and men, and people of different origins in roles and functions of equal value.

- Avoid preferring full-length photos of women and half-length photos of men as this could be seen as objectifying women's bodies.

- Favor pictures of **active behavior** (speaking, shaking hands, walking, writing, voting...).

- Challenge gender stereotypes in images.
  - This could mean choosing a woman to illustrate a topic traditionally considered male-related, e.g. technology or science, or a man in activities traditionally associated with women, e.g. family care, human resources management, household related tasks.

- Challenge traditional definitions of femininity such as submissiveness or sentimentality, expressed through clothing, cosmetics, style.

- Avoid stereotyping or "**tokenism**" in images.[4]
  - This can be done by portraying "diverse" individuals participating in activities.

- Images of persons with a disability should aim neither to hide a visible disability nor over-emphasise it. Persons with a disability should be portrayed with persons without disabilities, in a setting where they have equal value.

- Avoid using images that give the impression that ALDA has a gender, age, ethnic, or any other type of bias. Ensure ALDA is portrayed as open and welcoming of all types of citizens.

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1.4 Checklist of useful questions to ask when making the final choice of pictures:

☐ Who is in the picture? Are there both women and men?

☐ What are the apparent power relations between them?

☐ These can be expressed through their physical positions or postures, their facial expression, their clothing, etc. Is there diversity in these aspects? Is there inclusiveness?

☐ What are the possible underlying messages that could be interpreted from this image (ask several people for their opinion, since this can vary enormously)?

☐ Does it correspond to the message we want to get across?

☐ If any of the questions above make you doubt the picture's suitability, choose another one.

1.5 Glossary

Privilege

"Privilege" refers to certain **social advantages**, benefits, or degrees of prestige and respect that an individual has by belonging to certain social identity groups. For example, by being part of Western society, or any other social identity that allows people a position of dominance or power. Among others, these include being white, male, heterosexual, Christian, wealthy and not having disabilities.[5]

Intersectionality

The concept of privilege goes hand in hand with that of intersectionality. **Our social experiences are modified by our privileges**. For example, ethnic origin, race, social class, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Some of our social belongings and characteristics - like ethnic origin, race, social class, gender identity, sexual orientation and (dis)ability - may result in privileges or oppressions. These aspects of social inequalities operate together, and the concept of intersectionality refers to **how these various aspects of social location "intersect" to mutually constitute individuals' lived experiences.**[6]

What are some types of privilege, and how to combat privilege blindness[7]

Religion

Can you imagine other forms of privilege?

Sexuality

Race

Gender Identity

Ability

Education

Class

Privilege is the benefits and advantages held by a group in power, or in a majority, that arise because of the oppression and supression of minority groups

Privilege is the advantage of people that do not experience oppressive experiences. Understanding it requires to see things from the unprivileged perspective

Although no one can get rid of their privileges, it is possible to acknowledge and discuss them in solidarity with those who do not share them

Notes for Introduction

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3. Center for Equity, Gender & Leadership. (n.d.). Understanding IL Playbook. Berkeley Haas. Retrieved April, 2023, from https://haas.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/Understanding-IL-Playbook-3.pdf

4. Policy or practice that is mainly symbolic, and involves attempting to fulfill one's obligations with regard to established targets, such as voluntary or mandated gender quotas, with limited efforts or gestures, especially towards minority groups and women, in ways that will not change men-dominated power and/or organizational arrangements. https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1408

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02 Disability

Persons with disabilities **are more likely to live in poverty and experience other forms of discrimination and violence** than those without disabilities. They are more likely to have difficulty accessing education and employment when institutions are not set up to support their needs. In humanitarian emergencies, people with disabilities are also disproportionately affected and **face greater barriers to accessing humanitarian assistance, protection and support**. This section aims to create and use a positive and accurate language in order to have in focus the dignity and inclusion of persons with disabilities when they are talked about or with. To give some advice and start speaking with persons with disabilities in the same manner in which we speak with people who do not have disabilities

2.1 Strategies for an inclusive communication with persons with disabilities

When speaking with a person with disability, **it is important to approach them in the usual manner, without assuming they need special attention and introduce yourself.** It is also important to introduce any other person to the conversation, especially if the person you are talking with has a visual impairment. You need to maintain eye contact even though the person has no sight or vision impairment; if the person is in a wheelchair, it is appropriate to sit down and keep eye contact to create proximity.

Effective communication best works if the **conversation is kept natural** and the voice tone is ordinary with normal pitch, and speed. The language should be standard but, pay attention to the use of words and glossaries because some words might result in being disempowering and excluding. Allow the person to understand the meaning of the information you are sharing and check if the person understood, provide further explanation if necessary and if they asked for clarification. Apologize in case of mistakes but do not burden yourself with an excess of guilt.[8]

2.2 Advices to bear in mind when talking to a person who has disabilities

Apply these tips when referring to persons with disabilities:

- ☐ **Use person-first language**: a person with a disability, rather than expressions like "disabled person"

- ☐ Emphasize each person's individuality and capabilities rather than defining them by a condition

- ☐ Avoid phrases like 'suffers from' and passive 'victim' words

- ☐ **Avoid terms that define the disability as a limitation**

- ☐ Do not use collective nouns such as 'the deaf' as these groups are not homogeneous

- ☐ Remember that a large majority of disabilities are invisible[9]

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2.3 **Digital accessibility tips**

ALDA is committed to **web accessibility** and is constantly working to improve the user experience. While creating a web product, our communication unit and any other ALDA employee, intern or volunteer must use this check-list:

☐ **Conduct internal audits** regularly to verify and improve the accessibility levels including multimedia assets such as photos. video, audio and infographics.

☐ **Provide alternative text** on pictures in digital content, both on websites and on main social media platforms.

☐ Include alternative text on images that contain information and subtitles on videos.

☐ Use Camel Case (capitalize the first letter of every word) for hashtags as far as possible.

☐ Ensure compliance to enhance website accessibility.[10]

2.4 Glossary

Ableism

Discrimination in favor of persons without disabilities. The practices and dominant attitudes in society that exclude, devalue and limit the potential of people with disabilities. The ableist society treats non-disabled people as the standard of normal living in the public space, as creating barriers for people with disabilities. Not having a disability is not acknowledged as being a privilege because it is usually considered to be the norm.

"Is Affected by"

It is used to describe a person affected by a particular disability without defining them by their health issues. It does not have a negative connotation and does not define the person by the disability.

It is better to not use phrases "afflicted with" or "suffers from" and again "is a victim of".
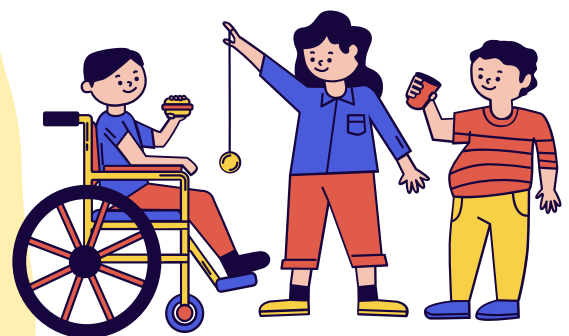
Mobility impaired, person with a mobility/ physical impairment

Describe a person affected by a particular disability without defining them by their health issue. This phrase is preferred instead of wheelchair-bound, crippled.

Non-disabled

A person who does not have a disability. This term, although still questioned by some, is better applied in a comparison between people with and without disabilities, and is to be preferred overall to expressions like "normal" or "healthy", which would imply that people with disabilities are unhealthy or not normal, as well "abled bodies" implies that people with disabled bodies are not able to do some things.

People living with HIV, people living with AIDS, person living with a chronic health condition

Those phrases do not define a person by the health issue and avoid the negative connotation that implies a person living with a health condition has no or limited quality of life. We should avoid "AIDS victims" or "MS sufferers". It is also important to remember that being positive to HIV does not mean developing AIDS, so the two expressions are not synonyms.[11]

People over or under.., elderly people, older people, elders, young people

It is used to describe people of a particular age group. It is used to describe people in a non-discriminatory way respecting their rights and dignity.

It is better to avoid terms such as "the elderly", "seniors" or "youth".

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People who have particular requirements, people who requires specific accommodations

People who might need requirements to support them with a disability. Many people consider the term "special needs" offensive because of the social stigma associated with it. We suggest using more neutral terms.

We should avoid using "people with special needs".

People with a disability or disabilities (PWD)

It is used to describe a person affected by a particular disability or disabilities and it is considered respectful because it puts the emphasis on the individual and not on their health condition.People or person with disability or disabilities is the term used by the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Another acceptable definition is a person or people who are differently-abled.

You should not use expressions such as "the disabled", "disabled people" or "the handicapped".

People with hearing impairment, hard of hearing person, deaf person

It describes a person affected by hearing loss, recognising there are different degrees of impairment.

With the term deaf we refer to anyone who has a severe hearing problem. Sometimes deaf is used just for people who have been deaf for all their life and it is preferable to avoid it when referring to someone who has an hearing impairment. We should use the world "Deaf" with a capital letter to refer to the Deaf community.

You should avoid using the word"deaf".

People living with mental health issues - obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), bipolar disorder, anorexia nervosa

We intend a person affected by clinical defined mental health issues to avoid conflating day-to-day behaviors with diagnosed illness. We should use a sensitive language when talking about mental health and avoid using stereotypes and stigmatized words and phrases. We should say "people living with" an illness instead of defining them by their mental health and we should specify their disorder.

We should avoid "mental", "mental patient", "psychotic", "OCD", "manic depressive".

People living with visual / vision impairment, visually impaired person, blind person, blind people

It describes a person affected by sight loss, recognising the different degree of impact. Be aware that "blind person" refers to someone with total sight loss. It is preferred because it avoids negative connotations and homogenization of all people living with visual impairment.

We should avoid "the blind".

Person who is neurodiverse / neurodivergent/ neurotypical

It is used to describe somebody whose cognitive functions are different from what is considered "normal" or "typical". The term recognizes the brain does not function in the same way. It avoids negative stereotypes and can be used to highlight the different strengths neurodiversity offers.

Person with short stature, person with restricted growth

To describe a person with short stature and those terms are considered respectful.

In solidarity with

Being in unity with a common cause and it can substitute "standing with" avoiding potential discrimination toward people who cannot stand.

Took their own life, ended their own life, death by suicide, completed suicide, attempted suicide

To describe a situation where a person ends their own life. The phrase 'committed suicide' derives from this act historically being criminalized and therefore implies wrongdoing.

It is preferable to avoid saying "committed suicide" or "unsuccessful suicide".

Notes for Disability

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3 **Gender**

ALDA is committed to **gender justice and equality between women, men, trans and non-binary people.** Women also experience discrimination that prevents them from exercising their human rights, including gender-based violence and lack of access to necessities such as adequate healthcare, education, or dignified and fairly paid work.

Transgender people are affected by many of the same systemic issues and are also more likely to live in poverty, though their experiences of discrimination and inequality can be different. The approach we use to gender justice is centered on intersectional feminism and it takes into account different social and political identities that can create different experiences of gendered oppression.[12]

The topic of gender is closely related to LGBTQIA+ ones, which are explored more in-depth in the dedicated section. It is advisable to read both sections as a whole.

3.1 How to mainstream gender equality and diversity in the public sphere

☐ Ensure **gender balance among speakers** at any public event organized

☐ Make efforts to engage speakers of all genders with **diverse backgrounds**

☐ Challenge gender stereotypes by, for example, involving male participants in debates and panels that are traditionally part of women's interest, or engaging women in topics that are considered to be traditionally masculine (like technology, science, industry, trade...), etc.

- ☐ Each Hub or Unity organizing or hosting an event should involve women speakers and **keep track to elaborate internal statistics and redress imbalances**

- ☐ Encourage women's participation when opening audience questions

- ☐ Make sure to use pronouns of choice when language cannot be gender neutral

3.2 Press and Media coverage on Gender

- ☐ Ensure gender balance among all genders in audiovisual products

- ☐ Engage with external partners to promote increased participation of women in their programmes

- ☐ Ensure that the language used, when representing ALDA, are in line with the values of the organization itself. These include articles, posts, events, ALDA Talks and many others

- ☐ Take gender equality and diversity aspects into consideration when drafting papers

- ☐ Challenge gender and LGBTQIA+ stereotypes, promote female role models and increase awareness of gender issues, through the choice of content, when possible[13]

3.3 Gender-Neutral & Anti-Discriminatory consent forms and entries in database, surveys, attendance lists

Gender is a sensitive and private topic for many people, thus **it is imperative to use a gender-neutral approach to make everyone included and not judged.**

The best choice is to **not ask for such sensitive data in consent forms**, attendance lists or databases if you are not looking for disaggregated gender data. Sometimes **it is important to know a participant's preferred pronouns,** to not make mistakes while speaking with them or sending them emails and invitations. Prefer to ask for pronouns instead of gender identity.

However, if you must collect gender data, it would be advisable to take into consideration a couple of options.

For starters, **do not limitate the gender choice between male and female**, instead prefer to add more options such as non-binary and transgender. The best option would always be to **leave a blank to allow everyone to freely express their gender identity.** Consider also making any question about pronouns non mandatory.

You will find more information and explanations about the usage of pronouns and gender identity in the next section concerning the LGBTQIA+ community.

Example: Federica Rossi identifies herself as a female; however, she wants to be referred to with they/them pronouns. Or, Mario Bianchi, identify themself as a non-binary person thus their pronouns might be he/she/they accordingly. Usually, the information that ALDA needs to collect are:

Gender | Pronouns | Organization | Email | Photo & Data consent | Signature

3.4 Glossary

Androcentrism

It is the practice of placing a masculine point of view at the center of someone's worldview, culture and history, often marginalizing femininity. In this context it is important to adopt a feminist approach that is inclusive of all genders. At the same time we should avoid the androcentrism narrative when we talk and write.

Dignified work

A worthy job enables workers to be respected as human beings and not treated as means of production and rejects the commodification of work. It is a productive work in condition of freedom, equity, security and human dignitiy.

GENDER Equality

Gender

Gender is understood as the social and cultural construction of norms and behaviors given to people on the basis of their assigned sex at the moment of birth, and is often important to someone's perception of their own identity. First, it should be considered that, even in biology, intersex individuals exist, and binarism does not account for all bodies. A person's sense of their own gender might not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth, or may also question the traditional gender binary. When talking and writing it is important to specify if you refer to gender or sex and to understand the difference between these two terms.

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Misogyny

Misogyny means hatred and prejudice against women. It has been assumed as a cultural norm on a global scale throughout history but sometimes it is not widely recognised. It is important to fight against misogyny and stereotypes.

Partner / Spouse

When talking about relationships, the sex and gender of a colleagues's partner should not be assumed. For this reason it will be more appropriate to use the neutral words "partner or spouse" instead of husband/wife or girlfriend/boyfriend. The term partner is inclusive of all significant relationships.

People

The word people is used as the plural of human beings. However when using this world it is necessary to specify to whom you are referring to trying to be as inclusive as possible. 'People' is a neutral term that does not refer to women, men or nonbinary people specifically, and is therefore inclusive of all human identities. We often use the phrase 'people we work with', since we work with people of all genders. When speaking you should avoid using the word "guys" because it excludes women and non-binary people.

Sexism

Sexism is based on prejudice, stereotypes or discrimination usually against women or on the basis of sex (either as the assigned sex at the moment of the birth or gender). Sexism is a form of prejudice that means that women and girls disproportionately experience the injustice of poverty and are less able to exercise their rights.
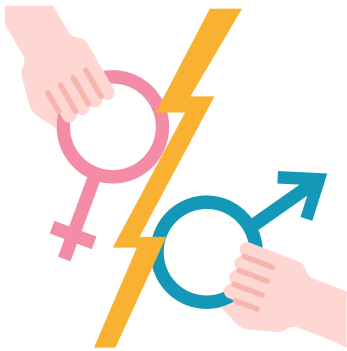
Sexual violence

Sexual violence is one of the most prevalent forms of violence against women; however, it can also be experienced by men and other genders. The LGBTQIA+ community is more likely to experience sexual violence than heterosexual and cisgender people. Eliminating sexual violence, as well as other forms of gender-based violence is fundamental to fighting gender justice.

Sex worker/People who sell sex or sexual services VS people who buy sex or sexual services

A person who works in the sex industry, e.g. receives money or goods in exchange for sexual services. The term sex worker is inclusive and respects the rights and dignity of workers, it avoids negative or discriminatory implications. Those phrases are also preferred by the movement to respect sex workers' rights.

It is important to avoid using words like prostitute, prostitution, use of prostitutes and use of sex workers.

Spokesperson

A person speaking on behalf of an organization or community. A spokesperson could be of any gender. We should avoid language that implies that men are the default human. In this as in other situations we prefer to use the neuter gender instead of the masculine because the masculine in this case is not inclusive but excludes. Other terms we prefer to use in the neutral gender are sportsperson, business person, salesperson, police officer, chairperson, flight attendant, bartender (instead of barman).

Women, men, girls, boys

'Women and children' reaffirms the patriarchal view that women are as helpless as children, neglecting women's actual and potential roles. It wrongly suggests that men are not in need of protection and that women have no agency or capacity to act. Use phrases that do not categorize women and children in the same group, and be specific about who you are talking about. Where appropriate, acknowledge that men are or can be victims as well.
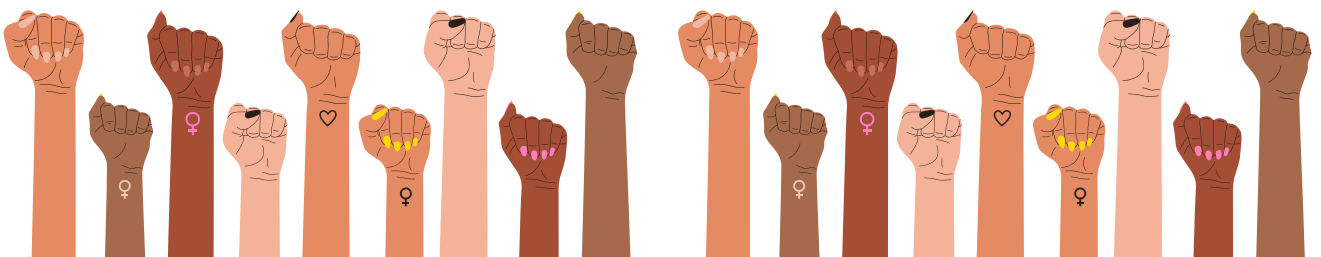
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4 LGBTQIA+

LGBTQIA+ communities suffer from discrimination resulting in social exclusion and stigma. Inclusion in the workplace leads to better outcomes for organizations that do understand the exclusion proved by people with diverse sexual orientations or gender identities. **Using inclusive language makes a positive difference** toward LGBTQIA+ employees because it shows respect and understanding. At the same time, **it creates a more trustful and inclusive workplace culture.**

Inclusive language ensures that all LGBTQIA+ employees are not excluded in our conversations or our work, it should be used when communicating directly with a colleague and when describing someone who isn't present. **The inclusive language acknowledges the diversity of people and creates an open and respectful environment to break prejudice, stigma and stereotypes.**[14]

4.1 Gender Pronouns importance

The importance of the use of gender pronouns lies in **making others understand what identity one wants to be known by.** It is a practice considered fundamental among the LGBTQIA+ community **to avoid misgendering**, i.e. confusion or mistakes about which gender is used when addressing someone. We advise everyone to use their pronouns and sign with these to normalize the practice even within the organization and to prevent anyone from being a victim of misgendering. In any case, remember that if you are not sure of an individual's gender, **it is better to ask them directly instead of guessing**. Also, in case of insecurity, **you can always use the pronoun They/Them as it is considered neutral.**

Example: Alternatives worlds and expressions to ladies, madam, women and guys, sir, men are: folks, everyone, friends, all, humans, people, co-workers, colleagues, guests.

LGBTQIA+ and further Gender Inclusion in the workplace

4.2

The selection process of the candidate

4.2.1

a. **Avoid gendered language** because it might trigger unconscious biases in both the hiring team and the potential candidate.

b. **Do not start with interviews until you have collected a gender-diverse pool** of candidates, which promotes equal hiring opportunities.

c. **Mark your commitment to gender inclusivity on your hiring pages**, it will help a diverse pool of candidates to apply and your inclusivity culture will improve.

Example: ALDA particularly welcomes applications from women, trans, non-binary and intersex people, individuals from Black communities, other communities of color and ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people living with diseases, and people under 30 years old.

4.2.2 Gender language practices

Gender language in ALDA's communication material (newsletter, articles and posts) as well as in job descriptions can send a wrong message to readers. **The use of gendered language might reinforce stereotypes and can be considered harmful.**

Example: Men are more likely to interrupt women while speaking (or, in general, women are more likely to be interrupted while speaking). Adopting a "zero interruptions policy" might ensure that every voice will be heard.[15]

4.2.3 Pronouns share as a standard

By encouraging employers and colleagues to share their preferred pronouns, **you will create a more inclusive workplace and make it easier for non-binary people to express their gender without fearing prejudices.**
When introducing someone into a conversation, it is a good habit to introduce them with their preferred pronouns (if you know them) or, feel free to ask them.

Example: If someone's signature is "Mario Rossi (he/him/them), Project Officer" it means that you can use male pronouns as well as they/them pronouns. Consequently, their identity could be more fluid than the one of someone who only uses he/him pronouns or she/her ones. At the same time, it is good to keep in mind that the gender expression and behavior of someone with only he/him pronouns or she/her may be more fluid and less traditionally masculine/feminine than what could be assumed.

4.2.4 Inclusive facilities

There are logistical and practical steps you can take in order to make your staff feel more included through the space that is available to them.

Example: If possible, create at least one gender-neutral bathroom. This will be a great start to making queer employees feel accepted within the staff. Also, you could provide sanitary products in all bathrooms without making a distinction.

4.2.5 Respecting and applying the principles

While it is good to have policies for the respect and inclusion of all individuals working within a company, it is critical to ensure that such principles are put into practice, making an effort to break the patriarchal inequalities and exclusions that tend to be replicated even in the workplace.

Creating structures, enforcing practices that foster inclusivity and welcome all genders will make employees feel safer and supported in their path, whatever it may be.

4.3 Glossary

Asexual, ACE

An asexual person is a person of any gender or sexual orientation who does not experience sexual attraction. Ace is an abbreviation of 'asexual' that some people use to describe themselves. Asexual people are gaining more recognition within LGBTQIA+ movements.

AFAB, AMAB

Acronyms meaning "assigned female at birth" or "assigned male at birth". No one, whether cisgender or transgender, gets to choose what sex they're assigned at birth. This term is preferred to "biological male or female", "male or female bodied", "natal male or female", and "born male or female", which are inaccurate and do not respect the identity of transgender people. It also refers to how the sex assignment at birth can try to force intersex individuals in one of the terms of the binary.

Ally

A Heterosexual and Cisgender person who supports equal civil rights, supports LGBTQIA+ social movements and challenges homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Cisgender

A person whose sense of gender identity correlates with the sex that they were assigned at birth. If there is no language to describe a person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth, then this is assumed to be 'normal', the implications of which contribute to the 'othering' and marginalization of transgender people. For this reason, recognizing this definition is an act of solidarity with trans and gender non-conforming people, who experience extreme and often violent discrimination around the world.

Discrimination

Discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favorably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics.

Gender Non-Conforming People (GNC)

People who do not conform to the social norms associated with the gender that correlates with their sex assigned at birth.

The description 'gender non-conforming' places the emphasis on the system rather than the individual and is more inclusive of a broader range of expressions of non-conformity with gendered social norms.
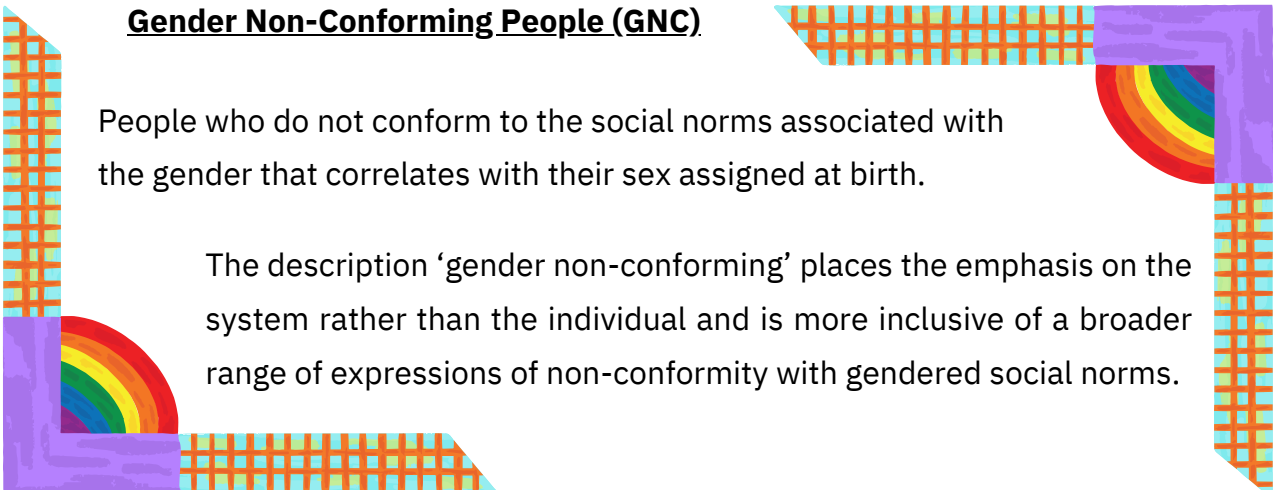
Heteronormative / Heteronormativity

Cultural and social practices which support the notion that heterosexuality, as well as all others social forms and institutions linked to it (like traditional marriage), are the only legitimate sexual orientation and institutions. In order to achieve real equality, we must fight discrimination in all its forms. If we do not actively include people who experience discrimination, they will necessarily be left out and left behind. To be truly inclusive, we must acknowledge power structures including heteronormativity, which is highly connected to patriarchal norms and gendered expectations.

Homophobia / Lesbophobia / Biphobia / Transphobia

Prejudices and/or active discrimination against those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans. Such discrimination is fundamentally at odds with the process of striving for a more equal world. It is important to be aware of and explicitly consider how it may intersect with work and how it affects those we try to support.

LGBTQIA+

An acronym that indicates the spectrum of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual **+ other people whose identities are not heterosexual and cisgender.** There are various versions of this acronym that include different letters to represent different groups. It is important to note that some people consider the + (to indicate others not explicitly covered in this acronym) to be insufficient. In general, the "Q" for queer indicates those who consider themselves "gender queer" or "sexually queer". The acronym should not be used without "T" for transgender because it would refer to the anti-transgender movement.

Non-binary

Non-binary refers to a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or exclusively feminine - identities that are **outside the gender binary**. Some people experience gender in a fluid way that can change over time and circumstances (they may use the term **gender-fluid**). It is better to use this umbrella term rather than 'gender minority', as being considered part of a minority can be very 'othering' and reinforces the idea that some humans are not the norm, rather just less common

Microaggressions

The everyday indignities, put downs, dismissals and insults that members of marginalized groups experience in their day-to-day interactions with individuals who are often unaware that they are engaging in an offensive or demeaning way.

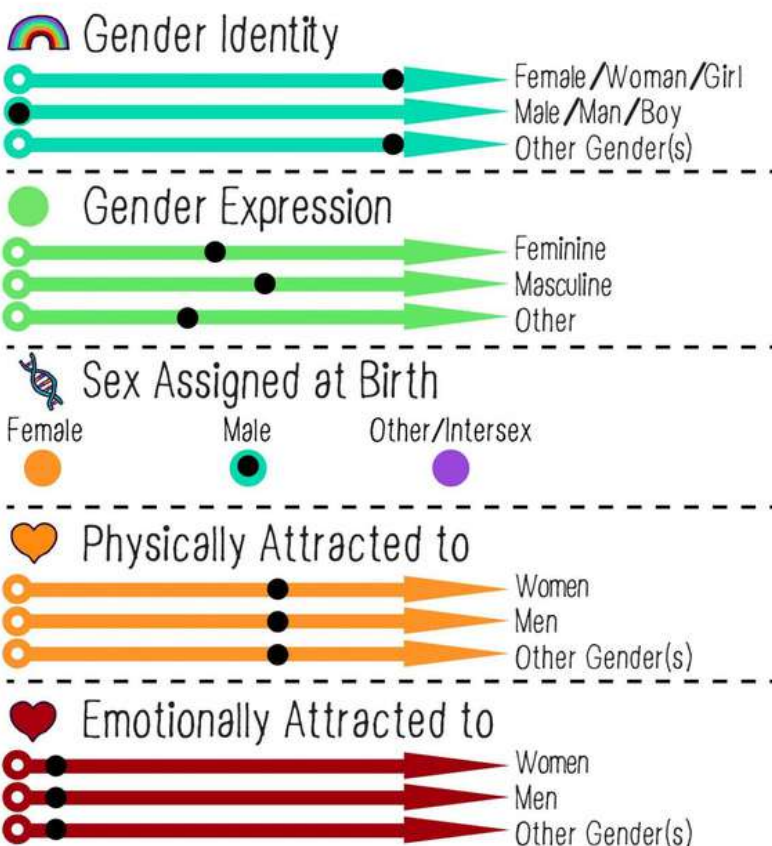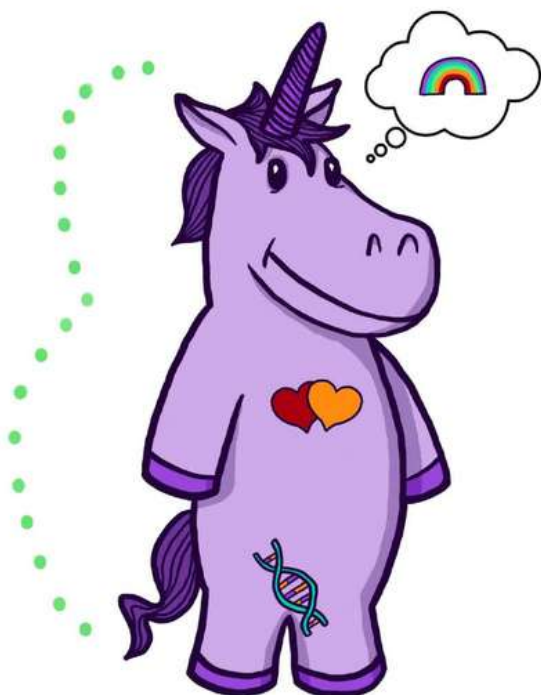## Transgender

People whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. Words such as trans or transgender are preferred as they do not directly imply a person's gender.

At the same time, it is not preferred to avoid terms such as "transsexual", as some feel it centers a trans person's identity on whether they have gotten medical care to realign their bodies to their gender or not.

The Gender Unicorn [17]

alda*
European Association for Local Democracy

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

The Gender Unicorn was developed by an organisation of trans students founded in 2011 (TSER) and has been used for years now to make everyone visually understand the difference between key concepts in the LGBTQIA+ world and to avoid further stereotyping and discrimination. The unicorn explains in a simplified way:

Gender Identity: One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity. For transgender people, their sex assigned at birth and their own internal sense of gender identity are not the same.

Gender Expression/Presentation: The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth.

Sex Assigned at Birth: The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, chromosomes. Especially in this context, is important not to simply use "sex" because of the vagueness of its definition and potentially transphobic implications: chromosomes do not always determine genitalia, sex, or gender.

Physically Attracted To: Sexual orientation. It can depend on a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth.

Emotionally Attracted To: Romantic/emotional orientation. It can depend on a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth.

There are other types of attraction related to gender such as aesthetic or platonic. These are simply two common forms of attraction.

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5   Race and Ethnicity

Talking about inclusivity is fundamental to fully embrace and accept the uniqueness of each individual. Such uniqueness is also related to race and ethnicity. **Individuals whose race or ethnicity differs from that of the dominant group may be excluded and marginalized,** even in their working life.

It is therefore fundamental to ensure as much inclusivity as possible, avoid stereotypes and override prejudice in the workplace - **promoting diversity within communities, and strengthening them through the input of different ideas, viewpoints and experiences.**

Workplace diversity consists of the presence, within an organization, of a heterogeneous workforce, that is, composed of people with individual characteristics that differ from each other. A company in which diversity is respected and does not engage in discriminatory practices ensures equal opportunities for its employees, regardless of their characteristics.[18]

5.1   Ethnic inclusion in the workplace [19]

These are all questions that can be used in an ethnic diversity audit.

☐ Does ALDA welcome people from diverse cultures?

☐ Are workers from certain ethnic groups all clustered in certain job levels?

☐ Do job advertisements target diverse ethnic groups?

☐ Do job advertisements state that the enterprise embraces diversity and promotes ALDA's Gender Equality & Anti-Discrimination policy as well as this Inclusive Language Toolkit?

☐ Does top management support diversity?

☐ Are succession pools (i.e. pools of people designated to succeed managers in the organization) diverse?

5.2 Questions to ask employees about company policies[20]

These are all questions that can be used to also assess the employees' perceptions of company policies. It may be relevant to have the employees' feedback even on questions that seem repetitive of those listed above:

☐ Is the human resources department committed to diversity?

☐ What are the enterprise attempts to eliminate racial discrimination?

☐ Is top management committed to diversity?

☐ What are the enterprise's diversity initiatives?

☐ Does the enterprise reasonably accommodate different beliefs, customs and practices of ethnic groups?

☐ Is the dominant group committed to diversity?

☐ What are the enterprise procedures to deal with racial discrimination complaints?

![alda logo - European Association for Local Democracy]

5.3 Glossary

Anti-Racism[21]

The anti-racism approach recognizes that racism has systemic and structural elements, and actively takes steps to combat them.

Anti-racism takes an intentional approach to tackling racism, as opposed to just being 'not racist'. It involves work to dismantle racist systems and structures as well as disrupt the racist ideas we might hold as individuals.

Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and People of Color (POC)

These terms are used to denote and refer to different categories of subjects and to acknowledge how indigenous communities around the world are affected by racism and postcolonial dynamics. Grouping non-white persons (ranging from Black, to Asian, to Middle Eastern, etc.) under the single label of "BIPOC" or "POC" can be a simplification that overlooks differences, but it is used in certain contexts to highlight how the mere fact of not being white can lead to discrimination, with "BIPOC" being overall preferred as it contains more diversity. It can also be a more comfortable term for people who do not strongly identify with one specific non-white race or ethnicity. In other contexts, the phrase "racialized people" is instead used to avoid de-personalizing the issue entirely through the persistent use of one single term or acronym.

In all cases, it is important to also consider what term the group or individual prefer in reference to their ethnicity, race and even nationality (for example, a group may refuse a racial denomination which is considered discriminatory in their culture or social sphere; as another example, an individual with an ancestry of immigration may or may not identify with the nationality and ethnicity of their ancestors and/or of their current country; etc.)

Decolonization[22]

Decolonization refers to the achievement of independence from colonialism and it is an ongoing process of power shift, from former colonial government and power structures, to BIPOC or otherwise racialized communities. It includes the reconstruction of culture, society, education and language.

The end goal is a society which no longer isolates or marginalizes the knowledge, experiences and practices of Black, Indigenous, People of Colour and other racialized people, but is jointly and structurally owned by all who are connected to dismantling poverty and inequality.

Ethnicity and Race[23]

Both ethnicity and race are social constructs. Ethnicity divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as a shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

Race, on the other hand, revolves more around physical characteristics rather than cultural factors. However, it is important to keep in mind that race is a social construct too, as genetics and immigration history have, according to a good part of the scientific community, proven that it is not a scientifically grounded concept. Different racial classification systems even disagree about what physical factors belong to one race or another. While race is still used in some scientific literature (for example in some medical research, which can benefit racialized people), and many may use it with no harmful intentions, it is important to keep in mind that, historically, the concept was often rooted in prejudices and attempts to justify power and domination over different groups. Therefore, race as a concept is better avoided, and ethnicity is preferred.

Overall, as stated above, it is important to also keep into consideration what identificatory terms the groups or individuals may prefer - including those persons that others may perceive as white.

Global South

The term "Global South" helps identify the majority of BIPOC or other racialized countries from rich, mainly white countries (that usually colonized them).

It is preferable to avoid terms such as "Third World", "Developing Countries" and "Developed Countries".

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism refers to the way that institutional policies and practices disadvantage different racial groups. This creates privilege for white people and discriminates against Black, Indigenous, People of Colour and other racialized people. Such outcomes are often not explicit, and caused by institutions and practices which do not overtly mention race or ethnicity or any intention of discrimination, but still systematically put certain subjects at a (dis)advantage.

Taking an anti-racist approach may require challenging and dismantling systems of discrimination, questioning our own practices and seeking alternative ways to overcome them.

People experiencing poverty, people living with/in poverty, people living in extreme poverty

People who currently live in a situation of economic poverty that might affect them in different ways. The key is that poverty is a situation they are experiencing and not an inherent characteristic of that person or community of people. It is important to avoid expressions such as "poor people", "the poor" and "poorest people". From an intersectional perspective, economic disadvantages can often be linked with racialized individuals or communities, and aggravate their situations.

Racialized Group [24]

Used to refer to all groups that do not enjoy the privileges of white people as a result of the socially constructed process of racialization. A racialized social system is "one where economic, political, social and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of people in categories or racial groups".

Roma, Sinti & Travelers (RST) [25]

Roma and Sinti are terms used usually to refer to communities that have settled down in one area. They are each spelt with capital letters because they contain other communities. The term gipsy, on the other hand, is considered an insult and has a negative connotation. Travelers are instead communities who still live as nomads or semi-nomads, usually coming from different parts of Europe than Roma (usually Northern).

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6 **Annex I**

a. Inclusive language job advertisement[26]

1. Use third-person pronouns

The first step to writing a gender-neutral job description is to remove the gendered pronouns he/she and prefer they/them, or even better you.

Using second-person pronouns, you/your will help the candidate personify the position and not create gender barriers.

2. Include salary and benefits information

A job description which foresees a salary range could be seen as a lack of transparency and fair pay regardless of gender or background.

It is also important to include the total compensation package like flexible work policies, bonuses and parental leave policies.

3. Only list essential requirements

Usually, women feel they should meet 100% of the criteria before applying for a job position, while men do not.

A solution is to list only the essential requirements avoiding the "desirable ones". Seniority requirements might also perpetrate imbalances, thus instead of focusing on qualifications, it might be helpful to highlight the objectives expected to be achieved.

4. Remove gender-coded words

Gender-coded words are words that have certain associations with male or female characteristics at a subconscious level due to stereotypes and socialization (see Annex III for some examples). Such words in job advertisements hurt candidates. A gender-neutral job description can be defined as a job description that is devoid of gender-coded words.

In addition, mention adjustments for applicants with disabilities. The organization should offer reasonable adjustments to facilitate them, ensuring the accessibility of job advertisements toward a diverse group of candidates.

5. Avoid language that might exclude older or younger applicants

Similar to gender-coded language, there are terms which have ageist connotations and can be discriminatory against certain age groups. For example, expressions like "recent graduates" almost immediately disqualify mature candidates.

On the other hand, younger applicants too can be subject to bias. Job ads that mention terms like "highly experienced" also become a barrier for younger candidates.

6. Incorporate a Gender indicator in Evaluation Criteria

Ensure that job openings demonstrate the organization's commitment to Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination.

When evaluating candidates, measure commitment to gender equality as competence and require them to demonstrate that they can incorporate a gender perspective into their work.

Suggested reading: Linee Guida Diversity & Inclusion in Azienda; Italian publication accessible through this link: https://www.globalcompactnetwork.org/files/pubblicazioni_stampa/pubblicazioni_network_italia/LINEE-GUIDA-DIVERSITY-INCLUSION-IN-AZIENDA.pdf

Bonus Tip: before publishing a vacancy check the gender bias in your job ads on this Gender Decoder website: http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/

b. Inclusive Job advertisement template[27]

About the company (200 words)

☐   Describe the organization and the team

☐   Mission and Values of the Organization

☐   Achievements and milestones so far

☐   What is it like working for ALDA

☐   Why it is a great opportunity

The [title of role] should have these skills:

What skills and working characteristics should this person have? E.g. written communication, data analysis, prioritization, etc.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Like the rest of the Company X team, you will benefit from:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What are the perks?
E.g. equity, a benefits package, health insurance, etc

What are the next steps? (150 words)
What does the candidate need to do to apply? What does the rest of the process look like?

c. Decode your language [28]

Gender-coded words to be aware of in job advertisements and company communications

Masculine-coded words		Feminine-coded words	
active-	objective-	agree-	support-
adventurous-	opinion-	affectionate-	sympath-
aggress-	outspoken-	child-	tender-
ambitio-	persist-	cheer-	together-
analy-	principle-	collab-	trust-
assert-	reckless-	commit-	understand-
athlet-	self-confiden-	communal-	warm-
autonom-	self-relian-	compassion-	whin-
battle-	self-sufficien-	connect-	enthusias-
boast-	selfconfiden-	considerate-	inclusive-
challeng-	selfrelian-	cooperat-	yield-
champion-	selfsufficien-	co-operat-	share-
compet-	stubborn-	depend-	sharin-
confident-	superior-	emotiona-	
courag-	unreasonab-	empath-	
decid-		feel-	
decision-		flatterable-	
decisive-		gentle-	
defend-		honest-	
determin-		interpersonal-	
domina-		interdependen-	
dominant-		interpersona-	
driven-		inter-personal-	
fearless-		inter-dependen-	
fight-		inter-persona-	
force-		kind-	
greedy-		kinship-	
head-strong-		loyal-	
headstrong-		modesty-	
hierarch-		nag-	
hostil-		nurtur-	
impulsive-		pleasant-	
independen-		polite-	
individual-		quiet-	
intellect-		respon-	
lead-		sensitiv-	
logic-		submissive-	

d. Workplace culture[29]

Promote active listening: Active listening comprises three components: listening without knowing, listening without judgment and listening without interruption.

Make gender inclusivity policies and practices readily available: Notice boards, the intranet or other internal communications platforms are good ways to create a section for employees to access them.

Provide and communicate leadership development and mentorship programmes: Share information about leadership development and mentorship programmes, including those targeting women specifically. Make these available to staff by providing funding, subsidies and/or leave time to facilitate greater participation.

Use an inclusive approach with pronouns: Avoid gender-specific pronouns except when referring to a specific person. Use the "they" or "them" or intentionally use diverse pronouns.

Intentionally celebrate men, women and persons of all genders with unconventional personalities and styles as leaders: Give equal visibility to women, men and persons of all genders occupying decision-making and leadership positions as role models.

Create pathways for feedback: Ensure that there are integrated feedback mechanisms and accountability for actions. It may be appropriate to allow feedback to be submitted anonymously.

Be conscious of voice: Notice those people who are silent in the room and ensure that you include them and do not continually hear the same voices. When brainstorming or asking for feedback, use inclusive methods, such as listening circles to ensure everyone speaks.

Use uplifting, inclusive and non-discriminatory language and behavior.

Be brave: Respectfully call out behavior that is not in line with the company's inclusive way of working.

Collect data. Administer and act upon organizational culture surveys regularly. Examples of the questions the company can include to collect the staff feedback are: What are the top three things you value most about your company? What are the top three things you'd like to improve about your company? To the extent possible, data should be sex-disaggregated.

Authentically commit and be accountable. Leaders should articulate an authentic commitment to diversity, challenge the status quo, hold others accountable and make diversity and inclusion a personal priority.

Be conscious of your own biases. Leaders should be aware of their biases as well as flaws in the company system, and work hard to ensure a meritocracy.

Track and monitor sex-disaggregated metrics to ensure women, men and persons of all genders are benefiting equitably from professional development opportunities at your company.

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