

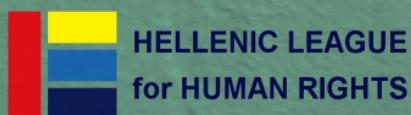


A New  
Gender Era

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# TACKLING GENDER STEREOTYPES

## A Good Practices Presentation



HELLENIC LEAGUE  
for HUMAN RIGHTS



Gender Alliance Initiative



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‘Tackling Gender Stereotypes: A Good Practices Presentation’

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# INTRODUCTION

Gender stereotypes have long been embedded in our society, persisting as deeply ingrained and pervasive beliefs about the characteristics and roles associated with women and men<sup>1</sup> and are detected, among others, in young audiences and in places of public dialogue, such as the media and advertising.

While progress has been made towards gender equality, young audiences continue to be influenced by these stereotypes, that perpetuate harmful biases and limit the potential of individuals in various spheres. Gender stereotypes can also limit their understanding of their own potential and hinder their personal and professional development. Also, they are often perpetuated in public dialogue, particularly in media and advertising, especially targeting young audiences, creating divisions between genders, perpetuating inequality and impeding social progress by discouraging genuine understanding and acceptance between individuals.

In this short guide we will try to (not exhaustively) present good practices to tackle gender stereotypes when working with young audiences, in education and in places of Public Dialogue, such as Media and Advertising, in order to promote equality and inclusivity.

This is a deliverable of "A New Gender Era" project which is implemented by the Hellenic League for Human Rights (HLHR) and Gender Alliance Initiative (G-All) with the co- funding of the European Union.

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[1] Butler, Judith, 2009, Αναταραχή φύλου: Ο φεμινισμός και η ανατροπή της ταυτότητας. Αθήνα: Αλεξάνδρεια.

# 1. WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION

It is educators' and mentors' duty to address gender stereotypes and empower young people to challenge and overcome them, highlighting the importance of fostering inclusive and equal environments, promoting critical thinking, encouraging role models that break free from traditional gender norms, implementing comprehensive education and providing resources and support.

## 1a. CREATING INCLUSIVE AND EQUAL ENVIRONMENTS

It is fundamental to create inclusive and equal learning environments that encourage respectful dialogue and collaboration. By eliminating discriminatory practices and fostering an atmosphere of acceptance, we can help young audiences to develop an appreciation for diversity and individuality. It is essential to provide opportunities for both boys and girls to engage in a wide range of activities traditionally associated with the other gender. For example, boys should be encouraged to participate in dance or art, while girls should be supported in exploring careers in science or technology. By breaking down barriers and promoting equal participation, educators can gradually dismantle gender stereotypes.

## 1b. PROMOTING CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is a powerful tool to challenge and question societal norms, including gender stereotypes. By engaging young audiences in critical discussions, educators can encourage them to analyze media, literature, and historical examples through a gender “lens”. For instance, when exploring the portrayal of gender roles in literature, educators can prompt students to reflect on the way male and female characters are portrayed and whether these depictions perpetuate stereotypes. By promoting critical thinking, young people are allowed to develop their own perspectives and challenge the narratives they encounter, fostering a more inclusive understanding of gender identities.

## 1c. ENCOURAGING POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

Role models play a crucial role in shaping young people's beliefs and aspirations. When tackling gender stereotypes, it is essential to highlight positive role models who defy traditional gender norms. By showcasing individuals who have succeeded in non-traditional careers or pursued their passions despite societal expectations, educators can provide young audiences with diverse and relatable examples. These role models can be male or female and may include scientists, athletes, activists, or artists who challenge gender stereotypes in their respective fields. By normalizing these alternative narratives, young people are empowered to question gender stereotypes and pursue their own dreams, regardless of societal expectations.

## 1d. IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

To effectively tackle gender stereotypes, it is necessary to implement comprehensive education that includes gender studies as part of the curriculum. By integrating gender-related topics into various subjects, young audiences can gain a deeper understanding of the societal construction of gender roles and the impacts of gender stereotypes. For example, within history classes, educators can explore how gender stereotypes have influenced women's rights movements or the achievements of historically marginalized individuals. Additionally, incorporating discussions on sexism, gender identity, and LGBTQ+ rights in health or citizenship can contribute to a more holistic understanding of gender issues. By educating young people about the consequences of gender stereotypes, they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and tools to challenge and reshape societal norms.

## 1e. PROVIDING RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Tackling gender stereotypes requires access to appropriate resources and support systems. Schools, organizations, and communities should provide books, movies, and other material that challenge traditional gender roles and showcase diverse representations of gender identities. Additionally, creating safe spaces and support groups can provide young audiences with opportunities to discuss their experiences and concerns, while also finding encouragement and empowerment. By establishing partnerships with local organizations or experts working in the field of gender equality, educators can further enhance their ability to address stereotypes and support young people effectively.

## 2. WORKING WITH YOUNG AUDIENCES IN PLACES OF PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Gender stereotypes in media and advertising targeting young audiences pose several challenges and in order to address this issue it is crucial to employ effective strategies that challenge them. A multifaceted approach is essential and it requires a concerted effort to raise awareness, promote gender balance, encourage equal speaking opportunities, and advocate for inclusive language and imagery. The following are some good practices and strategies worth considering:

### 2a. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA REPRESENTATION

Media plays a significant role in shaping societal attitudes. By actively promoting gender equality in media representation, we can challenge existing stereotypes and encourage inclusivity. This can be achieved by increasing the visibility of diverse gender identities, portraying individuals in non-stereotypical roles and avoiding objectification and sexualization of individuals based on their gender. Moreover, providing positive role models who challenge traditional gender norms can inspire young audiences and help to break down gender stereotypes.

## 2b. HOLDING MEDIA AND ADVERTISING ACCOUNTABLE

Media organizations and advertisers have a responsibility to ensure that gender stereotypes are not perpetuated through their content. Implementing strict regulations and ethical guides is a way to impose control and limit the phenomenon. Industry bodies should actively monitor and evaluate advertisements to prevent the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. Furthermore, Media Organizations should strive to include diverse gender voices in decision - making processes to ensure a wide range of perspectives, and therefore reduce the likelihood of stereotypes being perpetuated.

## 2c. IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND AWARENESS RAISING

By integrating comprehensive gender equality programs into educational curricula, young audiences can be exposed to alternative perspectives and learn to critically analyze media and advertising messages. These programs should encourage open discussions, facilitate empathy and create an inclusive learning environment. Also, using social media platforms to spread messages of gender equality and challenge stereotypes and creating partnerships with influencers and celebrities can equip students with critical thinking skills to deconstruct media messages and encourage the public dialogue on harmful effects of gender stereotypes.



## 2d. EMPOWERING WOMEN IN PUBLIC DIALOGUE

It is of most importance to ensure gender balance in panels, conferences, and public discussions. Also, media organizations should be encouraged to actively recruit and promote women in editorial roles and recognize and celebrate the achievements of women in the media industry.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

As already mentioned, the above presentation is not exhaustive. Implementing some of these practices could possibly create a more inclusive and equitable society where individuals are free from the limitations imposed by gender stereotypes.

For relevant recorded good practices please also consult:

- EKPA, 2020, Guide for Journalists and those involved in Media. Athens: EKPA
- Gender Alliance and Heinrich Bell Foundation of Greece, 2020, Gender Equality in Adult Education, Guide for the Implementation of Educational-Training Actions, Thessaloniki: Gender Alliance and Heinrich Bell Foundation of Greece
- HLHR, 2021, Good Practices for the elimination of sexism in Journalism. Athens: HLHR
- KETHI, 2018, Media Guide for the elimination of sexism and gender discrimination. Athens: KETHI
- Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies, 2018, Fighting gender stereotypes in education, Cyprus: Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies



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