



INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

PROMOTING BELONGING FOR WOMEN
AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN TVET

WHY INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Women and people with disabilities have traditionally been underrepresented in the Palestinian technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system. How TVET institutions communicate about their programs in informational, promotional, and instructional materials and on social media can encourage or discourage the participation of these and other underrepresented groups.

This checklist is designed as a practical tool to help TVET institutes ensure that their commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion is reflected in their communications. While gender and disability are a major focus of the checklist, inclusive communication means sharing information in a way that helps everyone, no matter their background, feel that they belong.

THE CHECKLIST IS STRUCTURED AROUND FIVE PRINCIPLES:

- 1 Representation matters
- 2 Safe spaces matter
- 3 Language matters
- 4 Accessibility matters
- 5 Listening matters

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

○ Ensure a balanced portrayal of women and men, including people with disabilities:

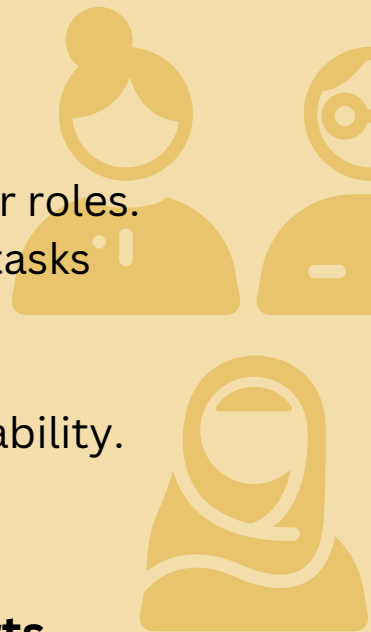
- ▶ Feature both women and men in case studies and photos.

○ Challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes:

- ▶ Choose images and stories that challenge stereotypical gender roles. For instance, depict women confidently engaged in technical tasks like operating a table saw, or men cooking or caring for young children.
- ▶ Refrain from limiting vocation options based on gender or disability. Share a story of a person who uses a wheelchair working in a workshop.

○ Portray women and people with disabilities as leaders, experts and changemakers:

- ▶ Share success stories of women and people with disabilities who have started their own businesses or excelled in their fields.
- ▶ Quote female experts. Interview female staff and instructors





○ **Amplify the voices of women and people with disabilities:**

- ▶ Allow women and people with disabilities to speak for themselves. For example, ask a woman to share her experiences in TVET directly, rather than interviewing her instructor about her participation.
- ▶ Interview people with disabilities about the challenges and successes they've had in their careers, instead of just consulting an "expert."

○ **Use active representation:**

- ▶ Depict women and people with disabilities actively participating in tasks, such as fixing cars, rather than passively observing.
- ▶ Use a photo of a female trainee explaining something to her classmates, rather than a photo of a male instructor explaining something to a female trainee.

○ **Represent women and people with disabilities as diverse groups:**

- ▶ Use stories and images that reflect women and people with disabilities of various ages, abilities, religions, and social groups.
- ▶ Recognize that disabilities come in many forms and may be invisible.

SAFE SPACES MATTER

○ **Express your commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion:**

- ▶ Consider developing a statement that reflects your institute's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and displaying it prominently on your website, communications materials, and social media.
- ▶ Explicitly state that all people are welcome and valued participants in your community.

○ **Promote a culture of safety and well-being:**

- ▶ Ensure that images reflect safe workspaces and that individuals are depicted with appropriate safety gear and equipment tailored to their specific needs.

○ **Keep social media a safe space by monitoring comments and removing harmful language:**

- ▶ Use misinformed comments as opportunities to educate, and remove comments that are sexist, ableist or otherwise hurtful to women, people with disabilities, or other groups.

LANGUAGE MATTERS

○ Use gender-neutral or gender-inclusive language:

- ▶ Avoid using male pronouns as the default when more inclusive wording could be used. Use the gender-neutral form of titles. This approach acknowledges and speaks to the diverse audience you are trying to reach.

For example: Use *chairperson* instead of *chairman*, *humankind* instead of *mankind*, *firefighter* instead of *fireman*, *flight attendant* instead of *stewardess*.

○ Keep your language clear and simple:

- ▶ Avoid the use of jargon, acronyms or technical terms that may not be understandable to people without specialized knowledge of the subject.

○ Emphasize capability:

- ▶ Choose positive and respectful language that emphasizes people's abilities rather than their limitations.
- ▶ Refrain from limiting vocation options based on gender or disability.



○ **Avoid patronizing language:**

- ▶ Speak to and about individuals with disabilities in the same respectful manner you would with anyone else. Patronizing language can be disrespectful.

○ **Avoid ableist or derogatory language:**

- ▶ Avoid using language that devalues people who have disabilities or that may be considered offensive or derogatory.



PEOPLE-FIRST LANGUAGE

People-first language prioritizes the person over the disability and avoids equating a person with a condition. For example, “person with a disability” is often preferred to “disabled person.” While Person-First Language is often preferred, some people consider their disability to be part of their identity and prefer “Identity-First Language,” such as “deaf person” over “person who is deaf.” When in doubt, ask about a person’s language preferences.



SAY THIS...



INSTEAD OF...

Accessible toilet/parking	Handicapped toilet/parking
Wheelchair user	Wheelchair bound/confined to a wheelchair
Person with a physical disability	Invalid, lame, crippled
Person with a mental health condition	Crazy, mentally ill, disturbed
Has/lives with a [disability/condition]	Suffers from, victim of, afflicted with
Person with a cognitive/developmental disability	Retarded, mentally handicapped
Deaf or hard-of-hearing	Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb, hearing-impaired
Blind or low vision	Visually challenged/handicapped
Has a congenital disability	Has a birth defect
Person with epilepsy/diabetes/paraplegia	Epileptic/diabetic/paraplegic
Has a learning disability	Is a slow learner
Non-disabled, without disabilities	Able-bodied, normal

ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

- **Use image descriptions (alt text) for visual content:**
 - ▶ When posting images or graphics, provide detailed descriptions of the content to make it accessible to individuals who use screen readers.
- **Choose accessible fonts and colours:**
 - ▶ Opt for legible fonts and high-contrast colour combinations to improve readability for individuals with visual impairments.
- **Provide captions and subtitles:**
 - ▶ Include captions or subtitles in videos to make them accessible to individuals with hearing impairments.

LISTENING MATTERS

○ Always get consent:

- ▶ Always ask people's permission before you photograph them or share their story. Ensure that they understand how their image or information about them will be used. Written consent forms may be useful.

○ Don't disclose a disability without permission:

- ▶ While some people are very open about their disability, others prefer to keep it private. Never mention a person's disability in communications content without their permission.



ASK AND LISTEN

If you're unsure about the appropriate language to use, the type of accommodations to provide, or how to help underrepresented groups feel more welcome in your program, it's best to ask the relevant individuals or groups directly. Listen carefully and respect their input.



ABOUT THE GRIT PROJECT

The GRIT Project is a five-year (2019-2025) project funded by the Government of Canada and implemented by the Lutheran World Federation and Canadian Lutheran World Relief. The goal of the project is to support the empowerment of Palestinian women, including those with disabilities, through technical education in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The project enhances gender equality and inclusivity in Palestinian technical training by improving access to quality skill development and employment opportunities, in collaboration with nine local TVET institutes.

