

GUIDE

# INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION



Guide  
**DIVERSITY**  
**AND INCLUSION**



# INTRODUCTION

We want everyone to feel included and treated equally and with respect. Therefore, at the Ecopetrol Group we promote Diversity and Inclusion as a competitive capacity and of sustainable development. In that transformation, language and communication are potentiators that contribute to change words, narrative and actions that transform the reality of our settings.



**This practical Guide is framed in the Diversity and Inclusion program and its edges:**

Gender

Discapacity

Police / Military /  
Agents / Members of  
the public force

Ethnicity, origin  
and socio-cultural  
conditions

Sexual  
orientation

## What is diversity?

It is understood as the multiple characteristics that make us unique, the differences and similarities of people and, beyond the four that are most recognized, i.e, gender, physical capacity, race, and sexual orientation.

Using an analogy, it means making people feel **"welcome to the party"**, regardless of its characteristics.



## ¿Qué es la inclusión?

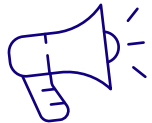
It is to ensure that we have environments where people feel included, have the same opportunities and their contribution is facilitated, where they can freely express their personality, without fear or feelings of exclusion.

Using the same example, it is **"ask them to dance"**



# What is an inclusive language?

It is one in which people are aware of the power of the word, which enables us to build new imaginary where everyone fits and which can evidence unconscious prejudices and biases.



**Words are alive and can help to build coexistence.**

An including language does not discriminate people because of their social condition, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, disability, experiences, etc. Its core is the human condition, the and the respect for the people and their dignity.



## Why an inclusive language guide in Ecopetrol?



- a. Activates the conversation
- b. Breaks stereotypes.
- c. Disqualifies excluding, discriminating or aggressive behaviors.
- d. Visualizes human beings, their story and dreams beyond any of their features.
- e. Approaches the difference.
- f. Creates awareness of visible or invisible barriers.
- g. Promotes action.



## Main mistakes al when expressing ourselves

### Due to ignorance or carelessness, we fail to communicate.

These are some of the most frequent language errors  
when we talk about our differences.

1.

Minimize

**A common mistake is to underestimate someone's  
capacity for their condition:**

- ▀ She can't.
- ▀ The girl or boy at the reception.
- ▀ Poor thing, he is disabled.
- ▀ We must help him because he has experienced violence.
- ▀ They did not teach him in that community.
- ▀ For being gay, they have always discriminated against him.

2.

Victimize

**Thinking that the conditions experienced by people  
make them victims:**

- ▀ Being a woman, it's been harder for her.
- ▀ Do you want my help? I see that she can't.
- ▀ How brave he is, how he faces life.
- ▀ As he is indigenous, he doesn't know certain things.
- ▀ Let's help her. She(he) is lesbian(gay and has been rejected).

3.

Generalize

**Unifying characteristics according to groups:**

- ▀ Women are the weaker gender.
- ▀ Women are more meticulous.
- ▀ Men do not cry.
- ▀ Men take more risks.
- ▀ The disabled are very grateful.
- ▀ The victims are resentful
- ▀ Afros are very good at dancing.
- ▀ Lesbians are aggressive.
- ▀ Gay men are transmitters or carriers of Sexual  
Transmission Diseases - STDs.

4.

Offend

**Using nicknames, sobriquets or expressions that  
denigrate people:**

- ▀ Kid, kiddo, mommy.
- ▀ Blind, disabled, dwarf, special person Fuzz, guerrilla,  
paraco (paramilitary).
- ▀ Indio, nappy-hair, rustic, calentana.
- ▀ Effeminate, sissy, tomboy, lesbian

5.

Ask

**Start a conversation with concerns that pertain to  
privacy:**

- ▀ How did you get the job?
- ▀ Are you disabled?
- ▀ Are you left-wing or right-wing?
- ▀ What religion are you from?
- ▀ At what point did you come out of the closet?





## When communicating orally and in writing

Recommendation	As it is usually said	How should we say it
Use neutral or impartial words, terms or concepts that do not make women invisible: citizenship, society, childhood.	Children from the Caribbean coast received school kits.	Childhood in the Caribbean coast received school kits.
Replace masculine universal words with neutral generics in names and calls:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He works in the Citizen Service Office.</li> <li>Petroleum engineers wanted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He works in the Citizenship Service Office.</li> <li>Petroleum engineering professionals wanted.</li> </ul>
Use the feminine in trades, professions and positions when applicable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The diagnosis that the doctor gave.</li> <li>The engineer reviewed the information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The diagnosis the doctor gave. (female)</li> <li>The engineer reviewed the information.</li> </ul>
Use creativity when writing to avoid the masculine if the feminine is to be included as well.	The event was attended by many citizens, nearly 4 thousand people.	The event was attended by many people, about 4 thousand.

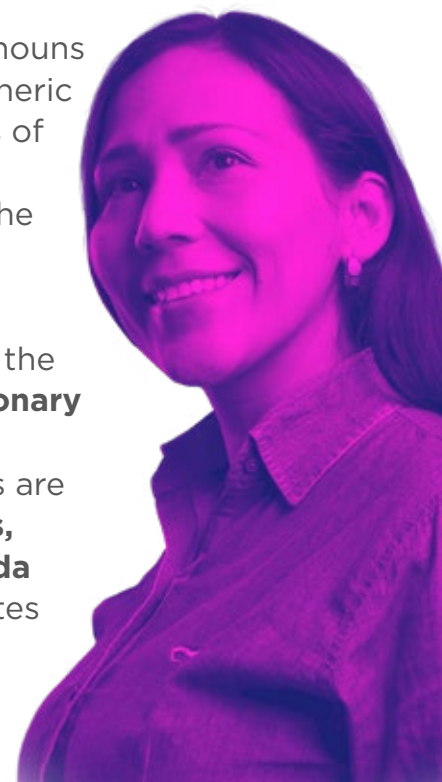
## All women and all men?

The Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, which regulates the use of our language, recommends the following:

- These uses are unnecessary from a linguistic perspective. In the nouns that designate animated beings, there is the possibility of the generic use of the masculine to designate the class, that is, all individuals of the species, without distinction of sex or gender: **All citizens of legal age have the right to vote.** Although the RAE accepts it, the invitation is to use an expression like **All citizenship of legal age has the right to vote.**



- The explicit mention of the feminine is only justified when the opposition of the sexes is relevant in the context: **Evolutionary development is similar in boys and girls of that age.**
- With regard to roles or positions, in Spanish the adjectives are acceptable such as **presidenta for president, jefa for boss, coordinadora for coordinator, doctora for doctor, abogada for lawyer, ingeniera for engineer, etc.** Their use contributes to cultural change.





## Specific examples by edge

### / Gender

Incorrect expression	Proposed
Guests are cordially invited to attend with their wives	Guests are cordially invited to attend with their partners
Single mother	Mother
Men, mankind	People, humanity, human beings, humankind, we, women and men
Businessmen	Representatives, business community, business people
Chairman	Chair, chairperson, head
Guys (referred to men and women)	All
Landlord, landlady	Owner
Layman, common man	layperson, average person

### / Disability

Incorrect expression	Proposed
Disabled (Blind/Visually impaired)/ The handicapped	Person with disability / Person with visual impairment
Normal people/Healthy people/ Able-bodied/ Abnormal person	People without disabilities
Has a deficit	Person with intellectual disability
Disabled/handicapped/paralytic/lame	Person with physical disability/reduced mobility
Abnormal due to a birth defect	Person with a congenital problem
Special child	Child with mental disability
Dwarf	Short person
Mongolic	Person with a disability due to Down Syndrome
People who suffer bipolar disorder	People with bipolar disorder

## / Ethnias, origin and sociocultural conditions

Incorrect expression	Proposed
Color person / Color people/ Afros	African American
The Blacks, The Whites	Black People, White People
Indian	Member of an Indigenous community Indigenous / ative American Indigenous communities Indigenous Peoples
Minorities	Underrepresented groups
Foreigners	People from overseas
Old folks/Old-timers/ The Elderly, Old Man/Woman	Older Person/People, Elderly Person/ People
A middle-aged workforce	An experienced workforce
Cults/Sects	Religious groups/communities
Servant/Domestic/Maid	General Services employee (male/female)

## / Sexual orientation

Incorrect expression	Proposed
Changed Sex	Had a gender affirmation operation Transsexual person
Boyfriend/Girlfriend/Husband/Wife	Partners/Spouses
Mannered/Sissy/Effeminate/Queer/ Homos	Homosexual person Homosexual man Gay person Gay man
Tomboy/Butch woman	Lesbian person Homosexual woman Lesbian woman
Bicon/Swith hitter	Bisexual person Bisexual man Bisexual woman
Hermaphrodite	Intersexual person
Tranny/ Transvestite	A trans person or a transgender person
Sex change/Looks “better” as man/woman	Transitioning/Transitioned well



# / Victims, excombatants and public force retired personnel

Incorrect expression	Proposed
Reinserted/exparamilitary/ exguerrilla/demobilized	Excombatant
Victims	Survivors
Fuzz/Cops/Army guys	Police/Military/Agents/Members of police forces
Displaced	Victims of forced displacement



## In general:

call people by their name and avoid categorizing them or judging diversity.  
We are diverse and we are simply Human Beings

## Inclusive language in Ecopetrol's communication media

Bringing these practices to the organizational media is more than a commitment. In all printed, illustrated, digital and audiovisual products, men and women are represented equally in various situations. The intent is to break established gender stereotypes that have been traditionally conveyed.



**Therefore, we intend for all communication pieces and products to rely mainly on the following criteria:**

- # Equality in the representation of cultural, economic and professional levels.
- # Equality in the number of people with different roles or positions.
- # Women and men different from each other: different height, ages; who represent, without limitation, regions, sizes, races, social condition, hair types, ways of dressing, health condition, social and work roles.
- # Make visible women roles as leader, businesswoman, scientist, military, heavy machinery operator, field leader, athletes, physicians, etc.
- # Make visible men in the roles of father, in caring, playing and sharing with daughters and sons, helping the elderly, performing household chores, etc.
- # In case of using images of men and women simultaneously, these should look proportional in terms of height and size.





## Images will not be used that

- Stereotype the beauty or that highlight physical aspects.
- That show imbalance between women and men. Of roles traditionally associated with women such as housewives, cleaning jobs, nursing, office clerks.
- Of roles or trades traditionally associated with men.

## Comunicación en audio

- Balance regarding the number of voices of women and men.
- Equality in the production of institutional pieces such as voices for videos, advertising guidelines or campaigns.

## Text communication (messages, legal documents, emails)

- Write and send written communications indicating the position of men in masculine and women in feminine: Secretaria for Secretary, **Jefa de Departamento** for Head of Department, Coordinadora for Coordinator, Directora for Director, Subdirectora for Assistant Director, etc.
- It is valid to leave the positions in the areas in neutral: Management, Coordination, Directorate, Vicedpresidency, etc.
- Adapt messages according to the **gender** and the site where they will be published. If it is a men's bathroom, it is acceptable to use a message such as "this place belongs to everyone (todos), take care of it." If it is a women's bathroom, it is acceptable to use "this place is for all of us (todas), take care of it"
- Guide the wording of **legal or juridical documents** according to gender. If it is a contract, mention men as worker / vendor (trabajador/proveedor) and women as worker/vendor (trabajadora/proveedora) It is recommended for regulations, agreements, official documents, etc.

## Communication in signs (notices, posters, billboards, etc.)

- Promote female **plural** and diverse images.
- Promote figures of people with **disabilities**, women and men in signs used in elevators, in emergency signs, in bathrooms, etc.



## Bibliography

- *Recommendations to be inclusive from the language. Vice Presidency of Colombia - Equity for women. Colombia.*
- *Information, education and communication strategies in health, inclusive and accessible. Social Promotion Office. Social Promotion Office - Disability Management Group. Health Ministry of Colombia*
- *Inclusive Communication Guide. Barcelona City Hall, Spain*
- *Guide of adequate disability language. National Disability Agency, Government of Argentina.*
- *Inclusive Communication Guide. Acción Empresas y Fundación Descúbreme, Chile.*
- *Inclusive Language Guide. Government of Mexico.*
- *Basic Guides - Recommendations for inclusive, rather than sexist language. National Counsel for Prevention of Discrimination in Mexico.*
- *Internal communication lines for the use of inclusive, rather than sexist language. National Commission for Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women in Mexico.*



