

Feminism and Intersectionality in Agriculture

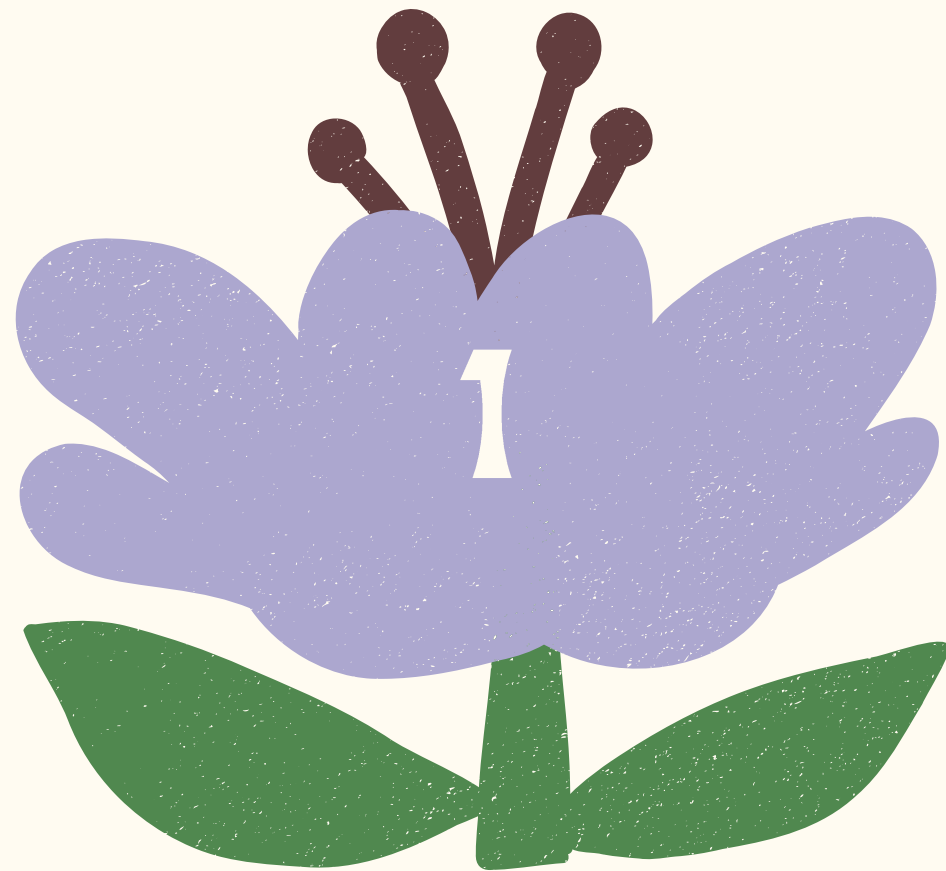
Jesse Donham-Buratti

INTRODUCTION

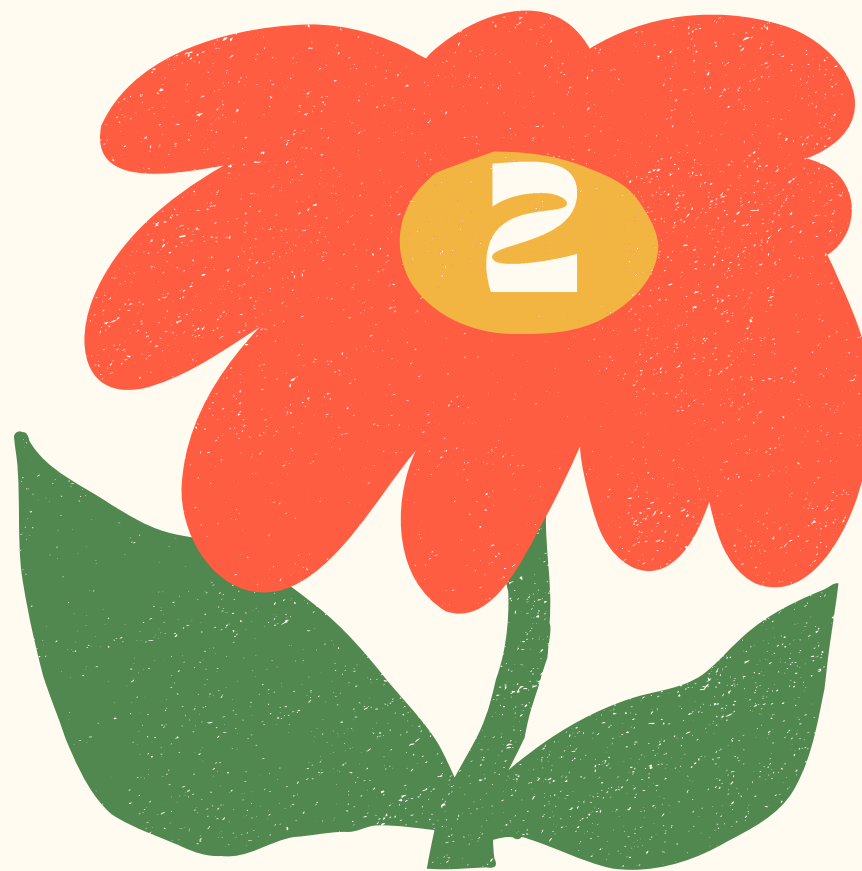
- **Research Fellow at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Piedmont, Italy**
- **Work on topics related to soil health policy in the agroecology department**
- **Established the Agroecology Europe (AEEU) working group on gender and intersectionality**



Agenda



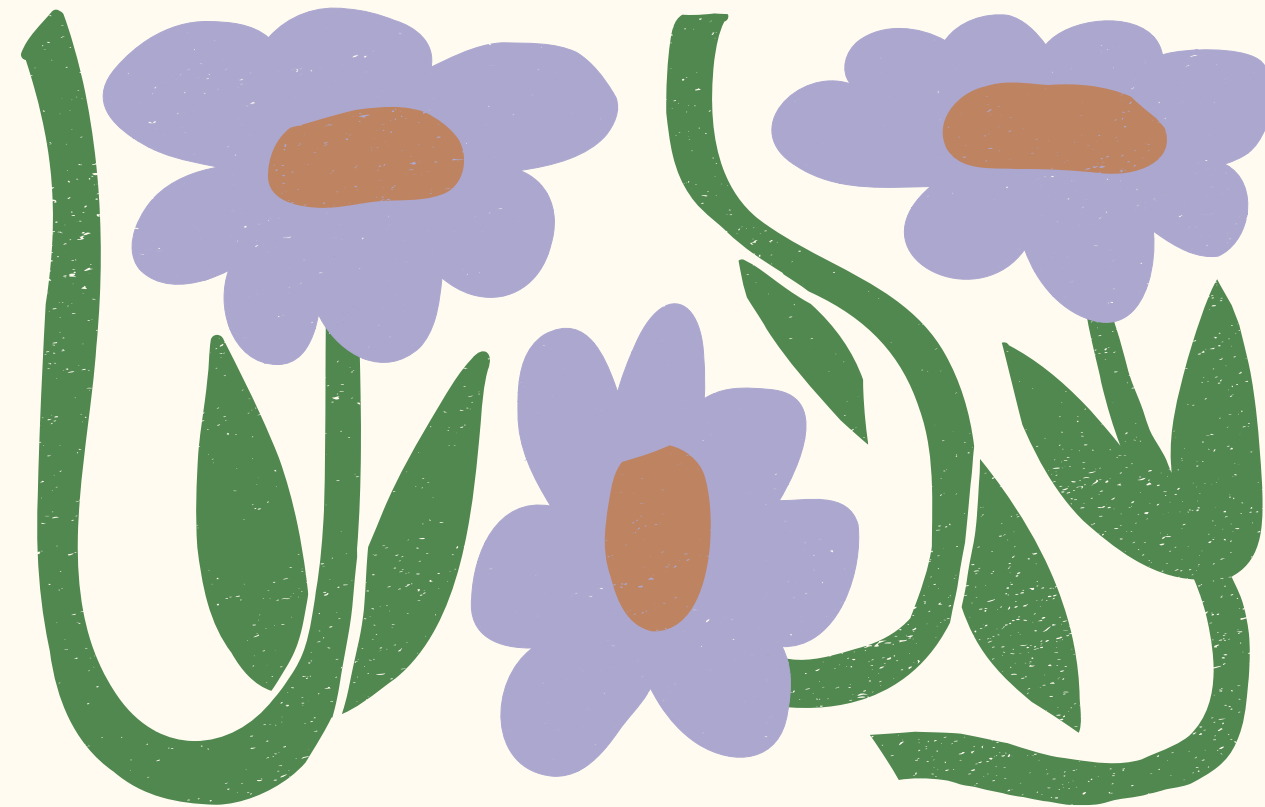
Definitions



**Why is it relevant to
agriculture?**



Steps Forward



A man and his son are in a terrible accident and they were rushed to the hospital in critical care.

The doctor looks at the boy and exclaims:

”I can’t operate on this boy he’s my son!“

How could this be?

Questions that guide our work in the Agroecology Europe Intersectionality Working Group

1. What is the reality of identity-based discrimination and privilege in the workplace?
2. Is agroecology intrinsically feminist and therefore blind to gender?
Is agroecology blind to class? Is agroecology blind to ethnicity?
3. What would a feminist and intersectional agroecological food system look like?
4. How do we address individuals that believe equality has already been achieved?



FEMINISM



Feminism is a range of socio-political movements and ideologies that aim to define and establish the political, economic, personal, and social equality of sexes.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The intersection of things that make us who we are within the broader social context.

Gender is one of the major determining factors of women's and men's lives, nonetheless, intersecting parameters are equally important.

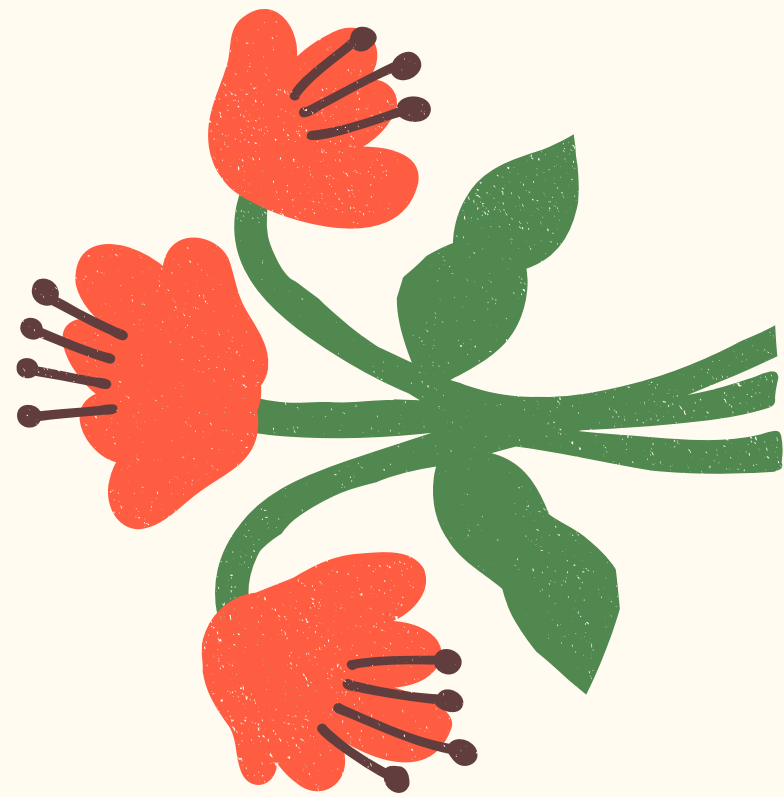


INTERSECTIONALITY



Intersectionality is a concept that explains how different aspects of a person's identity, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, physical ability and culture can combine to create unique experiences of privilege and oppression. It looks at how these overlapping factors influence and often reinforce inequalities.

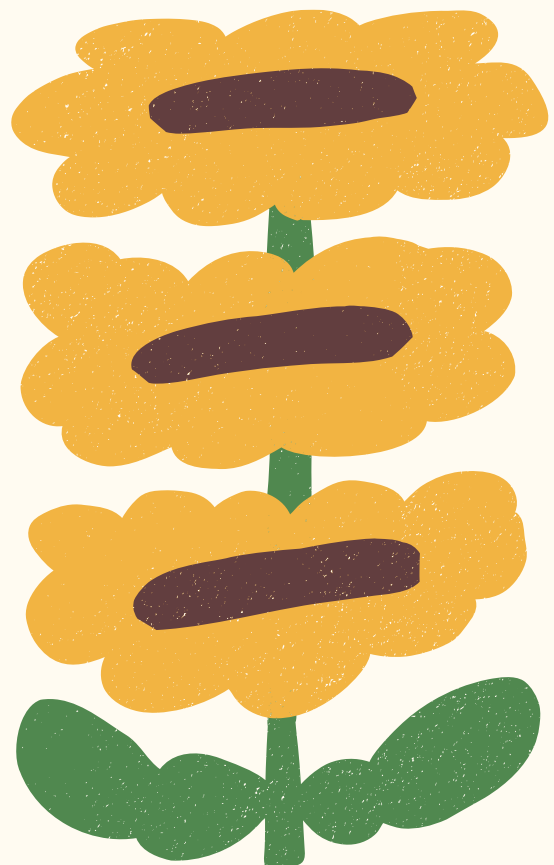
INTERSECTIONALITY



Example: A black woman may face both racial discrimination and gender discrimination. These intersecting identities mean she experiences a type of oppression that is different and often more complex than what a black man or a white woman might face.

Why are feminism and intersectionality relevant to agriculture?

Individuals that identify as women, trans, non-binary, queer, or people of color, as well as those that are from a lower socioeconomic income, experience different realities in agriculture.



Statistics



- **Women make up 43% of the global agricultural labor force (FAO)**
- **Globally, less than 15% of all landholders are women (FAO)**
- **Closing the gender gap in agriculture could lift 100-150 million people out of hunger (FAO).**
- **Women in agriculture are less likely to have access to resources such as credit, loans, extension services, and markets, which affects their productivity (World Bank).**
- **Black women in the U.S. earn 63 cents for every dollar earned by white men, compared to 79 cents for white women (National Women's Law Center, 2020).**

(Some of) the underlying causes of inequality

- Norms
- Gender relations in households and society
- Institutional structures that perpetuate discrimination and imbalances
- Lack of acknowledgement of everyone's role in food systems, especially invisible and unpaid work

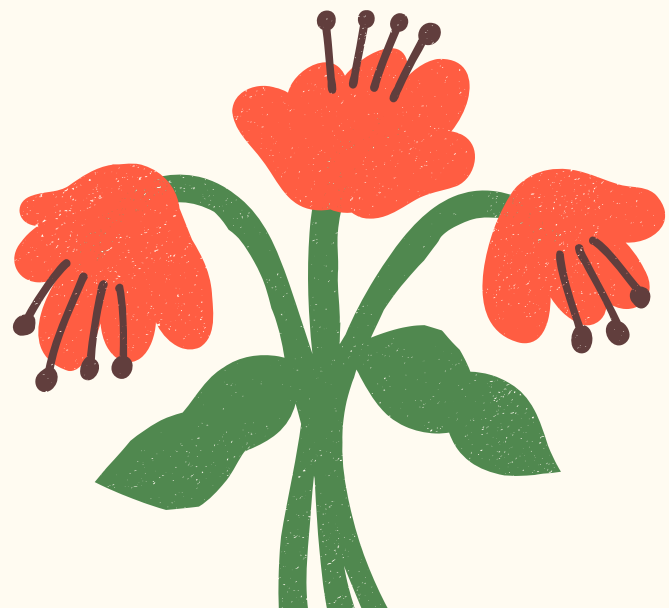


What does it mean to be a woman in agriculture?

- **Economic disparities/income inequality**
- **Less often at the table when big decisions are made**
- **Having to prove oneself/legitimacy**
- **Differing norms and laws for land and property rights, succession and inheritance**
- **Legal abilities in general**
- **The labeling as the 'farmer's wife'**
- **Having to manage working hours/days with motherhood, as well as any other unpaid care work**
- **Having the responsibility to shop, cook, and maintain healthy household diets**
- **Predominantly in charge of preserving food, seeds, and culinary tradition, as well as to make organic fertilisers**

Solutions

- Agricultural initiatives that advocate for everyone's formal rights
 - Land access
 - More equitable family and community relationships
 - Reorientation of institutions and organisations to explicitly address inequalities
 - Recognition and concrete value women's invisible contributions
-
- Do we think organic agriculture or agroecology can be part of the solution?



What is agroecology?

Agroecology is a system for ecological balance and social justice.

Agroecology includes social biodiversity.

It is about creating a more horizontal relationship between humans and nature, but also between humans.

Therefore, in its most rigorous form, agroecology can address the issues in the previous slides.



Solutions for programs or policies

It is important for programs and policies to integrate gender, and avoid gender negative, but also gender blind and neutral approaches.

Gender-blindness or neutrality is when a program does not consider gender differences in its design or implementation and follows the assumption that the program has no gender-relevant aspects to consider at all.

We need to move towards gender sensitive, responsive and transformative programs:

- Actively identify gender issues and formulate gender related design elements to address these issues throughout the program.
- Actively design and implement interventions to address identified gender inequalities.
- Aim at creating sustainable change to gender inequalities as a major objective of the program.



What does gender sensitivity look like?

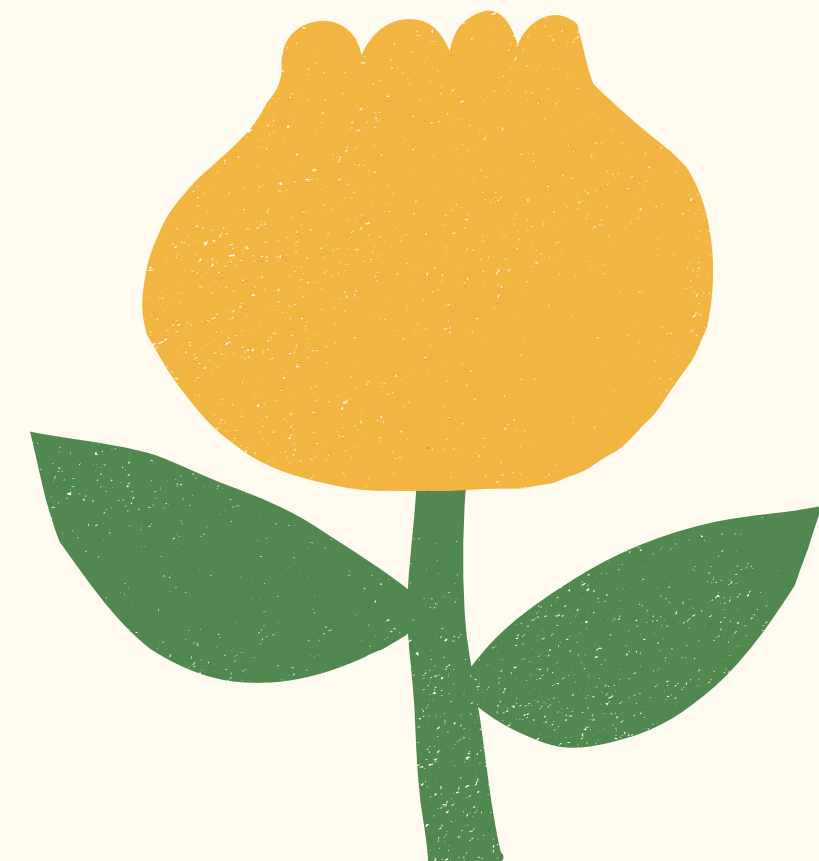
To engage in a process of assessing which different implications for women, men and non-binary persons any planned action could have, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels.

Based on understanding that there are no 'gender neutral' measures



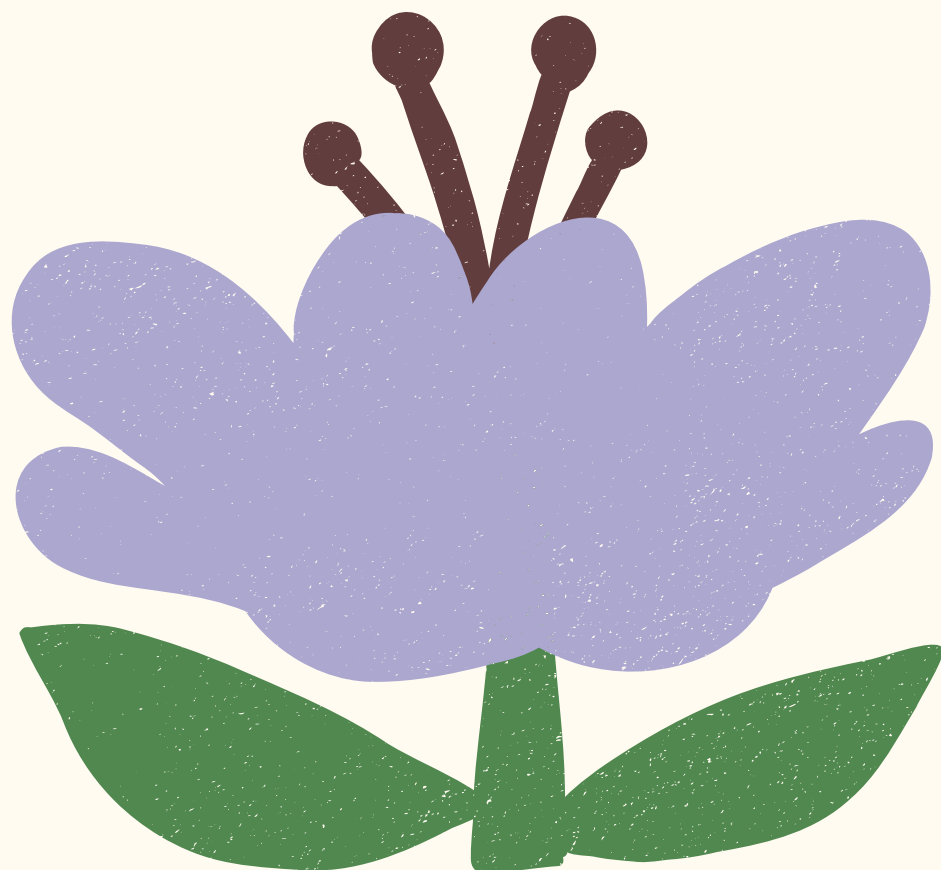
Practical ways to bring intersectionality and feminism into our workplaces and lives

- **Creating safe spaces in events, and workplaces**
- **Carrying out an equality analysis for our workplaces**
- **Provide training sessions to foster awareness on unconscious bias, provide tools and strategies to recognise and mitigate biases in decision-making processes, hiring practices, and everyday interactions.**
- **Promoting a a healthy work-life balance**

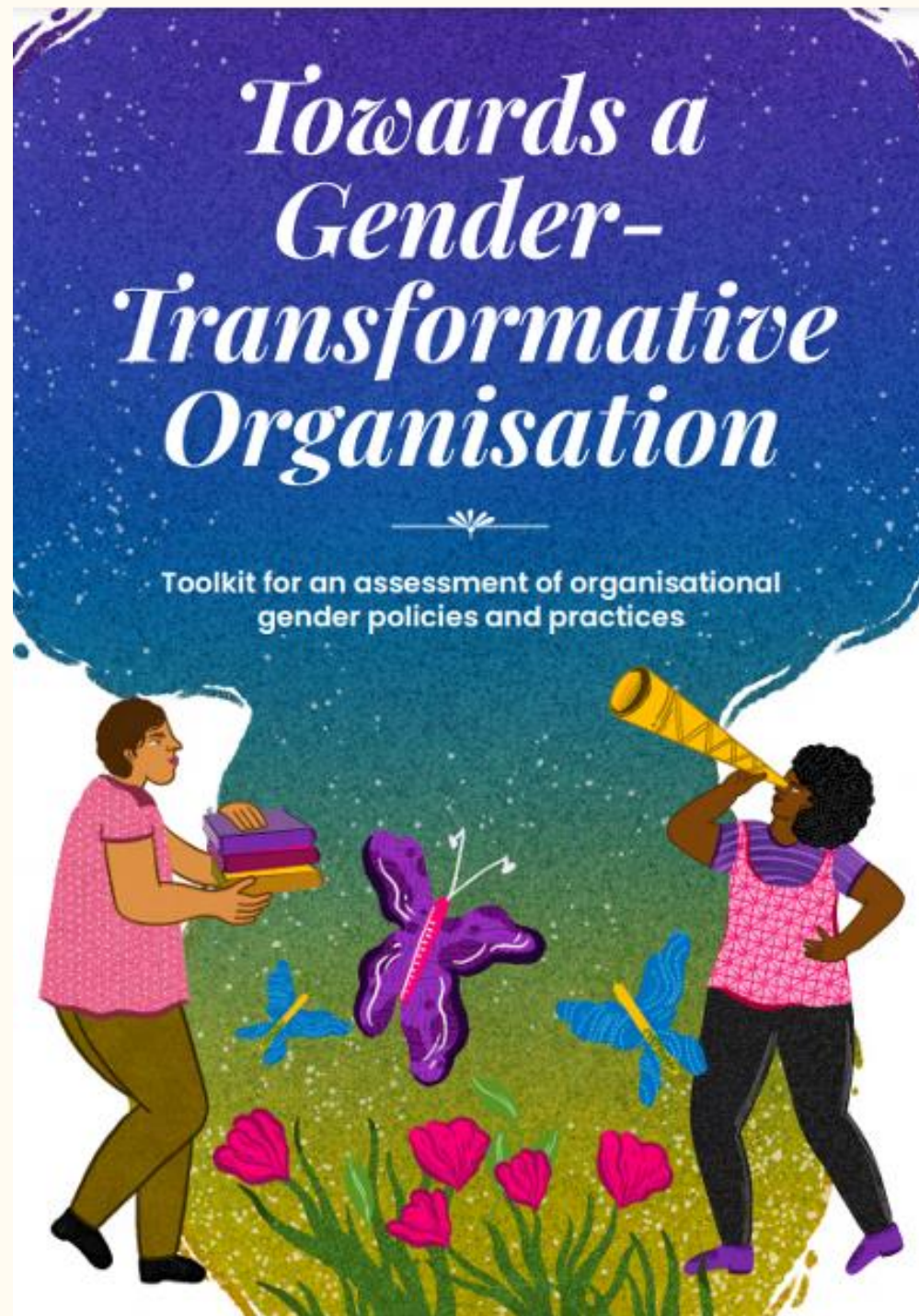


Creating Safe Spaces in Events

- What does it mean?
 - Creating a space where participants can bring their full selves without having to filter what they say
- A place to share and move towards action
- How can a safe space be created?
 - Telling participants to:
 - Take the time to listen and witness, without focusing on responding/solving
 - Pay attention to non-verbal reactions, such as freezing, discomfort or facial expressions
 - Creating a social contract
 - Make it clear that everything shared in the space remains in the space (i.e. it cannot be shared afterwards with others)



Equality analysis in associations

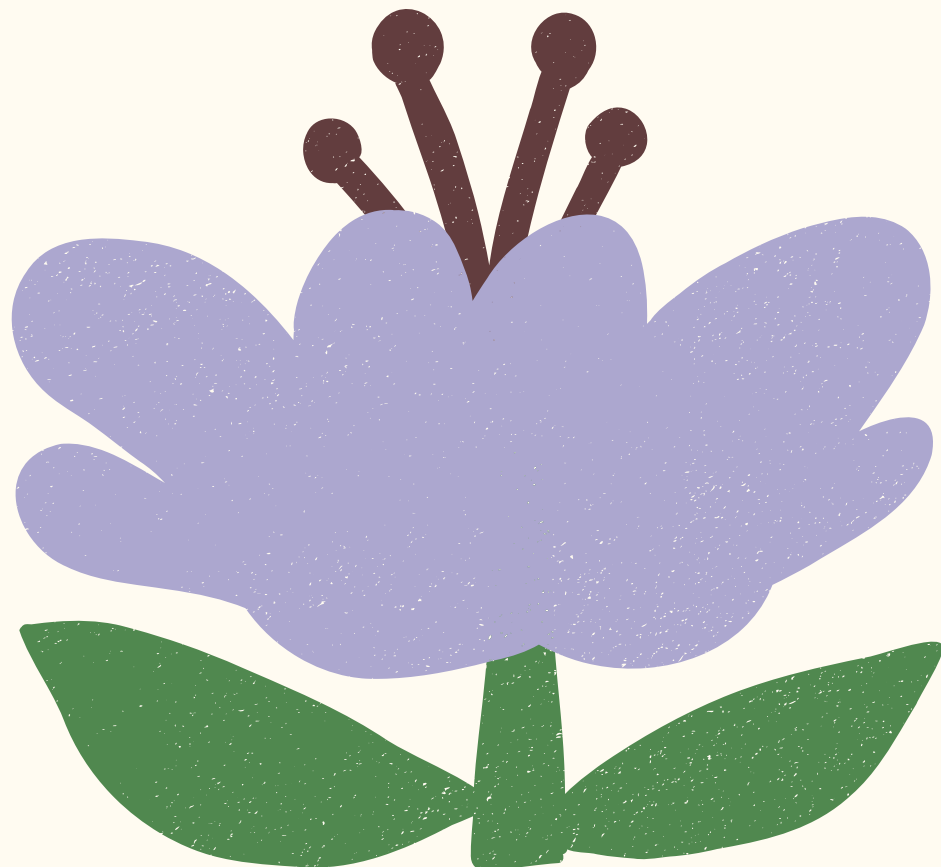


by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)



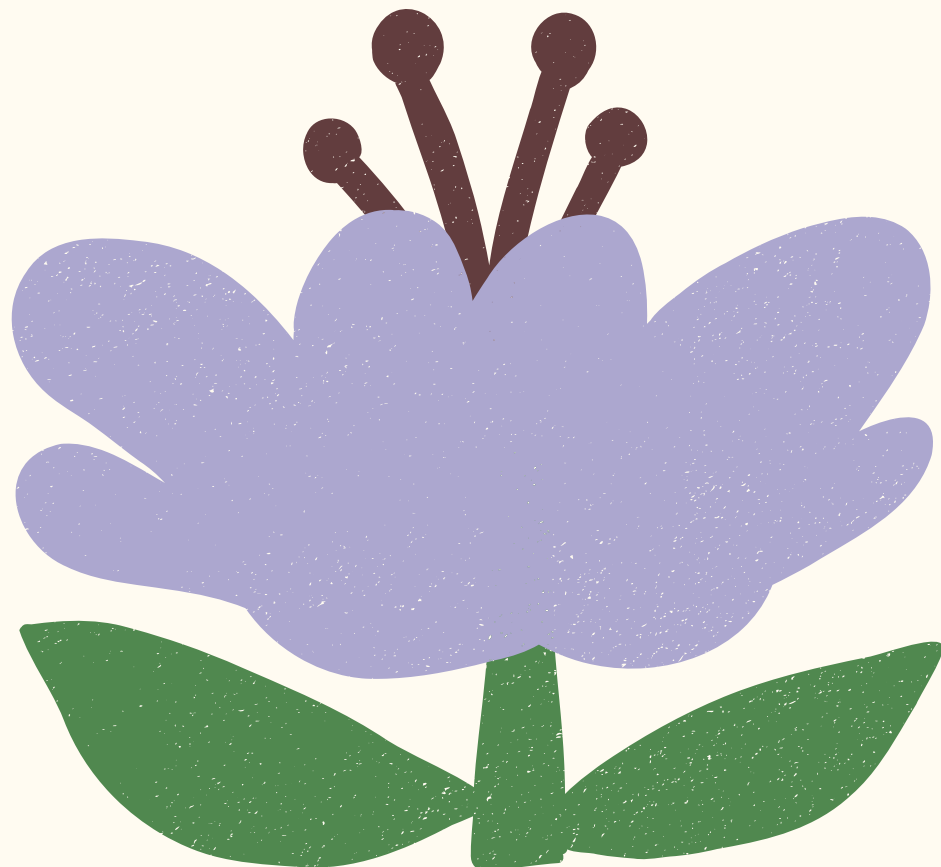
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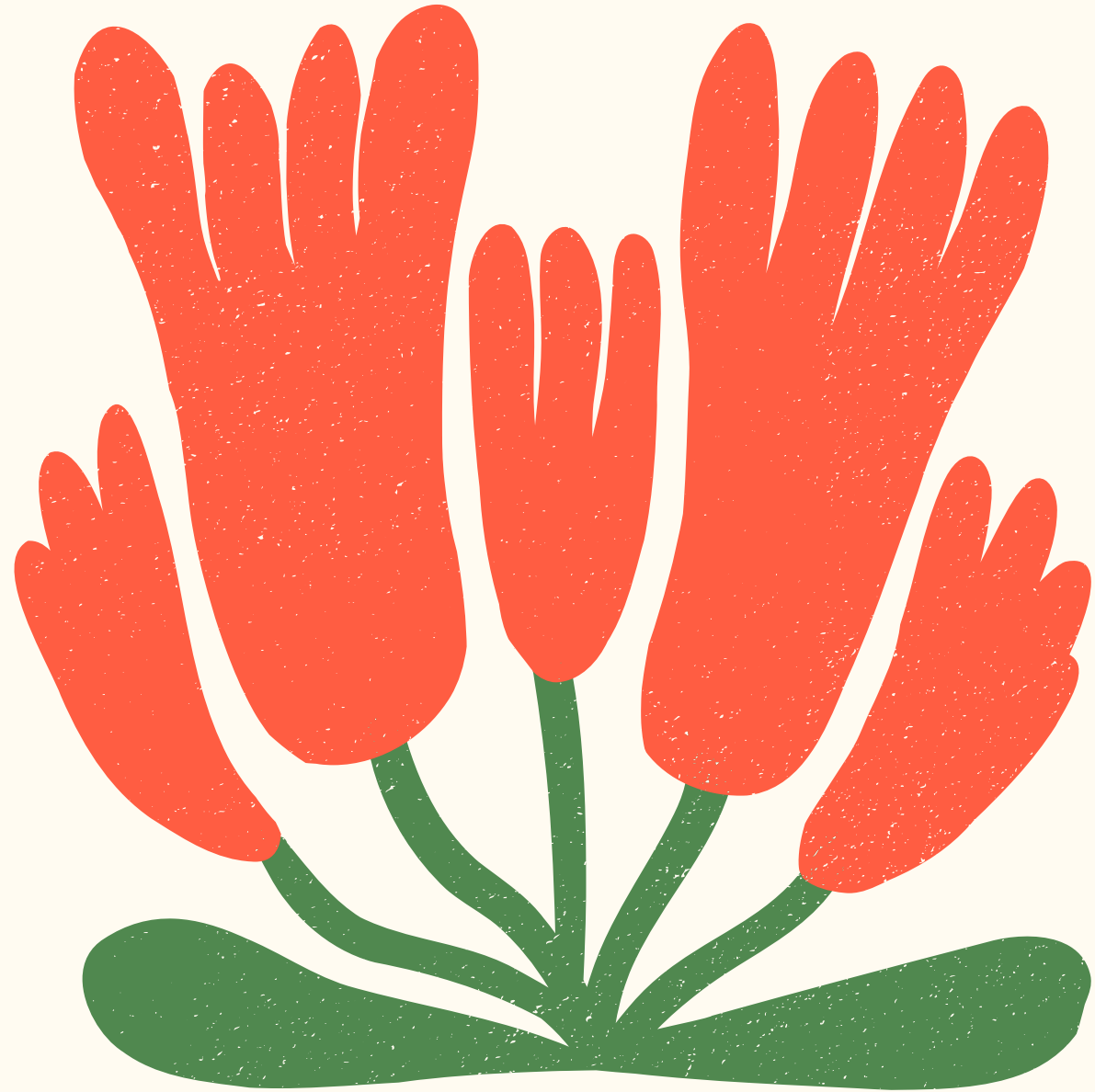
- Ask questions such as:
 - Does this institution encourage or invite individuals to apply for a promotion, or a post at a higher grade?
 - Does it provide training opportunities
 - Does it expect overtime (working weekends, nights, more than 10 hours)
 - Is there rules specified in its statute for parental leave
 - Is there safety procedures and safety officers to speak to if one has felt issues surrounding discrimination
 - Does it provide stable contracts or do you have to renew every 6 months to a year
 - When one has a part-time contract are they expected to work more than part-time to finish tasks?



Equality analysis in associations

- Ask questions such as:
 - Is well-being tended to and rest valued?
 - Is there opportunities for mentoring for all individuals, especially those who's identities are regularly discriminated against in society?
 - Does it move away from supporting roles that are lower paid for individuals who's identities are regularly discriminated against in society?
 - Is there women, queer and people of color in leadership positions?
 - Are women, queer folks and people of color regularly recruited for leadership positions?





Thank you!

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