

DISMANTLING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING: CREATING AN EQUITABLE FUTURE IN ASIA-PACIFIC



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Why do we need to dismantle gender stereotypes?

Across cultures and societies, people face pressure to conform to gender roles and stereotypes portrayed in media, marketing and advertising. These stereotypes can leave people feeling excluded, unworthy, inadequate, and invisible. Narratives can entrench harmful gender norms, roles and behaviours. They contribute to shaping different pathways, driven by gender stereotypes, in the family, schools, at work and the broader economy through the different stages of life.

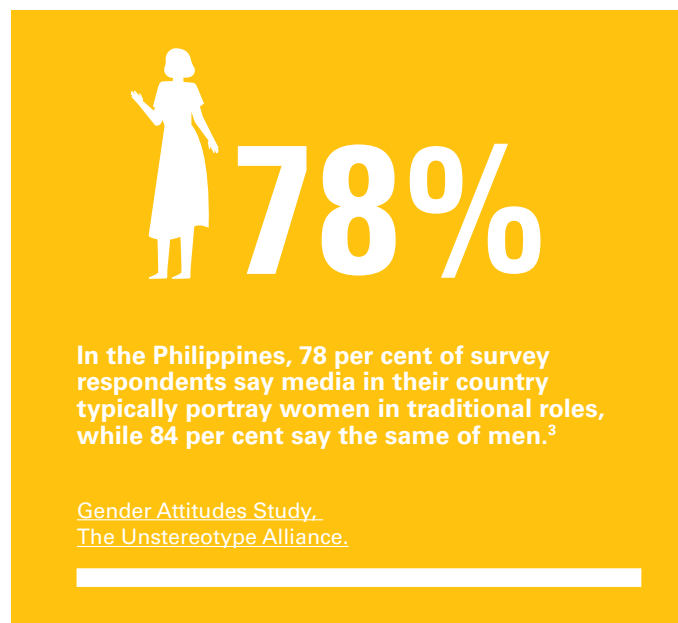
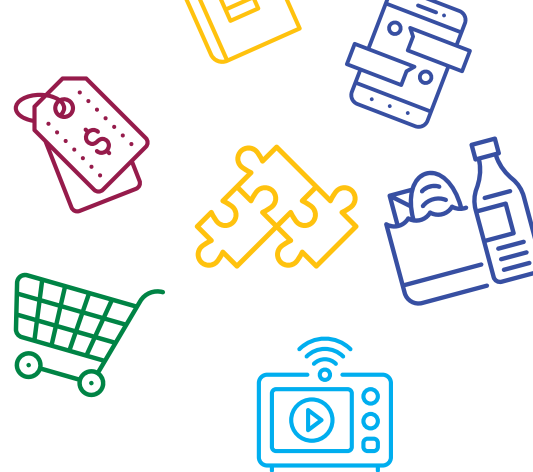
Women and girls across Asia and the Pacific face high levels of gender inequality and harmful gender norms in households, institutions and society. Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) vary substantially in their levels of human development; countries with a lower level of development are generally at greater risk of gender inequality. High rates of domestic violence, sexual violence, teenage pregnancy and child marriage, still common in many countries across the region, are alarming manifestations of inequality and harmful gender norms. Traditional gender norms also dictate that care and domestic work is disproportionately carried out by women. As a consequence, many women are leaving the workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing gender inequalities, with increases in gender-based violence, increased burden of unpaid care and domestic work, deepened inequalities in learning for girls and young women, and escalated economic problems disproportionately affecting women and girls. It is imperative, therefore, to renew efforts to combat harmful stereotypes that limit choices and opportunities and entrench gender inequalities and harmful behaviours. This can be achieved through a wide range of interventions with government, business and civil actors.

Media, marketing and advertising play an important role in the socialization of gender norms among children, adolescents and adults. Gender norms are encoded in TV and film, in advertising creative content for products such as toys, books, clothing and cosmetics, and across marketing channels including online. Often, these gender norms promote harmful stereotypes that impede opportunities for children, especially girls, and limit opportunities for women. Research shows that by the age of six, girls already consider boys more likely to demonstrate brilliance and more suited to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) subjects, impacting employment opportunities.¹ Harmful stereotypes and tropes can also contribute to the normalization of harmful behaviours and violence against women and girls.

What is gender socialization and why does it matter?

Gender norms are informal, deeply entrenched and widely held beliefs on gender roles and expectations within a community that govern human behaviours and practices. The process of gender socialization means expected gender roles are learned from birth and intensified through childhood and adolescence with messages received from society. Children learn to 'do gender' in accordance with gender norms – for example girls are more likely to be praised for their looks and given toys to encourage caregiving while boys are praised for their physical strength and given toys to develop cognitive and physical skills. Gender norms can change, and change is most likely to be achieved by exposing children and adolescents to positive gender norms as early as possible.²



Gender stereotypes can be found across different sectors, products and services

Clothing and Sports Apparel

Children's apparel makes up 15.9 per cent of the clothing market. Clothes are a leading product type purchased online by 16 to 24-year-olds in Asia.⁴

The style, design and marketing of clothing can encode social norms:



- Colour coding linked to gender stereotypes
- Princesses, rainbows and unicorns vs. spaceships dinosaurs and football
- Images of girls and women posing rather than actively participating
- Clothing for girls and women not designed for activity
- Unequal sponsorship of women's and girls' teams

Consumer Goods Advertising

Women are less likely to be shown in public spaces, in paid employment, as leaders or making decisions about their futures in advertising.¹⁰ Advertising for household goods and food can contribute to perceptions of gendered family roles, driving a disproportionate burden of care for women and girls.

Creative content often features:



- 'Incompetent dad' tropes
- Mainly women shown cooking, cleaning & caring
- Women shown as homemakers or lovers, not leaders
- Men more likely to be portrayed as scientists and tech leads

Online Media

Children and adolescents are increasingly online: sixty-one percent of 4 to 18 year-olds in Asia-Pacific (APAC) have their own smartphones.⁵ Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) is a particular issue for girls and women and can include stalking, cyberbullying, deepfakes and hate speech.

Issues include:



- Children over 13 years of age are treated as adults by many platforms
- Digital advertising often served according to gender stereotypes
- Community moderation and guidelines may not full address the needs of women and girl users

TV and Film

Narratives and representation in TV and films can help shape perceptions of self. Creative content in media has the power to create change.

Examples of stereotyping can include:



- Lack of agency for girls and women in characters, with leaders more likely to be male
- Non-human (cartoon) characters more likely to be shown as male than female, contributing to lower representations of females overall
- Household and employment situations are often stereotyped
- Storylines can promote unhealthy notions of romantic love, including toxic relationships and normalization of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Toys, Books and Licensed Products

East Asia and the Pacific is leading global growth for toy sales.⁶ In early childhood, gender stereotypes can be impacted by the toys parents choose for their children.

Examples include:



- Colour coding and gender signposting in shops and catalogues
- Lack of positive female characters in varied roles in storylines in books, films and TV shows
- Stereotyped creative content in TV shows and associated product licensing

Gaming

While women make up 38 per cent of gamers in Asia (and growing)⁷ and 46 per cent globally,⁸ they are underrepresented in the gaming industry, with women making up just 22 per cent of those working in games studios across the world.⁹

Lack of representation across the industry can contribute to:



- Lack of diverse storyline and characters, or positive role models in content
- Advertising placed according to stereotyped views of women and girls' interests
- Less variety among the types of YouTubers/ Influencers monetised and promoted by brands
- A lack of commitment to zero tolerance of abuse

Personal Care Products and Cosmetics

The beauty industry can have a harmful impact on self-confidence and self-perception. Beauty advertisements have been shown to increase weight concern, self-consciousness, body dissatisfaction, negative mood and perception of one's own unattractiveness.

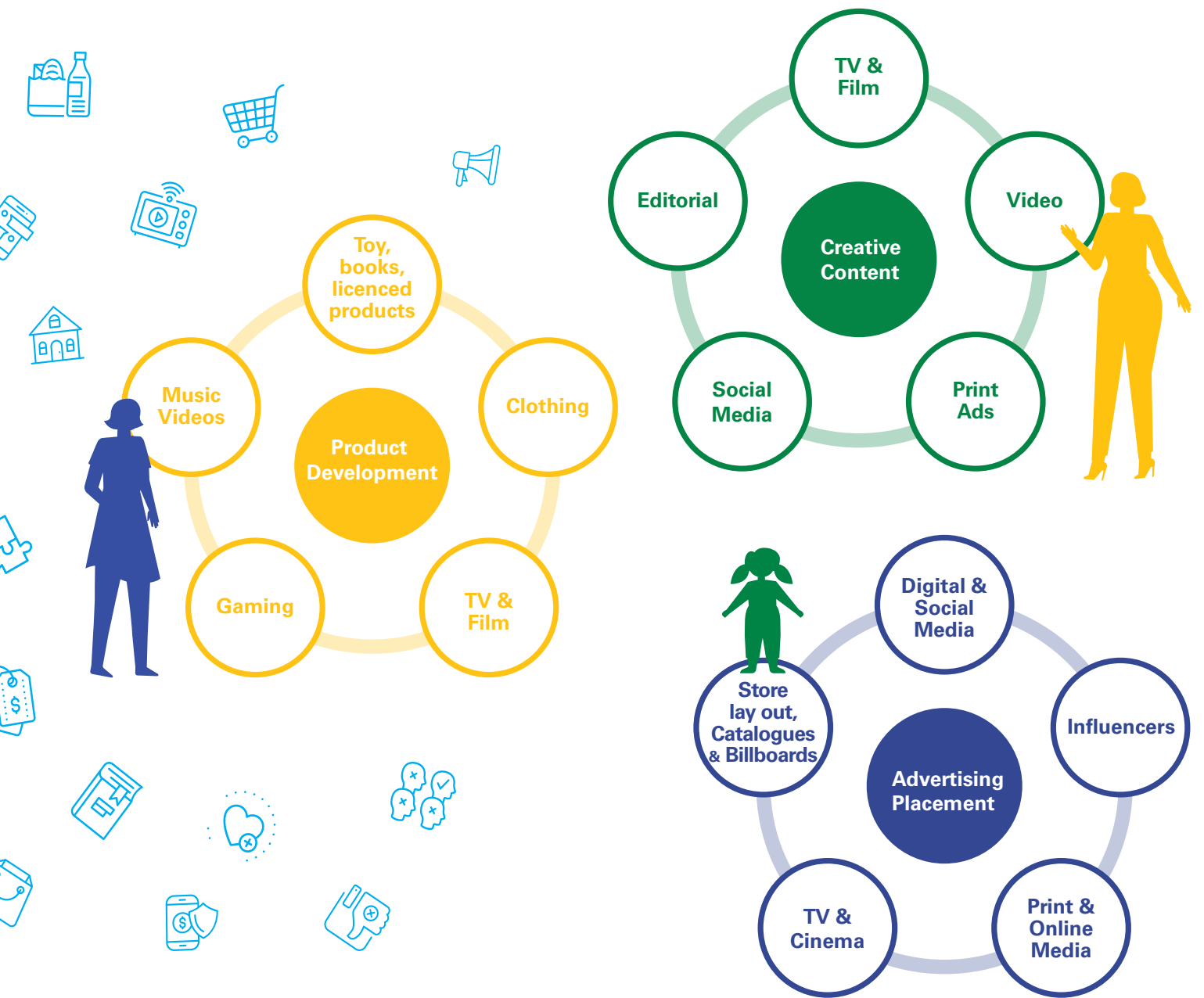
Harmful practices can include:



- Lack of diverse models in terms of body size, colour and beauty norms
- Use of editing software to perpetuate a particular standard of beauty
- Lack of regulation and/or clarity around use of paid influencers
- Promotion of potentially harmful cosmetic products and treatments
- Sexualization of adolescent girls in advertising



Where to look for gender stereotyping across media, marketing and advertising?



Actors that take part in media, marketing and advertising in the region in Asia-Pacific

MEDIA	Publishers, news media, Internet platforms, TV, streaming platforms	CROSS-CUTTING ACTORS Government regulators; marketing and advertising regulators, business aggregators, industry associations (global, regional, in-country), civil society organizations, industry media and service providers
MARKETING	Brand owners: toys and games; beauty and personal care, food and beverage, apparel sectors, technology	
ADVERTISING	Creative agencies (in house and external), media buyers	

Trends impacting gender stereotyping in media, marketing and advertising

Gender equality has been impacted by recent global trends and events, with progress slowing down and even regressing on some key indicators. The need for action to dismantle gender stereotypes across media, marketing and advertising remains as relevant as ever.

Impact of COVID-19 on gender equality

Women and girls paid additional costs during the COVID-19 pandemic and their working, home and school lives have been negatively impacted, with progress towards gender equality lagging. Deepening economic and social stressors, along with pandemic-response measures, heightened family and domestic demands, led to acute stress, particularly for girls and women. They are more likely to have suffered financial hardship as a result of the pandemic, because they are more often in vulnerable employment and bear a greater burden of increased unpaid care and domestic work. They were also more likely to be working on the frontline in health care, to have lost jobs, had schooling derailed or and had an increased burden of care at home.

Digital explosions

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of digital platforms and social media among children globally and across the region, with new platforms and habits emerging. Children and adolescents, along with their parents, are increasingly reliant on screens, and advertising and marketing techniques to attract consumers are changing at pace. While traditional toys and books still play an important role in the lives of children, games and socialization have increasingly moved online. This trend has produced many positives, but also many issues for parents and children – and the need for the advertising and marketing industries to respect and protect children's rights remains as relevant online as offline. Online gender-based violence is also a growing issue impacting the mental health of women and girls and their ability to speak out in public.

For advertisers, the trend of increasing spend on digital advertising has also disrupted traditional channels for marketing and media planning with consumers increasingly accessing media content through a variety of digital platforms, creating new challenges around the targeting of advertising and control of a brand.

Responsible business conduct and diversity and inclusion

Business has placed an increasing focus on issues around diversity, equity and inclusion, with a continuing push to measure gender equality in the workforce and set meaningful targets with accompanying policies to promote women in leadership. Global social movements such as #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter have also impacted corporate positioning of brand values and harassment policies. While there may be a perception that diversity and inclusion issues are being driven by global headquarters outside the region, an increasing number of local brands are engaging with these issues. Women working in advertising across the region highlight the gap that sometimes exists between the ideals from corporate HQ and the practice on the ground.¹¹ For example, headline reporting of gender parity can give a misleading impression of gender balance throughout the workforce.



Impact: body image and beauty norms

How people are portrayed in media and advertising – through both text and image – has a considerable impact on the way children view themselves and who they aspire to be. Beauty advertisements, particularly when coupled with peer interactions, have been shown to increase weight concern, self-consciousness, body dissatisfaction, negative mood, and perception of one's own unattractiveness. Products such as skin whitener, hair relaxants and promoting cosmetic surgery to girls and adolescents reinforce harmful notions of femininity and can also be dangerous to their health. Food advertising can promote unhealthy diets, lifestyles and unrealistic body ideals, while TV and film also play a role in driving gender norms.



Around one fifth of respondents from Asia Pacific to a U-Report survey on body image said unattainable beauty standards was the biggest body image problem for girls.¹²






Girls begin to lose confidence in their own abilities by the time they reach

6 years old.¹³



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Body Image and Beauty Norms across the Lifecycle

	EXAMPLES OF ISSUES AND GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ACTION	POTENTIAL AREAS TO ADDRESS
 <p>0-10 YEARS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on beauty and style in toys (including dolls), games and magazines • Stereotypical notions of beauty in TV and cartoons • Emphasis on girls being pretty; while boys are brave and bold in advertising content • Lack of female role models in science and technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present toys (including dolls), games and magazines that open up possibilities for children to explore interests outside of traditional roles or careers. • Create guidance for avoiding stereotyping in content creation • Ensure products promote a variety of style and messaging • Include messaging on women in Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) and leadership
 <p>11-17 YEARS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filters and excessive photo editing in ads impact self-esteem and self-confidence • Social media impact self-esteem with role models and influencers prized for beauty • Lack of sports participation among women and girls from adolescence, with indoor rather than outdoor activities encouraged for girls • Lack of diversity in body types and characteristics associated with positivity in TV and film 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt inclusivity guidelines for casting in advertising to dismantle stereotyping • Revise corporate policies on paid influencers • Increase sponsorship of women and girls in sports • Monitor diversity in TV and film casts
 <p>18+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure to conform to beauty stereotypes through use of unnecessary cosmetic surgery or use of skin lightening • Models with unrealistic body types • Taboos around menstrual health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote body-positive brand values across product lines rather than campaign focus • Develop policies on use of photoshop and filters • Use creative content to break taboos



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CHINA
is the world's
2nd
largest plastic
surgery market.¹⁴

Impact: economic opportunities for women and girls



Across Asia-Pacific, educational attainment has increased, with entry-level workplaces becoming more gender-balanced. However, with maternity the glass ceiling and sticky floors become issues.¹⁵ Educational achievements by girls do not always carry over to the workplace: while girls have higher attendance and completion rates for secondary schools in the region, they are more likely to be not in employment, education or training (NEET) in adolescence and early adulthood, which can be attributed to social norms that discourage women from careers and instead prioritize domestic and care responsibilities. Stereotypes can have far-reaching effects on economic opportunities for women and girls. Too often, girls, their parents and teachers do not see futures in science technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) employment, which are usually male dominated. Increased representation of women and girls in a variety of roles across sectors, including as leaders and in STEM professions, helps them visualize themselves in similar roles. At the same time, portraying boys and men in traditionally feminized sectors such as hospitality or healthcare and promoting shared care responsibilities can address one of the most persistent barriers to women's economic empowerment – the unequal unpaid care burden carried by women.¹⁶

35% of all gamers in Asia are female and the percentage is growing.¹⁷ Scientists in television and film are mostly male, but when they are depicted as female, they are often portrayed as naïve, dependent or providing assistance to more important male scientist characters.¹⁸

Parents in China are **9 times** more likely to spontaneously think of engineers as men.¹⁹

62% of people in Vietnam believe a man's job is to earn money while a woman's job is to look after the house and family.²⁰

Stereotypes affect women's willingness to contribute to work discussions on male topics: Women of childbearing age or mothers are widely perceived as less committed at work and more focused on family.²¹







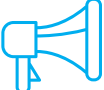


Only **5.7%** of startups in Asia-Pacific are led by female entrepreneurs, a percentage that has stayed stagnant for five years.²²



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¹⁵ Glass ceilings refer to the phenomenon where women are prevented from reaching top levels of management due to bias and/or discrimination, leading to gender balance at the top levels of business. In addition, traditional glass ceilings are not the only obstacle women face as they climb the career ladder. Sticky floors refer to when women start facing barriers at lower management levels generated from structural factors within corporations as well as from social and cultural constraints. At times, it can be women themselves who are reluctant to pursue higher-level responsibilities.

Economic Opportunities for Women and Girls across the Lifecycle

	EXAMPLES OF ISSUES AND GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ACTION	POTENTIAL AREAS TO ADDRESS
 <p>0-10 YEARS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls less likely to be given construction/engineering toys while boys not encouraged in care role play Girls seen as pretty while boys are intelligent or leaders Girls have supporting roles or stereotyped on screen in tech and science storylines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-test products with all genders, not just traditional gender target audiences Show catalogues/store lays-outs based on passions rather than gender stereotypes Portray positive role models for girls in science and technology across TV/film
 <p>11-17 YEARS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maths and science not seen as subjects for girls Lack of female role models – women in lower-paid jobs rather than as leaders Girls do more housework than their brothers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feature girls as equals, not bystanders, in ads for tech toys and gaming Develop creative content to include women as scientists and engineers Show fathers and men doing housework and being competent dads Check ad placement on gaming apps to avoid toxic environments
 <p>18+</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="background-color: #00a651; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">  <p>+2%</p> <p>The share of women managers in Southeast Asia has only increased by 2 percentage points in the past two decades.²³</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #002060; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">  <p>In India, 40%</p> <p>of engineers reported bias against mothers in their workplaces.²⁴</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #800040; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Investor decisions are driven in part by observations of gender-stereotyped behaviours and the implicit associations with the entrepreneur's business competency, rather than the entrepreneur's gender.²⁵</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffcc00; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>70%</p> <p>of female entrepreneurs say gender stereotypes have negatively affected their work as an entrepreneur.²⁶</p> </div> </div>	
 <p>WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women seen as sexual rather than intellectual; homemakers and caregivers rather than employees Gatekeepers perceive “hard skills” like technical problem solving as masculine, while “soft” communication and team-building skills are feminine Tendency of women to underplay their contribution and question their own abilities can determine how much women contribute to discussions as well as compete for promotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable portrayal of gender roles in family, professional and societal settings (i.e., portray both men and women involved in shared care responsibilities) Highlighting role models to promote girls’ interest in STEM education and introduce them to potential future employment opportunities Recruitment policies to address gender imbalances horizontally and vertically with gender-responsive employment benefits; organization-wide gender-bias training; graduate and mentoring outreach programmes
 <p>WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female leaders perceived as bossy rather than authoritative, neglecting roles as mothers and as the primary users of parental leave Appropriate leadership behaviours synonymous with stereotypical male behaviours Stereotypes influence women to discount or undervalue their talents, which can affect their ability to put themselves forward into leadership positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show women in leadership positions and value leadership styles by men and women that are empathetic, collaborative, and inclusive.
 <p>WOMEN AS ENTREPRENEURS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women seen primarily as caregivers, with entrepreneurial pursuits often seen as a “hobby” Confidence and aspirations harmed by stereotypes, which in turn can affect business performance and profitability Availability of start-up capital for women impacted by implicit biases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies and brands can form partnerships and synergies to achieve common goals, including forming partnerships with schools, NGOs, and others to raise awareness of career opportunities in the industry, provide mentorship and internship opportunities, and ultimately nurture the career pipeline of young women and under-represented individuals/groups Investors to look beyond traditional networks to include female-led startups
 <p>WOMEN AS CONSUMERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designs of products and services do not always take into account the needs of women and use the average male as default size/user Women portrayed as consumers and primary decision-makers for household goods, while men for expensive items, such as cars, which may neglect growing needs of women as a customer segment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity, equity, and inclusion must be meaningfully embedded at all levels of the creative process, including eliminating biases within casting process and ensuring diversity among the individuals developing scripts and creative concepts Ensure marketing of financial products is designed taking women’s loan needs into account (placement and design/advertisement for women as consumers) Ensure bias training for all those involved in product development, and also at all management levels to be able to identify and address gender bias and discrimination that stems from stereotyping

Impact: violence against women and girls

Organizations concerned with preventing violence against women and girls sounded the alarm as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic hit, warning of a likely increase in violence against women and girls globally, particularly in households already at risk. The pandemic increased women's experiences of violence and eroded their feelings of safety. Violence against women has had a significant impact on women's mental health during the pandemic.²⁷ Exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse from early childhood is likely to contribute to harmful attitudes towards domestic violence. Discriminatory gender norms perpetuated in media and advertising can normalize acts of violence against women and girls and portray unhealthy relationships. Societal pressures on young men are also a factor in violence against women and girls.






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Violence against Women and Girls across the Lifecycle

	EXAMPLES OF ISSUES AND GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ACTION	POTENTIAL AREAS TO ADDRESS
 <p>0-10 YEARS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls seen as shy, modest, while boys are seen as more confident Children told that boys tease and bully girls they like Boys do not cry and boys are strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and support age-appropriate media sensitivity education to equip children with the right skill set and protective behaviour to safeguard themselves from online abuse, violence and exploitation Use games as an opportunity to promote diverse roles and positive gender roles Avoid stereotypes in cartoon characters as well as “humans” in TV and games Model healthy, equitable relationships based on mutual respect in media narratives
 <p>11-17 YEARS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls’ worth tied to attractiveness to men Excessive value placed on beauty and attractiveness Across society, girls expected to make way for boys Lack of awareness of principles of “consent” Boys perceived as decision makers with final say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use creative content to show women and girls as independent and self-confident Develop policies to protect girls from harassment online when engaging with brands Use ethical algorithms to disrupt, not reinforce stereotypes Strengthen content-quality testing and evaluation mechanisms Promotion of enthusiastic consent in narratives and acceptance of “no means no” Responsible reporting on crimes against women and girls
 <p>18+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women generally portrayed as caregivers or objects of sexual desire Women seen as passive, men as leaders and authority figures Objectification of women as victims and sexualized in media, marketing and advertising Men expected to act tough and use aggression to get respect and solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoiding stylized violence in creative content Ensure advertising is not placed on online forums where there is a lack of vigilance around Online Gender Based Violence Avoid using stereotypes and tropes when reporting on violence against women and girls Audit how women portrayed in terms of clothing, body types and skin colour



© UN Women/Lauren DeCicca



Violence is a major component of masculinity, with

63.6%

of male characters enacting violence in a study of online video gaming, and

84.8 %

study of online video gaming, and of the time that violence is directed against other people.²⁹

Frameworks and Guidelines for Action

Policy and regulatory frameworks

Existing laws, policies and self-regulatory mechanisms rarely protect consumers, especially children, from harmful stereotypes, and tend not to mention possible gender-related considerations. However, this is beginning to change with the updating of industry codes of conduct. With a rapid shift towards marketing via digital channels and with an increase of content creators (i.e. influencer marketing), regulating the digital space to protect people from the impacts of harmful stereotyped marketing practices and toxic online environments continues to be a challenge.



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Industry bodies and self-regulation

There is a network of marketing and advertising associations across the region, some of which are active in highlighting the impact of discriminatory stereotyping to members, providing guidelines and toolkits to members at a global, regional and country level. These associations work with advertising and marketing agencies as well as brand owners.




Child Rights & Business Principles (CRBP)

All businesses should use marketing and advertising that respect and support children's rights (Principle 6)

The CRBP call for marketing practices that “consider factors such as: children’s greater susceptibility to manipulation, and the effects of using unrealistic or sexualized body images and stereotypes” and calls to promote “positive self-esteem.”

<https://childrenandbusiness.org/>




WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact Office

The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of principles offering guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. The WEPs were established by the UN Global Compact and UN Women.³⁰

An increasing number of companies across Asia-Pacific have signed on to address gender bias in their value chains. This includes addressing harmful gender stereotypes in all media and advertising, and by systematically depicting women and men as empowered actors with progressive, intelligent and multi-dimensional personalities (WEPs Principle 5: Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices).³¹

<https://www.weps.org/>



#UNSTEREOTYPE ALLIANCE

The Unstereotype Alliance is an industry-led initiative convened by UN Women that unites advertising industry leaders, decision-makers and creatives to end harmful stereotypes in advertising and businesses and other organizations championing the end of bias in advertising. The members collaborate to help create a world without stereotypes, empowering people in all their diversity, and adhere to the following principles:

- Create unsterotyped branded content by depicting people as empowered actors; refraining from objectifying people; portraying progressive and multi-dimensional personalities, and
- Foster an unsterotyped culture by driving gender balance in senior leadership and creative roles through directly addressing unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion through training as a standard across the industry.

The Unstereotype Alliance aims to challenge advertisers and advertising agencies to deliver the best unsterotyped marketing content and setting clear goals and measuring change annually.³²

www.unstereotypealliance.org

Drive a positive impact

The business case is increasingly clear: progressive advertising is good for business.³³ But guidelines and best practice from a global headquarters do not translate neatly into a country or region. A great deal of effort may be needed to tailor an approach that resonates culturally and meets the needs of an audience.



Promoting change in marketing through a sustainable and inclusive business model.

Businesses should manage their media content and marketing mix to understand where gender stereotyping might be impacting their strategies through product development, creative content and advertising placement. Editorial content and coverage of issues drive perceptions of gender norms by upholding but also challenging harmful norms. While issue-based campaigns to drive awareness can be powerful, it is also crucial to ensure a holistic approach across all brands and business operations that portrays women and girls on equal footing. Television and film narratives and casting should focus on the quality of representation and avoid tropes, stereotyping and quantity of representation and especially avoid normalizing, condoning or excusing violence. A gender-transformative approach³⁴ in the workplace helps drive gender-responsive products and advertising content and narratives.

UN Women's and UN Global Compact's Women's Empowerment Principles, platforms like the Unstereotype Alliance, and organizations such as the World Federation of Advertising and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media have designed guides and toolkits for practitioners to help business pinpoint areas for focus, address bias and promote diversity and inclusion that can be used as a starting point for addressing country and regional-level media, marketing and advertising.³⁵ Tools are also available for media to drive awareness and guidance on how to avoid harmful stereotyping when reporting on violence against women and children.³⁶

At a regulatory level, increased advocacy to raise awareness of the impact of gender stereotypes and develop country-specific guidelines will help set the agenda for business.

The road ahead

What will enable the marketing and advertising ecosystem to continue progress on gender equality? Based on the data, below are some suggestions on issues to explore:

- ✓ **Build the evidence base:** plug the data gap by mainstreaming the collection of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data and measuring impact of media on gender stereotyping
- ✓ **Advocate for change:** become a champion internally and externally for marketing and advertising messaging and content that promotes equality between women and men, and avoids gender stereotyping, opening up spaces for women and girls to be free, safe, and lead
- ✓ **Create guidelines, tools and targeted action:** audit your media and marketing mix
- ✓ **Bring global movements like the Unstereotype Alliance to the region and increase the civic space to empower women and girls**

Continue the Conversation!



³⁴ Gender-transformative systems, services, and products aim to transform stereotypes, attitudes, norms and practices by challenging power relations, rethinking gender norms and binaries, and raising critical consciousness about the root causes of inequality.

Endnotes

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UN Women Asia and the Pacific
Rajchadamnern Nok Avenue, Khwaeng Bang Khun Phrom, Khet Phra Nakhon, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en>

