

COUNTERING FAKE NEWS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS



'Countering fake news on climate change and women's rights' is created by Center for Sustainable Communities Development (CSCD) Bulgaria, 2025

Center for Sustainable Communities Development is an independent, non-governmental organization in public benefit, founded in 1994 by active professional women. It has won recognition as an Advocacy group working to: raise Bulgarian society awareness on gender equality issues; raise civil society intolerance to violence against women at home and in workplace; change the legislation to protect women and children victims of domestic violence; educate children and young people in human rights and the national and international regulations guaranteeing those rights; get media involved in gender issues discussions; acquire successful practices of foreign NGOs and adapt them professionally to the Bulgarian reality; promote and encourage women in starting-up their own business; and achieve more active women's participation in politics and decision-making, and create a national women's lobby.

This method is part of the online trainers hub, which is one of one of the key adult education tools developed in the multi-year collaboration entitled: **"Gender and Climate Justice: Knowledge for Empowerment", in brief COPGendered**. This project builds up tools and knowledge for learners to upskill themselves (in groups, individually or with a teacher) in the relationships between gender inequality and the climate crisis. This includes providing tools for adult education providers. The project which lasted for three years ended in November 2025.

The associations involved are in this project: WIDE+ (Europe), GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice/LIFE e.V in Germany, WIDE in Austria, GADIP in Sweden, KULU Women and Development in Denmark, Mundubat in Spain and CSCD in Bulgaria.

COPGENDERED PROJECT PARTNERS



Mundubat



Center for Sustainable Communities Development



KVINDERNES U-LANDSUDVALG
KULU - Women and Development



Bildung Umwelt Chancengleichheit



Entwicklungspolitisches Netzwerk für Frauenrechte und feministische Perspektiven



Co-funded by the European Union

METHOD PREPARED BY:

Center for Sustainable Communities Development

PROOFREADING:

Alison Whyte

EDITING:

Janine Wurzer, Gea Meijers and Gioia Buonsanti

LAY OUT:

Stephanie Höglund

PICTURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS:

The illustrations are downloaded from Canva and are free to use for commercial and personal purposes. The memes were developed during the transnational workshop of the project in 2025. Together with the photos of people, they are used with explicit consent by the participants. Consent has been given before or at the beginning of the event that is pictured. The picture of the speaker at page 3 is Stanimira Hadjimitova, director at CSCD who facilitated the workshop at the transnational training. The method provided may be used freely as long as CSCD is clearly credited as the source.

This project is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the writers and participants and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



COUNTERING FAKE NEWS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This method aims to teach people how to expose fake news about climate change and women's rights and to counter them through using online tools, in particular by using humour by making memes. In this way, participants are learning more facts and perspectives on the topics of feminism and climate change and participants' skills are enhanced. They are enabled to use powerful and modern methods, creating humorous images (memes) to make more people laugh at lies.

SUMMARY

This workshop consists of small group work doing two exercises to build the online skills of participants, combined with group reflection. It starts by doing media research to find fake news on two topics: one on climate change and the other on feminism, followed by a reflection on common misleading claims and how to overcome them. In the second part of the workshop the groups will have to make one meme each, in order to make fun of fake news and show how the information found was wrong in an innovative way that can attract online views and engagement with posting the meme.

Time needed: 120 minutes

Space needed: a room

Number of participants: A minimum of 8 and a maximum of 14

Age: 12+

Material needed: laptop/mobile phones with internet connection and ideally a room with a beamer, with connection to a computer.

Material provided in this guide: links to websites useful for the creation of memes and to fact-check news.

Citation: For more information, see CSCD's website: <https://cscd-bg.org/en/>

FACILITATION GUIDE

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

STEP 1: PREPARATION

In this workshop, people will work in small groups of 4-8 people. Many people carry a phone and some people may also carry a computer. Having access to the internet and being able to work with some online tools as a group is a necessary requirement. It is important to assess if participants will be adequately prepared.

The location should obviously have a good internet connection, and it is also advised to reflect if within the group there is some capacity among participants to work and search online. It will benefit the presentation greatly if you have a beamer screen available in the room, to show the other group(s) the materials that have been discovered and developed. If you assess that as a group, people do not have the necessary experience and skills, it is advisable to plan for more time and guidance on how to use these tools and websites.

You might want to find particular online resources of fake news and tools in the language of the participants, as the suggestions below are tailored to English, though common tools are available in different languages.

STEP 2: SEEKING FAKE NEWS IN TWO GROUPS

For this part, you need 50 minutes, with five minutes of introduction and 45 minutes of group work. It starts with the facilitator welcoming everybody and splitting the group of participants into two sub-groups.

The facilitator announces the task: one group will **look for fake news or stereotypical news about women, and the second will do the same for climate change.** Part of seeking out fake news is assessing if a particular news item is true or false, by checking credible sources (see below).



You can provide some examples of fake news to help the groups. These include common misleading claims such as:

On climate change:

- "Global warming stopped in 1998."
- "Climate change is just part of a natural cycle."
- "Climate change is a threat used by governments to control citizens."
- "CO2 is not a significant driver of climate change."

On feminism:

- "Feminism is anti-men."
- "Feminism is about gaining power and creating a society ruled by women."
- "Feminists are anti-feminine."
- "Feminism is a white woman's issue."

As part of the instructions, you tell participants to keep track of where they found fake news and how they checked its validity (which sites, etc.). You can suggest around 20 to 30 minutes of individual online searching. And the remaining time for the small group discussion. The group discussion will discuss how they verified it, how such fake news can negatively impact and reinforce stereotypes and prejudices on the topic, who spreads them and how they can fight against this.

The final aspect of your instruction is about the plenary presentation after the group work. Each group will have to choose a speaker who will have seven minutes to present their key findings and impressions in front of the other group members. This is also a time for questions from the other group, leading to a small session of plenary reflection.

You can highlight resources to fact-check in the plenary, or on paper, or online screen, either in this session or during the group work:

- **Climate Feedback (climatefeedback.org):** A platform where climate scientists review and debunk climate misinformation.
- **Skeptical Science (skepticalscience.com):** This site counters common climate change myths with peer-reviewed scientific research.
- **IPCC Reports (ipcc.ch):** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change regularly publishes comprehensive reports backed by scientific consensus.

How to find accurate information:

1. **Look for peer-reviewed scientific journals:** Websites like Google Scholar (scholar.google.com) or JSTOR (jstor.org) offer access to verified scientific studies on climate change.
2. **Government and educational websites:** Websites from institutions like NASA (climate.nasa.gov) and NOAA (noaa.gov) are reliable sources.
3. **Fact-checking websites:** Platforms like Snopes (snopes.com) or FactCheck.org can help clarify false claims about climate science.



STEP 3: PLENARY PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FAKE NEWS

At this step you plan for 15 minutes of plenary presentation and discussion. Each group has a representative who briefly outlines what they have found and discussed. There is also space for questions and answers.

STEP 4: MAKING MEMES TO COUNTER FAKE NEWS

In the second part of the workshop the two sub-groups will have to create at least one **meme** each in order to give the right information to the audience, in response to the fake news found, and to present it in a funny and innovative way. The groups will have 40 minutes for this exercise.

You might need to explain what a meme is and point to well-known resources and tools. This information is provided in this guide for you to use.

A meme is an idea, behaviour, or style that spreads using imitation from person to person within a culture, often to convey a particular meaning. A meme carries cultural ideas, symbols or practices that can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing or speech. In everyday language, the term meme refers to what actually represents only one category of meme, that is the “internet meme”, i.e. a concept that spreads rapidly from person to person via the internet, largely through internet-based blogs and social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and instant messaging.



I'm not denying climate change, I'm saying it could very well go back!

The most accredited site that manages a virtual archive of many (if not all) of the memes produced in recent years is <https://knowyourmeme.com>. Memes represent a powerful tool to express a point of view or to express an opinion about something (often critical and ironic). In other words, memes are a way to contribute to the public discourse on social media and influence your online reputation. Memes, being viral and transmitting specific cultural messages, are powerful tools to contribute positively to the social media environment.

No special skills are required to produce a successful meme. On the one hand, in fact, many free resources are available online where participants can create a meme, or even just edit existing memes to create new ones. Once logged in, one can create images with super imposed text, using models already prepared for dissemination on social networks.

- Imgur, <https://imgur.com/>
- Quickmeme, <http://www.quickmeme.com/>
- Imgflip, <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>

On the other hand, the more the meme is simple, clear, funny or ironic, the more successful it will be. Jokes can be reflections on the absurdity of everyday life, as well as about current events, and newsworthy items.

After an introduction on memes and tools, give the participants the chance to create their meme (per group) against stereotypes! In the previous part of the workshop, one group focused on climate change and the other on women's rights. Suggest that each group continues to work on their topics, having researched fake news. In order to start the group work, suggest the following actions, after which they do some individual reflection followed by group work:

- Think of a stereotype particularly common among your friends or among the people you know.
- Think of a way to make fun of the stereotype in question.
- Look for an image that is simple and effective among the currently most popular ones.



STEP 5: FINAL PRESENTATION

At the end of the workshop, each group has five minutes to present their meme, why and how they made it, and five minutes is available for questions from the other subgroup, a total of 20 minutes for the final plenary session.

CONCLUSION

Young people often have the most experience with online tools and searching, especially people from Generation Z, while more often the older generations do not have the same level of digital skills. The method can be used as a way to include the youngest representatives of society in the topics of women's rights and the fight against climate change and also to create a link between generations in which people from the older generation learn from the younger ones.

The ability to detect fake news and create memes will be increasingly valuable in the future as a teaching method and as a tool for learning new information. Fact-checking is especially needed in the modern environment of social networks and increasing digitalization.