

The Girl Generation- Support to the Africa-led Movement to end female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C Accessibility Guidelines

Best practice in making communications accessible and inclusive

These guidelines are to be used alongside The Girl Generation Brand Guidelines. They provide additional guidance to ensure the design and formatting of communication materials and documents are as accessible as possible.

Accessible and inclusive design means making sure our work can be used and accessed by as many people as possible. This could mean communities we work directly with through a programme, such as grantee partners, survivors of FGM/C, health professionals, government staff or partners and global health experts. Within these target audiences, our communications work should be accessible to anyone with additional needs.

Communication is diverse and includes languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, plain-language, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible information and communications technologies (CRPD Article 2).

Across the globe the percentage of people who have a disability is estimated at one billion, which is about 15% of people worldwide. Therefore, in line with our values, we see it as important to consider accessibility when creating our communications products.

The Girl Generation aims to meet industry standards and ensure that we make the necessary adjustments to our design work wherever possible. Accessibility is not an afterthought for us but is held of the highest importance.

If you have any questions regarding our accessibility guidelines, please reach out to the Communications Team- info@thegirlgeneration.org. To learn more about the programme, visit www.thegirlgeneration.org

How we make our work inclusive

Accessible and inclusive design means making sure our work can be used and accessed by as many people as possible. This covers people with visual impairments disabilities, colour blindness, learning difficulties, auditory impairments, ambulatory impairments, and cognitive impairments to name a few.

At The Girl Generation, we aim to respect the needs of our audience and make the necessary adjustments to our work wherever possible, so it can be used by the largest number of people.

Creating accessible communications does not mean we have to lose our design aesthetic. Accessibility has nothing to do with how visually attractive a website, a document, or a graphic is. Many accessible elements are considered good design practice and create a better experience for all readers/users. For example, the ability to easily scan a page to quickly find information needed, enhanced readability due to good typography and color choices, and distinguishable hyperlinks.

Below we will outline the steps we intend to follow throughout our design communications to make our work more accessible.

General principles

- Communicate in languages, formats and media that are easily understood, respectful and culturally appropriate for different members of the community, especially if you are working with vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Start with good design and build accessibility requirements into any procurement process. Considering and including accessibility from the beginning is cheaper, and essential to avoid procurement and design mistakes. Good design simply makes sense and benefits everyone.
- External communications, including those used for funder purposes, are accurate, ethical, and respectful, presenting communities and people affected by the crisis as dignified human beings.
- All images should include descriptive alternative text.
- All language should be simple and straightforward.
- Language, images, and graphics used must be survivor-sensitive and should avoid the use of razor blades, blood, or images that depict the act of FGM/C being performed.
- Where appropriate, listen to users as users have clear expectations about their needs and preferences, and what they like and what they want to avoid, for example, CAPTCHA verifications on websites. Check-in with users regularly to ensure accessibility is maintained over time.
- Engaging with persons with disabilities to support you in developing content will often help identify issues that are not covered by any standard.
- Appropriate images, language and terminology go hand-in-hand with a genuine change in attitudes and practice. Communication should be inclusive, challenge assumptions and avoid stereotypes. Use person first language (e.g., person with disability) and ensure terminology is affirmative and respectful, in line with United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and use images that demonstrate respect and dignity.

Colour and contrast

- All colours are accessible – it is how they are used that is important.
- Colour alone cannot be used to convey meaning. But we can use contrast to distinguish certain elements from one another or to make sure that essential elements are visible to sighted users even if they have a visual impairment.
- For example, colored but not underlined hyperlinks in a sentence, would not be enough to make the hyperlink stand out.
- Using the colour red to display 'no' is another example, – you must back the colour up with an image such as a traffic light, or a text explanation. People with colour blindness will not be able to understand your document otherwise.
- It is important to ensure sufficient contrast when combining colours.
- Avoid using too many colours at once - this can be disorientating and makes it harder for your messages to be understood, in particular, avoid colour combinations affected by color blindness like red and green.
- Black on white is not ideal for dyslexia or perceptual processing disorders – it is better to use an almost black (as per the brand guidelines).

There are no contrast requirements on:

- Logos
- Decorative elements
- Part of a picture that contains significant other visual content
- Screenshots

The Girl Generation colour palette

TGG-ALM offers a wide range of colours and a selection of light and dark shades to create striking contrasts in our designs and communications. **Please see our brand guidelines for the colour palette.**

Typography

Typography is important to consider in how we make our communications and documents accessible.

Lato and Baloo are TGG-ALMs main brand fonts to be used on all externally facing comms products, for example, our marketing collateral and website. Lato and Baloo are widely used font from a Google library.

Similarly, to colors, there are no strict rules around which fonts are accessible or which are not, although it is generally acknowledged that sans serif fonts are easier to read.

Accessibility is fundamentally more about how a font is used rather than just its features.

As outlined in our brand guidelines, we do everything to ensure the way the font is used meets the necessary guidelines and standards.

To accommodate for documents with substantial amounts of text for everyday use, we have introduced our secondary font, Arial.

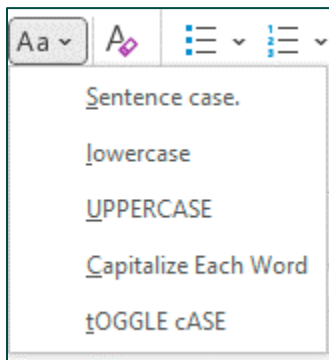
Arial is used for internal documents and email, and as an alternative when Lato and Baloo is not suitable or available.

It is the standard font for the body text for all 'non-designed' documents, such as Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. However, Lato and Baloo can still be used for titles and headings in these products. **Please see the brand guidelines for typography guidelines.**

Guidelines for text:

- If possible, avoid making lines too long. 75-120 characters per line is a comfortable reading width for most.
- If accessibility is your priority, then set your text in a single column as this is easier to read than two columns for a lot of readers.
- If you need to use multiple columns on some occasions that is ok, just make sure the reading order is clear.
- Use white space – add generous margins.
- Ensure there is sufficient space between lines and paragraphs to make it easy to read.
- Do not hyphenate text, especially headings.

- Avoid italics or underlined text, and especially italics underlined as both formats are harder to read.
- Minimum font size can vary based on the use, and font choice, but for a general A4 document set in Arial, **12 point** should be the minimum. If you need to inform users in 'large print' then set the text at **16 point** or more.
- For posters or presentations use **18 point** or more. If in doubt, consider the space in which the work will be shown, and adjust the sizes to best suit the reading distance.
- These sizes come from [UKAAF Clear and Large Print Guidelines](#) and are meant as a guide. Doing your own user research with your products is always recommended.
- Use ALL CAPS sparingly and for short lines of text and abbreviations only (e.g., titles/headings where needed). Readability is reduced with all caps because all words have a uniform rectangular shape, meaning readers cannot identify words by their shape.
- If using ALL CAPS, type the text as 'sentence case', then style it as 'UPPERCASE' – this is better for screen readers. Select the text, Click the Home tab in the Ribbon, Click Change Case in the Font group (Aa). A drop-down menu appears, Select 'uppercase'.



- Left justify text. Left-aligned text is considered the most readable and accessible option, as it reduces the effort required to track each line's beginning when the text wraps.
- Heading styles – define your levels of heading and make them distinguishable.
- Sans serif fonts are easier to read on screens.

- Avoid too many changes of type, print size or format as this is confusing. People who have difficulty with reading need consistency.
 - Avoid putting text over photographs, graphics, or patterns, it will make it much more difficult to read the text, using a plain background for the text works better
- **Please see the brand guidelines for how to use our Tone of Voice.**

Images

There are two types of images; essential and decorative. Essential images must follow accessibility laws. Context is key as it depends on determining what type of image they are.

Essential Images

Essential images are ones that convey information. They are important for understanding the content. If the image were removed, would someone miss that information or be able to understand the content?

Essential images could be:

- an image of text
- logos
- some photos or illustrations depending on how they are used
- meaningful icons such as social media icons
- data graphics (pie charts, bar graphs, line graphs and infographics)
- maps

Decorative Images

Decorative images may be:

- decorative elements such as a border or lines,
- decorative quotation marks that you might use for pulling quotes,
- decorative icons that do not convey meaning, and
- decorative icons that are redundant. These icons are redundant because the text next to each of them explains what they are.

Use Alt-text for essential images:

Use Alt-text on logos, photographs, graphs, and illustrations. Alt-text applies to essential images, not decorative ones. Alt-text stands for 'alternative text' for an image.

Assistive technology cannot see the content of an image. However, they can read—and will voice—Alt-text. Alt-text helps people with little or no vision using assistive technology, such as a screen reader or a braille keyboard. Alt-text should say what the image contains based on the context in which it is being used.

Adding Alt-text in Microsoft:

To add Alt-text to a picture, shape, chart, or SmartArt graphic, right-click on the object and choose Format Picture. In the Format Picture panel, choose the Layout and Properties icon. Then choose Alt Text. Add a title for your object, then a description.

To add Alt-text by typing it directly into InDesign:

1. Select an image that does not have alt text.
2. With the Selection tool, select the image.
3. Choose Object > Object Export Options.
4. Select the Alt Text tab in the Object Export Options dialog box.
5. Choose Custom from the Alt Text Source menu.

Some best practices for ALT text include:

- Use a period at the end. This will cause a screen reader to pause after reading it.
 - Check the spelling of your Alt-text!
 - Leave out “Image of,” “Photo of,”
 - Keep it short and to the point
- **See here for examples and further guidance: [How to write alt-text for image accessibility - Scope for business](#)**
- **Please see our brand guidelines for guidance on how to represent people in photography.**

Digital Guidance

- Not everyone is digitally included perhaps due to cost, or in some countries, the bandwidth to view videos or even high-resolution images is not necessarily available, so a range of channels should be used.
- Where videos are used, these should always be subtitled, preferably on a consistent background for legibility.
- Where text is used as part of the video then it should be voiced over (in case it cannot be read) and text should move at an average reading speed.
- Where publications can be downloaded, it can be helpful to provide an alternative HTML page instead and/or to make sure the document is available in a readable or searchable PDF as opposed to a scan.
- Twitter: over-use of hashtags and abbreviations can make some Tweets difficult to understand. Hashtags should always capitalise the beginning of every word, so that it is easier to read, does not accidentally spell something inappropriate, and is accessible to assistive software.

Accessibility guidelines and standards

The UK Equality Act

In Britain and the EU (European Union), it is the law: the UK Equality Act says people with disabilities should be able to access your work to the same standard as people without disabilities.

WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 defines how to make Web content more accessible to people with disabilities.

WCAG 2.0 guidelines are categorized into three levels of conformance to meet the needs of diverse groups and different situations: A (lowest), AA (mid-range), and AAA (highest).

PDF/UA – Universal Accessibility

The PDF/UA standard - formally known as ISO 14289-1 - is designed to ensure that PDFs are universally accessible. Aimed at everyone involved in creating PDFs, it sets minimum requirements that make sure documents are compliant with devices that support people with disabilities.

Additional resources

Accessible communications including digital

[Accessible communications: A starting point for fostering more inclusive comms | CharityComms](#)

[Accessible communications - GCS \(civilservice.gov.uk\)](#)

Accessible formats and fonts

[Accessible communication formats - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[WebAIM: Typefaces and Fonts](#)

[Testing fonts for accessibility. Selecting accessible fonts for your... | by Colin Shanley | UX Collective \(uxdesign.cc\)](#)

Accessible design

[Content design: planning, writing and managing content - Tables - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Accessible graphic design | Creating Inclusive Content | University of Greenwich](#)

Accessible social media

[Planning, creating and publishing accessible social media campaigns - GCS \(civilservice.gov.uk\)](#)