



# WOMEN AND CYCLING INCLUSIVITY CAMPAIGN SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN GUIDE



### **Colophon**

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# INTRODUCTION

For most of the 21st century, cities around the world have embraced a resurgence in the power of cycling to move people in sustainable and active ways. However, with infrastructure often slow to catch up to the need, the image of cycling has tended to appear difficult, athletic, and more suited to men. What is often not communicated is how cycling in all its forms can be a tool for emancipation for women, providing freedom and autonomy to move through the city unencumbered, facilitating the varied types of journeys women make, and even providing a tool for taking one's power back and be in control of their lives rather than dependent on someone else.

The power of cycling in creating a more inclusive mobility environment is important to share through experience. There are many tangible barriers to everyday cycling for women and non-binary and transgender individuals – lack of safe infrastructure, lack of access to cycles, lack of ability in first knowing how to cycle, etc. But these are surmountable goals through investment and education. At the same time, good awareness campaigns can help

overcome the more intangible barriers, stemming from the perception that cycling is not something for them. Through awareness building campaigns, it is possible to show women and non-binary and transgender individuals that cycling is indeed something attainable, and even freeing.

There is an old adage, "If you can't see it, you can't be it." Just as increasing representation of women in the mobility field is vital to changing the narrative, so too is representation in the images we use in campaigns that encourage cycling.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a template to Women Mobilize Women on communicating the inclusivity cycling can bring to women, non-binary and transgender individuals of all ages and abilities. The themes and messaging are aimed at addressing ways to communicate with a variety of groups, and can be used as a starting point for this and future campaigns to create comprehensive, engaging, and inspirational content that will help show women the power of cycling in their freedom and emancipation.

# The Core Message:

The main purpose of the inclusivity campaign is to **show** through visual representation and tell through compelling message how cycling is an inclusive form of transport for all women, regardless of age, ability, race, or sexual identity. For that reason, the main message that is recommended to be used to guide the content for this campaign is:

## Freedom to move

Within this core message, the following **three** themes should be reflected in campaign imagery and messaging:

### HAPPINESS

No matter the age, riding a bike can bring a smile to anyone's face. The freedom and joy felt being in control of your own transportation is immeasurable.

### EMANCIPATING

Just as people are varied, so too are cycles. Two, three, four wheels, e-assist or not; no matter the type, cycles provide people of all ages and abilities the be move how they wish and where they wish to go, without burden of cost, licensing or otherwise.

### INCLUSIVE

Cycling in non-gendered, and therefore available to everyone. Cycling as a group builds community, whether with strangers, friends or family, cycling is a means to build social connections and no longer feel excluded from society and city life.

The following sections provide an outline of four key groups to be focused on for the campaign, as well as suggested themes.

# Campaign audience profiles

The purpose of this inclusivity campaign is to community the power of cycling to create inclusive mobility environments for women, non-binary and transgender individuals. It is important to understand some of the various groups that will be focused on, how to communicate with them, and what some key message could be.

## *Key messages include:*

- Cycling allows me to be in control
- Cycling is easy
- I can be myself
- Cycling is social

## **Young girls, incl. non-binary and transgender\* (13-24 yrs)**

As many girls reach their teens, how they move through the city changes dramatically. The innocence of childhood is shed as they become more aware of their bodies, of social networks, and how society perceives them in the public realm. For many, cycling can be seen as no longer viable as a tool for transport, exposing them to danger, impractical for the types of trips they need to take, or even isolating.

What has been seen, however, is the social camaraderie that can be developed through cycling. The very nature of cycling side by side, chatting in groups is not only a way to establish social bonds with peers, it provides freedom through moving in



groups, safe in being surrounded by peers. Cycling also allows young women to not be dependent on family, friends or public transport for mobility, allowing them the autonomy to decide where they want to go and how.

For this group, imagery should be engaging, look easy and comfortable, and emphasize the social nature of cycling. Using mediums such as Instagram, YouTube and Tictok, and encourage young people to share their experiences through hashtags will be a good way to reach out to peers and show solidarity with one another.

*\*Throughout this document, it should be noted that each group is intended to include individuals who are non-binary and/or transgender*

## *Key messages include:*

- Cycling simplifies my daily life
- Cycling is easy
- Cycling gives me freedom
- Cycling is for every woman

## **Adult women (ages 25-55)**

21st century women lead very diverse lives depending on their education and career paths, decision around family planning, or deciding not to have a family, sexual identity, geographic location, economic means, and cultural and social dynamics. What is common amongst all these types of women is that cycling can provide an effective and practical means of transport. Therefore, any campaign aimed at this group needs to emphasize how freeing cycling can be in reaching a variety of destinations, facilitating care trips and trip chaining, and how it allows them to maintain control over their mobility.

Images showing that cycling can be done in everyday clothing, showing a variety of women of various body types, races, ages within this group, and



performing the daily activities of their peers is an excellent way to show what is possible on two (and three-) wheels. This is made even more palpable when showing women on cargo bike, transporting children, groceries, or otherwise, emphasizing there is no limit. Using social media platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and even short promo videos easily shared from YouTube are good platforms to reach this group. The main goal must be that the images are accessible and evoke feelings of how any women can do it.

## *Key messages include:*

- Cycling gives me control of my mobility
- Cycling is for all abilities
- Cycling gives me freedom
- Independent mobility is everyone's right

## **Women with disabilities – any age**

When speaking of the emancipating power of cycling, it is important to show how cycling is not just a tool for women without disabilities. E-bikes, tricycles and quadri-cycles, adaptive cycles, rickshaws, etc., are all tools that can be used by women to maintain control of their mobility even if they are living with visible or invisible disabilities. Just as women without mobility challenges want to be in control of their own mobility, so too do those with one, especially as being reliant on family and/or friends or public transport that may be inaccessible limits their access to opportunities. Therefore, the campaign should show how cycles allow women to continue active participation in society, and they are not limited by their disability.



Images showing the various types of mobility tools using cycle (mobility) lanes, of a variety of ages and backgrounds emphasizes how important safe infrastructure can be in emancipating people with disabilities. Using social media platforms, and being sure to use ALT-text on Twitter, helps to normalize cycling as a mobility tool for all abilities. Also, working with organisations focused on accessibility to cross promote messaging and highlight the people they help is vital in emphasizing cycling isn't just freeing for people without mobility challenges.

## *Key messages include:*

- Cycling keeps me active
- Cycling is social
- Cycling gives me freedom
- Cycling is ageless

## **Senior women (ages 56+)**

At a time when our global population is aging rapidly, emphasizing the role of cycling in independent mobility, especially for aging women, is imperative. There remain areas of the world where driving and car ownership rates among women remain low. At the same time, women continue to outlive their male counterparts. Therefore, cycling presents the opportunity for women to maintain their mobility well into old age, allowing them to continue participating in society in however they wish, not reliant of younger family or friends for mobility, and remaining a part of the social fabric of their city. Campaigns directed at this group should emphasize the social nature of cycling, the happiness brought by independent mobility, and how easy daily life can remain through cycling.



Reaching these women through a social campaign may be more challenging, as they may not be as digitally savvy. Therefore, print campaigns on public transport and in local publications and newsletters will be the way to reach this group. Showing the role of e-bikes for longer mobility is important in this campaign. However still utilizing social media will be important for the younger in this group who are more digitally connected, and to show younger groups how cycling is a lifelong joy.

# Freedom to Move Campaign: Four core themes

## THEME 1:

## CYCLING TAKES ME WHERE I NEED TO GO

For all the audience groups listed, this theme would show women using cycles to access any number of destinations or trip types: the trip to school, shops, work, meeting up with friends. By emphasizing the freedom of cycling and the inclusivity it presents for all women, non-binary and transgender individuals as a mobility tool, women may be inspired to start or continue cycling, building confidence and possibly convincing peers to join them. Focus on how there are no limits to where cycling can take you.



**LOCAL  
ATTRACTIONS**



**RETAIL  
AREAS**



**SCHOOLS, PLAYGROUNDS &  
COMMUNITY CENTRES**



**EMPLOYMENT  
CENTRES**

## THEME 2: CYCLING CONNECTS ME TO MY COMMUNITY

Just as cycling can take you anywhere, it can be done with everyone. Focus on how cycling can build connection between friends and families, connect new and experienced riders, young and old, and provide opportunities to support the local community as a whole. Using imagery and messaging that emphasizes the social benefits of cycling will present cycling as community building, important in building upon notions of “the village” supporting mothers, young women and senior women, and women in the LGBTQIA2S+ community.



# THEME 3: CYCLING IN ANY FORM IS EMANCIPATING



If cycling is inclusive, then it is also emancipating by its very nature. Showing how cycling gives freedom and independence to young girls, allows senior women to maintain mobility into old age, provides women with disabilities the ability to be in control of how they move through their city, and every other female-identifying person, proves how powerful cycles are as a mobility tool. Focus on the diversity of users and cycles, and all the activities that can be done, and can be made easier, when cycling.

# THEME 4: CYCLING IS GOOD FOR MY MIND, BODY AND SOUL

With a tagline “Freedom to Move,” emphasizing the social, physical and mental health and happiness that comes from cycling is important in creating an inclusive campaign. Make sure this theme is present throughout all campaign materials. Remind women of the joy of learning to ride, the freedom that comes with independent travel, and how amazing it feels to be confident on two-, three- or more wheels.



# Campaign Do's and Don'ts

In order to make the Freedom to Move Campaign as easy to implement as possible, the following do's and don'ts will be helpful to keep in mind:

## DO'S

Portray cycling as a normal mode of transportation for all women and trip types

Carefully select images that show people riding for everyday purposes in everyday clothing

Focus on the ease and joy of cycling

Show off safe and connected infrastructure/traffic calmed areas

Show diversity by representing people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities

Be flexible and adapt your campaign to match what resonates with how people are responding to the campaign

Use local assets – hire local artists to support the campaign

## DON'TS

Refer to cycling as an “alternative” mode of transportation or the women that do it as “cyclists”

Make cycling look complicated by needing a bunch of specialized equipment

Use language or images that portray walking and cycling as strenuous or sweaty activities

Use imagery that highlights what currently makes people feel uncomfortable cycling

Focus on the danger/risk of walking and cycling

Focus too much on sport and recreation

Argue on digital mediums – keep the conversation productive and let them know you're there to listen if they want to have a meaningful discussion

# Measuring success



**POSITIVE  
REACTIONS ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA**



**ENGAGEMENT  
(LIKES, SHARES,  
RETWEETS)**



**PEOPLE  
SHARING THEIR  
PHOTOS AND  
USING YOUR  
HASHTAGS**

Remember that knowing what your audience reacts positively to takes some experimenting, so be willing to be flexible and change things up if something isn't working. And most of all, have fun with it!



Women  
Mobilize  
Women

# Freedom to Move

