

## Guidelines: Towards a gender-sensitive urban development



## Connective Cities COVID-19 Programme 2021 Working Group Gender sensitive urban development

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by



## Guideline Towards a gender-sensitive urban development

This guideline aims to bring gender sensitivity into processes and projects in the field of urban development. It combines established practice and solid experience and gives you scope for your own creativity. This guideline is thus like a framework to which cities that want to establish gender sensitivity in their work can cling to.

### Elaboration of the Guidelines

The guideline was developed by Soumaya, Fatma, Jessica, Felipe, and Germania, all members of the working group Gender-sensitive Urban Development together with experts at the diverse working group's meetings. The working group's members came from Ecuador, Mexico and Tunisia.

### Introduction

#### Why are our cities not gender equal?

Fundamental differences in the use of space today still result in particular from the gender-specific division of labour - mothers are still mainly responsible for looking after children and daughters for looking after parents, and women do most of the housework, as studies clearly show. Cities have historically been built reflecting traditional gender roles and gendered division of labor and consequently work better for men than they do for women.

#### What can be done to make our cities gender equal?

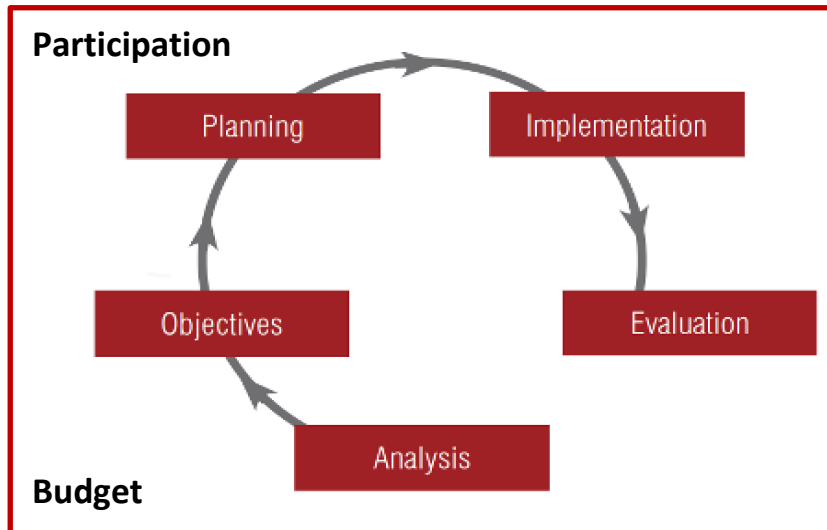
Taking account of and supporting the compatibility of family duties and paid work, gender-sensitive urban planning needs to provide spatial offerings to facilitate family duties and paid work. Gender-sensitivity needs to be reflected and taken into consideration in all phases of the planning and evaluation process. There is never one single solution. Only a combination of different activities will help to successfully implement gender sensitivity in our urban development decisions and in the solutions we create for the future of our cities.

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by





## Fields of activity

### ANALYSIS

#### Gather detailed knowledge about gender specific needs

Women's daily lives differ from that of men; women's perception of a place differ from that of men. Gather knowledge about the gender specific needs in a city.

#### Make sure that data generally is collected in a gender/sex-disaggregated manner

Cities collect a lot of data. Make sure you can draw information about gender differences from this data.

#### **Good Practice: Assessment of Everyday Network Tool (Spain & Latin America)**

The Spanish planning collective Col·lectiu Punt 6 has developed a tool which helps to map the frequented destinations and services as well as problems and needs and the direct living environment of women. The maps are usually made in a process based on walks and discussions and aims at a better insight in life contexts and problems of women in a community.

See also: [https://womenmobilize.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/A\\_Sourcebook\\_Social-Issues-in-TransportGIZ\\_SUTP\\_SB7a\\_Gender\\_Responsive\\_Urban\\_Mobility\\_Nov18-min.pdf](https://womenmobilize.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/A_Sourcebook_Social-Issues-in-TransportGIZ_SUTP_SB7a_Gender_Responsive_Urban_Mobility_Nov18-min.pdf), Chapter 6

### OBJECTIVES

#### Foster gendersensitivity in processes

There is no use if you know about gender specific needs and if gender-disaggregated data is collected, but not analyzed and integrated into the plan-making process accordingly. Ensure that gender sensitivity is considered at every step of the process.

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by



## Ensure that gender sensitivity is incorporated in the objectives of the planning process

Make sure that the formulated objectives (also) aim at gender equality. Always view people as the target group of all planning activities and help to differentiate the needs of people. Ask questions such as „What are the potentially different everyday requirements of women and men? How do women and men experience the situation differently?“ Take this as starting point for the formulation of objectives of your planning process.

### **Good Practice: Gender mainstreaming aspects in urban design competitions (Vienna, Austria)**

The Municipality of Vienna integrates gender relevant criteria in the tender documents for urban design competitions. The competition documents should clarify the effects of the urban design targets on different user groups. The documents are required to contain information about the social conditions and gender-specific quality criteria to be taken aboard and expected to use gendered language. The jury should be sensitized to social issues and includes gender planning experts.

See also: <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/studien/pdf/b008358.pdf>

## PLANNING

### **Strengthen a polycentric urban structure**

Preserve or develop a decentralised distribution of facilities in the city and connect them to public transport and good pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. The development of local centres allows for even infrastructure distribution and hence for good and quick accessibility on foot and by bicycle. This especially helps to improve the daily life of persons with care obligations.

### **Help designing a city of short distances**

Striving for a “city of short distances” means fostering mixed-use structures and the decentralised distribution of functions. Besides, in a city of short distances, children, older persons and persons with special needs can move independently and handle all everyday tasks on their own. This helps to reduce the trips imposed on caregivers.

### **Good Practice: The 15-Minutes City (e.g. Paris, France)**

The urban planning model of the “15-Minute City ” was developed by French-Colombian scientist Carlos Moreno to help tackle car hegemony and create more sustainable human-centric urban environments. In the “15-Minute City ”, all citizens can access their daily necessities by foot or by bike within 15 minutes. Home and workplace are in either a short walk or cycle distance. Food, health, education and cultural facilities are also accessible without a car within a quarter of an hour. This kind of city not only helps to reduce the dependency on vehicles, but also improves the everyday lives of those with caring responsibilities. In 2021, Carlos Moreno won the Obel Award for this model (see:

<https://www.archdaily.com/970873/the-concept-of-15-minute-city-wins-2021-obel-award>

Paris is among the cities that are already using Moreno's ideas.

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by



## **Promote the design of high-quality public space**

Differentiated functions of various open space types (e.g. green spaces near the home, parks, squares) support different forms of everyday life and in particular benefit persons responsible for family chores and housework. Besides, the health especially of children and older persons as well as the independence of these groups are fostered by open spaces near their homes. This is why it is of big importance to design high-quality public space and foster a good distribution of public and green space in the city.

## **Advocate for a safe city**

Although statistics show that men fall victim to violent crime more frequently than women, women are more often exposed to situations that trigger anxiety. A subjective feeling of unsafety in public space will cause the person affected to stop using this space. Advocating a safe city helps balancing gender inequalities and consists of providing social control and ensuring visibility without blind corners and with efficient illumination of streets and footways.

## **Make sure your city is barrier-free**

Especially persons with reduced mobility but also persons with caregiving and family tasks (carrying shopping bags, pushing prams, accompanying other persons) or with temporarily impaired mobility (e.g. due to injuries) encounter difficulties when they face barriers. Make sure your city is barrier-free and when reducing barriers, start where the need is highest (close to child care facilities, in areas with a high amount of families or elder people, etc.).

## **Social infrastructure**

The provision with high-quality social infrastructure (such as e.g. healthcare, educational institutions, sport facilities or cultural establishments) and its good distribution in the city supports population groups who frequently have to handle household and care tasks. Ensure their good connection to the public transport system (which is especially important for schools and nursing homes).

## **PARTICIPATION**

### **Include persons with different daily lives and backgrounds**

To include gender specific needs in planning processes, the integration of persons with different daily lives and backgrounds in the formulation of objectives is necessary. Make use of the competencies and resources of women and men.

### **Take care about who is participating in planning processes**

Quite often, in household surveys only male heads of households are participating. When it comes to participative events, in many contexts male participants dominate. Make sure to address both sexes, but also diverse age and income groups. Ensure that also marginalized groups actively participate in the planning process.

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by



## Take people seriously

You might like to reflect on different live experiences: What are the specific needs of pregnant mothers, elderly and children? Maybe it turns out, that a specific group feels anxieties in specific areas. Maybe you do not feel the same. Anyhow, you should take people serious and your work should cover all needs.

## Support initiatives who are motivated to develop a gender-sensitive city

Create meeting opportunities and inviting contact points for fruitful exchange with residents. You may come across self-initiative and self-organisation, and you can support the initiatives for the further development of a gender-sensitive city.

### **Example of a bottom-up initiative: Women in Urbanism (Belgium)**

Women In Urbanism is a Belgian initiative which determines bottom-up the key problems to tackle in urban planning and development. The network wants to forge connections to ensure increased meaningful participation of women in all steps in the value chain from policy, through construction, management and use of the urban environment. The initiative aims at ensuring that those who shape the urban environment are representative, knowledgeable, aware and that they have the tools to ensure it benefits all women as well as the men for whom it has always been built. Women in Urbanism organizes Hack- and Creatons to develop solutions, tailored to Brussels to begin with.

See also: <https://www.womeninurbanism.be>

## Ensure that more women work in urban planning and urban design

The more women work in urban planning and urban design, the greater the focus on women's needs. Women are better able to put themselves in the situation of the daily life contexts of other women and have different experiences and perceptions than men. Consequently, they can represent women's interests better. If necessary, design the relevant normative framework to get a greater number of women in the transport sector.

## Don't forget to consider digital solutions

Diverse apps can help to connect people or get knowledge about our environment. You can use digital solutions to evaluate how people use the city, but also to increase the participation of women in city life, amongst other purposes.

## Ensure there is enough budget to embed gender sensitivity

The integration of gender-sensitive measures also needs a solid financial basis. Ensure that sufficient financial resources are available. Furthermore, the budget of your municipality should, according to the results of the 4th UN World Conference on Women, promote gender equality (gender budgeting).

## Stay in contact with diverse decision makers and politicians

Designing a gender sensitive city requires a change of policy makers' and planners' mindsets. Only if they see urban planning more comprehensively and involve all city user's needs, the results will be inclusive. Try to get support from decision makers and politicians.

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by



### **Foster innovation to reach gender specific goals**

Have you taken all aspects seriously, worked on gender-sensitive solutions and are not facing the desired goals? Maybe, some more work has to be done than. Did you ask about what pregnant women or women need to feel more safe in public space? Did you ask about how to foster the quality of sojourn for girl in parks? You do not need to have the answer. Get in contact with the private sector and try to establish a joint project in order to find innovative solutions to reach gender specific goals.

### **Work on women's capacities**

Many women have already become accustomed to feeling uncomfortable in public space, having to take a detour at night on their way home for safety reasons, etc. Work on women's capacities to articulate their needs and to have full access to the city and it's offer.

### **Collaborate with the private sector**

For the implementation of ambitious goals in the pursuit of a gender-sensitive city, it may be useful to consider cooperation with the private sector. Look around for opportunities to work together with the private sector.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Check your projects and never stop to get inspired for new ones**

Always check whether your efforts have led to the desired success. And if not, use the evaluation as an opportunity to improve your existing ideas or come up with new and better ideas.

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by



## Disclaimer

This is a Connective Cities publication. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Connective Cities partners (German Association of Cities, Engagement Global gGmbH / Service Agency Communities in One World and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH).

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by





## **Published by**

Connective Cities  
International Community of Practice for Sustainable Urban Development  
info@connective-cities.net  
www.connective-cities.net

## **Connective Cities is a joint project of**

Association of German Cities  
Gereonstraße 18–32, 50670 Cologne | Germany  
Project Contact: Alice Balbo | [alice.balbo@engagement-global.de](mailto:alice.balbo@engagement-global.de)

Engagement Global gGmbH / Service Agency Communities in One World  
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 40 | 53113 Bonn | Germany  
Project Contact: Alexander Wagner | [alexander.wagner@engagement-global.de](mailto:alexander.wagner@engagement-global.de)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32+36, 53113 Bonn | Germany  
Project Contact: Ricarda Meissner | [ricarda.meissner@giz.de](mailto:ricarda.meissner@giz.de)

## **Author**

Elke Schimmel

## **Editorial Review**

Franziska Loibl, Lina Kratz

## **Translation**

Lina Kratz

## **Design and Layout**

Elke Schimmel  
Lina Kratz

## **Photo Credits**

wsfurlan | iStockphoto

January 2021

## **Commissioned by**

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

BMZ Bonn Office  
Dahlmannstraße 4  
53113 Bonn | Germany  
Phone: +49 (0) 228 99 535-0  
Fax: +49 (0) 228 99 535-350

BMZ Berlin Office  
Stresemannstraße 94  
10963 Berlin | Germany  
Phone: +49 (0) 30 18 535-0  
Fax: +49 (0) 30 18 535-2501

[poststelle@bmz.bund.de](mailto:poststelle@bmz.bund.de)  
[www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de)

Partners of Connective Cities



Commissioned by

