

# SYNOPSIS

## Mainstreaming Gender in Urban Renewal Projects

### SUMMARY OF AN IDB TECHNICAL NOTE <sup>1</sup>



#### Introduction

Urban renewal programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are designed to improve the quality of life of low-income residents through improvements in water and sanitation, social services, transportation, and housing. But men and women have different priorities and needs, which affect how they experience the city. For that reason, urban renewal efforts may not benefit men and women equally or equitably—unless those efforts take into account, in their planning and execution, certain key differences between the sexes.

The technical note summarized here provides guidance for project managers and policy makers on how to embed the gender perspective in urban renewal projects in LAC. It reviews gender equality challenges that should be taken into account when designing policies or projects and identifies ways to meet those challenges, which project managers can adapt to promote gender equality or reduce gender risks. The summary ends with lists of important questions to answer during the project cycle and of indicators to monitor and evaluate projects' gender-related results.

#### Context

More than two-thirds of LAC's poor live in cities, most of them in peripheral areas where services are sparse and access to jobs is difficult. The urban programs of the Inter-American Development Bank are designed to reduce such gaps in access to services and employment. Because men and women experience city life in distinct ways (owing to differential employment patterns and domestic responsibilities), renewal efforts have affected them differently, often exacerbating existing inequalities. Prominent examples include property rights, public safety, and social services. These issues and others are discussed below.

#### Important themes in the promotion of gender equality in urban renewal projects

Most renewal projects include investments in the four areas outlined below, each of which has implications for gender equality.

1. The full note "Mejoramiento de Barrios" (Gender and Diversity Division, Social Sector, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C. December 2013) is available in Spanish and can be found at <http://www.iadb.org/document.cfm?id=38737000>. This is one of a series of sector-specific technical notes that have been developed as practical guides to support implementation of IDB's Operational Policy on Gender Equality (GN-2531-10), adopted in 2010.

**Urban infrastructure.** Gender differences in employment remain pronounced in the LAC region, which means that men and women have differential needs and priorities related to urban infrastructure, including basic services, social services, and transportation.

Some 110 million people lack access to improved sanitation and 34 million to potable water, a lack that is especially hard on women and girls. Public baths and unhygienic latrines pose particularly high risks for women (e.g., in the form of genital infections). Poor public lighting, unsafe walkways, and long distances to bus stops also affect women disproportionately, inhibiting their mobility. Because women (and children) tend to spend more time in the home than do men, electricity is especially beneficial to them, e.g., by providing energy for study, connectivity, labor-saving appliances, and home-based businesses.

Social services (schools, clinics, childcare centers, and athletic facilities) are scarce in low-income areas for a variety of reasons, including the lack of basic services and poor public safety. Their absence is felt disproportionately by women, who care for children and the elderly, spend more time near home, and have less flexibility and money for traveling to reach services. At the same time, they tend to make more, if shorter, trips than men, so they feel more acutely the absence of public transportation (as well as its cost, where it is available, and the safety risks it often poses).

**Real estate, property titling, and land valuation.** Many renewal projects include components to formalize residents' ownership of homes or home sites, either in place or through resettlement. Too often such projects have not taken into account the property rights of women, either because women are not counted as the "head of household" and thus are left off the deed to property previously held in common (if informally) or because they do not claim their rights under law, rights of which many women are simply unaware. Resettlement often deprives women of the home-based livelihoods they earned in their old neighborhoods and separates them from support networks and social services on which they had depended. They may be obliged to find new sources of food, fuel, water, and sanitation. Lastly, the tension and stress of resettlement operations often lead to increases in domestic abuse. Even when renewal projects do not force people to relocate from their old home or neighborhood, higher property

values (and related taxes) may pose a problem, particularly for poor women who head households.<sup>2</sup>

**Public spaces.** Although women, as citizens, have an equal right to the enjoyment of public spaces, concerns about safety, particularly sexual violence, oblige many women to avoid the public arena, even to the extent of not attending school or taking a job. The social and economic costs of such avoidance on a grand scale are enormous, both for women and for the society that could benefit from their education and employment.

**City management.** To make the region's urban areas more woman-friendly will require greater involvement of women in city planning and management. At present, however, women are not well represented in local government in LAC, accounting for just 8.5% of all mayors and 22.5% of municipal officials. Experience has shown the benefits of greater female participation in urban planning and management, in part because, by virtue of spending so much of their time in their neighborhood, they know its problems and are committed to solving them.

## Proposed actions to promote gender equality and avoid gender risks in urban renewal projects

One of the most important things that project teams can do to ensure that their interventions advance gender equality—and are more effective and sustainable—is to increase women's participation in the design and implementation of renewal operations.

**Urban infrastructure.** Experience has shown that water and sanitation projects carried out with women's participation not only are more effective and sustainable but also, by providing women access to new channels of participation and decision making (both on project teams and in institutional settings such as water commissions), promote social transformation away from power relations built on gender norms.

The lessons of that experience apply to other basic urban infrastructure services as well. Large infrastructure projects in water, electrification, and transportation can cre-

2. These issues are the subject of another technical note in this series: "Vivienda en el Medio Urbano" (Gender and Diversity Division, Social Sector, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C. December 2014), available in Spanish.

ate opportunities to employ more women in activities traditionally considered male, such as construction. Such projects also typically attract temporary laborers who may increase risks to women residents (e.g., of sexual violence or transmission of disease), risks that should be taken into account in project planning.

Other ways to promote gender equality through greater participation include affirmative action in hiring (e.g., to achieve gender parity in staffing) and contracting. Given their predominant role in the home, women can be great allies in efforts to promote energy efficiency.

Because households headed by women tend to be poorer than most, they are disproportionately affected by increases in electricity tariffs and by high connection charges. But by the same token, they stand to benefit disproportionately from consumption and connection subsidies designed for the poorest households and from pay-as-you-go metering programs that allow households to decide how much electricity to buy or use—provided such programs take into account gender inequalities (in access to credit, for example).

Locating social services in or close to poor neighborhoods not only makes them more accessible to women but also offers women greater opportunities for formal employment.<sup>3</sup> However, when projects extend social services into marginal areas, expectations are raised, so it is important that such extensions be integrated with ongoing public investment and development policies so that successful experiences can be sustained and replicated.

Transportation projects should take into account the unique needs of various user groups—and women are a large group indeed, with safety, cost, and accessibility of particular concern. Here, too, women's participation in project planning is essential.

**Real estate, property titling, and land valuation.** Overcoming the barriers that impede women's exercise of their property rights requires affirmative action in project design and implementation, including educating women about their property rights; registering property jointly; adopting more inclusive notions of the head of the family; ensuring that registration workers are trained to seek out and

identify all owners or potential owners in a given household (including common-law spouses, divorced spouses, widows, and sisters); and offering gender training to personnel in agencies responsible for housing, home ownership, and urban development to make them aware of the obstacles many women face (including lack of information and awareness and lack of official documentation, as well as cultural biases that limit their participation in decision making).

To ensure that the burdens of resettlement do not fall disproportionately on women, in addition to the measures just described, it is essential to involve women and women's organizations in planning and managing the resettlement process, and in the process of setting policies related to compensation, job creation, and income generation.

Special policies may be required to prevent urban improvements from forcing poor women out of their neighborhoods. Such policies may include tax and financial subsidies and preferences, as well as programs to provide microfinance for home-based businesses.

**Public spaces.** Women's safety audits have proven to be one of the most effective ways to approach the theme of making public spaces, including transport systems and pedestrian walkways, safer for women. In addition to bringing about practical changes, such audits have made women participants more confident. For many, the process was their first experience with formal decision making.

**City management.** Affirmative actions are needed to increase women's participation in municipal governance. In addition to quotas for elective office (in 2006, 40 countries had gender-based quotas for parliamentary elections), possible actions include informational campaigns to encourage women to seek elective office or other local leadership positions, both formal and informal. In several countries of the region, "participatory budgeting" has provided a forum, as well as incentives, for such participation, helping to close the gap between government and the people. Montevideo's women's commission has provided another such avenue in Uruguay.

3. IDB urban renewal programs have included social components since the 1990s. Wherever possible, investment decisions are made with local participation.

## Proposed questions to guide gender mainstreaming throughout the project cycle

The full note contains a longer set of questions.

Focus	Diagnosis	Design	Implementation	Monitoring and evaluation
General	In the development of the diagnosis, were men and women consulted equally about project interventions?	<p>Are tools available to determine how the proposed interventions will differentially affect men and women?</p> <p>Are the risks of differential impact identified on the risk matrix, and have actions been proposed to mitigate them?</p>	<p>Are men and women participating equally in implementation?</p> <p>Has consideration been given to whether women may need special arrangements to participate in implementation (for example, stipends for child care)?</p> <p>Where appropriate, does the project include satisfaction surveys for users of services?</p> <p>Will the project create opportunities for women's empowerment?</p>	<p>Does the project's results matrix accommodate gender-differentiated results?</p> <p>Does the project include indicators of progress in gender equality?</p> <p>If applicable, are there indicators to measure use of and satisfaction with the services implemented by the project?</p>
Infrastructure and urban services	Does the project identify the priorities and/or needs of women and men for neighborhood services in the intervention area(s)?	Have provisions been made to increase the access to and use of services and infrastructure by men and women?		
Real property, titling, and land value	How many beneficiary households hold title to their land or home in the area of intervention? How many of these are headed by women? How many by men?	<p>Will the project include mechanisms such as joint ownership to advance and protect women's property rights?</p> <p>Are there gender gaps in access to credit?</p>	Are information campaigns planned to inform women of their property rights?	
Public spaces	What factors affect women and men differentially in public spaces (e.g., crime, perception of insecurity)?	Are interventions planned to reduce the rates of violence that affect men vs. women?		
City management	At what rates do men and women participate in formal and informal mechanisms of governance in the area of intervention?	Are women empowered to influence budgetary priorities and the distribution of neighborhood resources?		

## Sample indicators for gender mainstreaming in agricultural operations

The full note contains additional indicators.

Focus	Examples of indicators of gender inclusion
General	<b>Output</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of public officials trained to apply the gender approach</li> <li>• Number and percentage of women participating in the project's decision-making forums</li> </ul> <b>Outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the rate of access to and/or use of services, by gender</li> <li>• Perception of satisfaction with services, by gender</li> </ul>
Infrastructure and urban services	<b>Output</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users with access to water and sanitation services; increase in the use of such services</li> <li>• Installed infrastructure that meets specific gender criteria (e.g., hygienic and private latrines located in safe places)</li> <li>• Community alternatives for child and senior care</li> <li>• Transportation services in the project's area of intervention, including measures to protect women and children from violence</li> </ul> <b>Outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in the time women and girls spend obtaining water for household use</li> <li>• Increase in the number and percentage of women entering the labor market (because of project actions such as providing child care)</li> <li>• Increase in the use of public transportation by women in the area of intervention</li> </ul>
Real property, titling, and land value	<b>Output</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication campaigns to raise women's awareness of their rights</li> <li>• Compensation for loss of property due to relocation or formalization, by gender</li> <li>• Access to loans and guarantees to improve access to financing for the purchase of a home or home site, by gender</li> </ul> <b>Outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men, women, and couples who become owners of their land or housing thanks to the project</li> </ul>
Public spaces	<b>Output</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public spaces designed with gender-specific criteria in mind</li> <li>• Public spaces with newly installed or improved lighting</li> <li>• Infrastructure constructed or improved to reduce violence affecting men vs. women (e.g., cultural centers and sports facilities)</li> </ul> <b>Outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent reduction in local crime rates, by gender and type of crime</li> <li>• Percent reduction in rates of victimization of neighborhood residents, by gender</li> <li>• Increase in perception of security of women vs. men in neighborhood, by day and by night</li> </ul>
City management	<b>Output</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalized informal settings for urban policy making (e.g., participatory budgeting)</li> <li>• Communication campaigns to promote women's participation in formal and informal policy making</li> <li>• Childcare centers or other arrangements to support the participation of women in formal and informal policy making</li> </ul> <b>Outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent increase in men vs. women who participate in formal and informal policy making</li> <li>• Services/infrastructure designed specifically to benefit women</li> </ul>