

# GENDER MAINSTREAMING --- IN PRACTICE

## CHECKLIST ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



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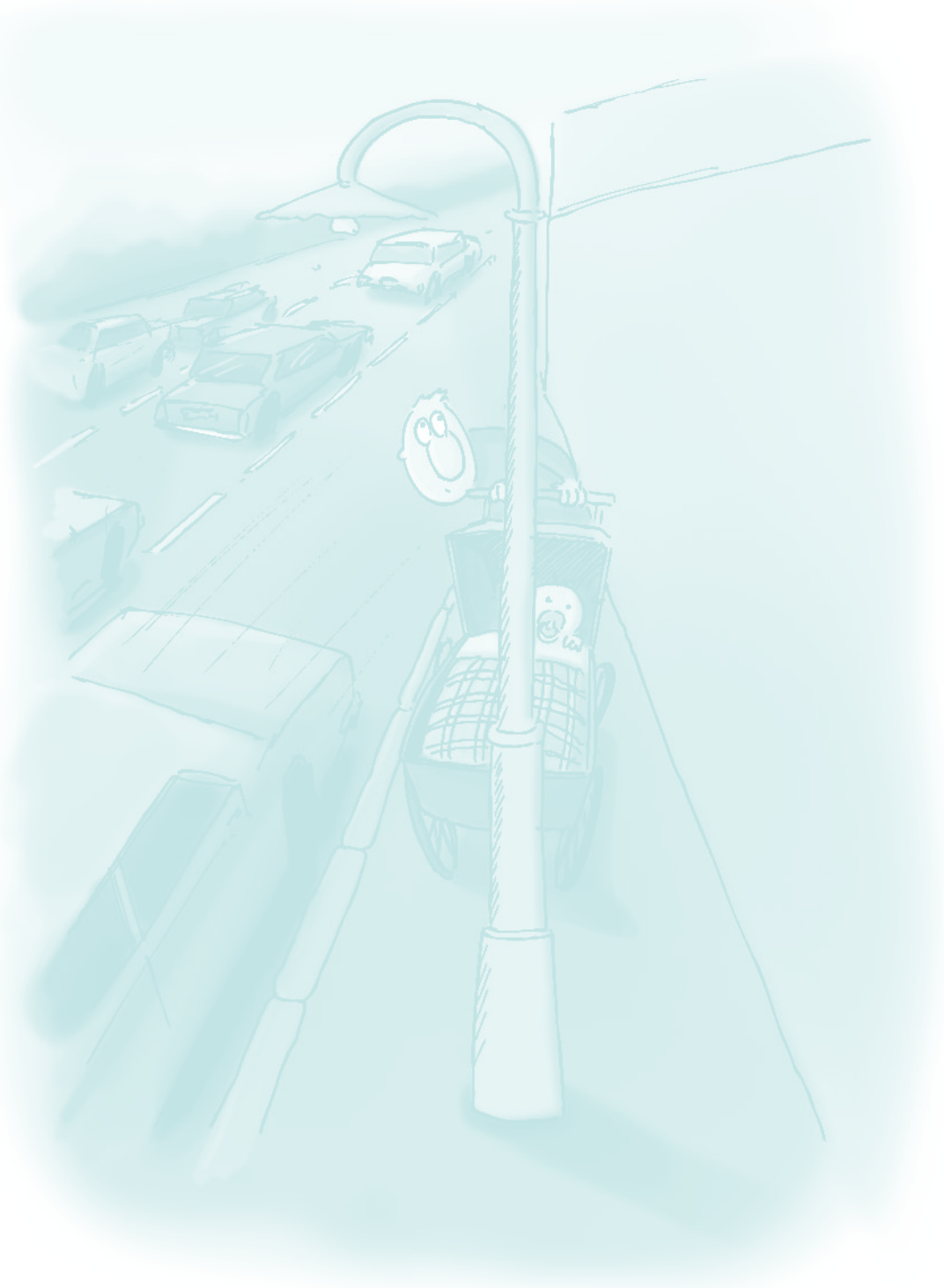
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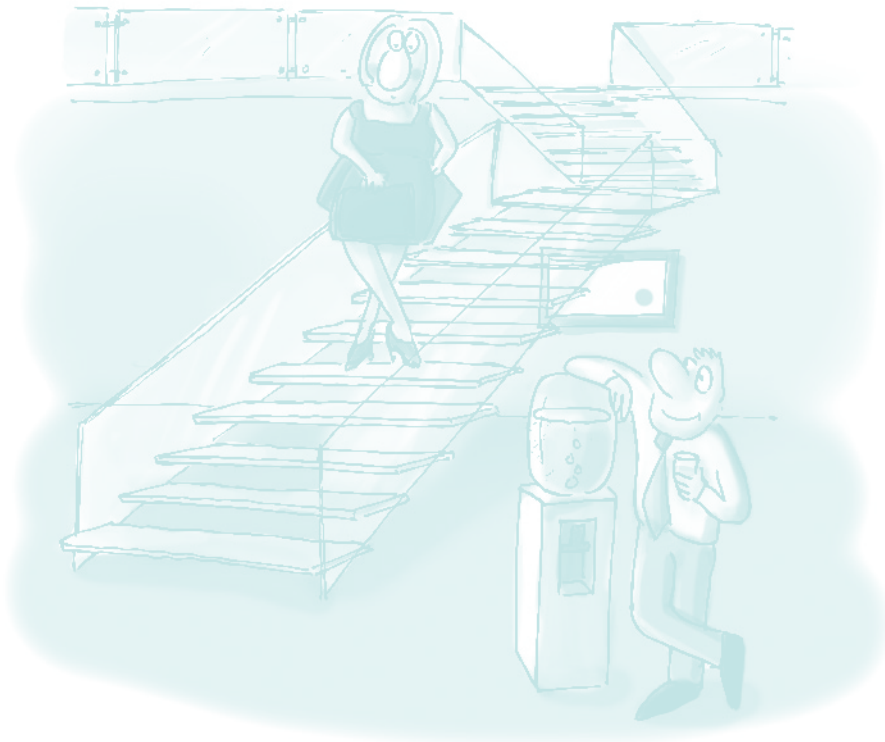


## 1. Defining Gender

The terms **sex** and **gender** are commonly used interchangeably, however, it is important to understand that there is a significant difference between the implications and usage of the two terms. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 'gender refers to the **economic, social** and **cultural** attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female at a particular point in time'<sup>1</sup>.

Gender roles are **learned behaviours** that a society or community assigns to women, men, girls and boys. based on their gender. Such roles tend to influence which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived to be female and male. More specifically, these roles influence the relationship between women, men, girls and boys. Social and cultural understanding of gender varies throughout societies and time.

On the other hand, sex is biologically determined and 'refers to the **biological characteristics** that define humans as female or male' (as defined by WHO<sup>2</sup>) and these characteristics are considered as being universally similar and is constant.



<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, 2012. *Gender, Women and Health: What do we mean by 'sex' and 'gender'?* [Online] Available at <http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/> [Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012].

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, 2012. *Gender, Women and Health: What do we mean by 'sex' and 'gender'?* [Online] Available at <http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/> [Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012].

## 2. Defining Gender Equality

Gender equality seeks to promote the basic and universally recognised civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Gender equality means being free to act outside the parameters of the inscribed gender roles, that is, the stereotypical roles usually associated with women, men, girls and boys, and the prejudice associated with such roles. The European Commission (1998) defines gender equality as,

*‘The concept meaning that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles; that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally’*

Furthermore, gender equality refers to ‘equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life<sup>3</sup> and means that, ‘the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, ‘equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence<sup>5</sup>. Gender equality strives to create a society that will function equally for women, men, girls and boys.

<sup>3</sup> Council of Europe, Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual Framework, methodology and presentation of good practices, 1998: 7

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EC Development Cooperation Section 3: Glossary of gender and development terms, 1998: 2

<sup>5</sup> ILO, ABC Of Women Worker’s Rights And Gender Equality, Geneva, 2000: 48

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*‘Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making’*

### 3. Defining Gender Mainstreaming

The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. It is a strategy which seeks to integrate the concerns and experiences of women, men, girls and boys into any planned action, by assessing the implications which might affect the way women and men and girls and boys might experience any particular action.

Therefore, gender mainstreaming is about incorporating a gender perspective into all planned policies, activities and projects, before decisions are taken, that is, during the design and implementation stages and then monitoring and evaluating the effects of incorporating such a strategy.

Incorporating a gender perspective into policies means that both women, men, girls and boys are not considered as a homogenous group, but as distinct groups with differing needs, characteristics and behaviours that require different approaches. Gender mainstreaming ensures that women, men, girls and boys benefit from a more equal society built on the recognition of differences, which addresses and values individual and group needs.

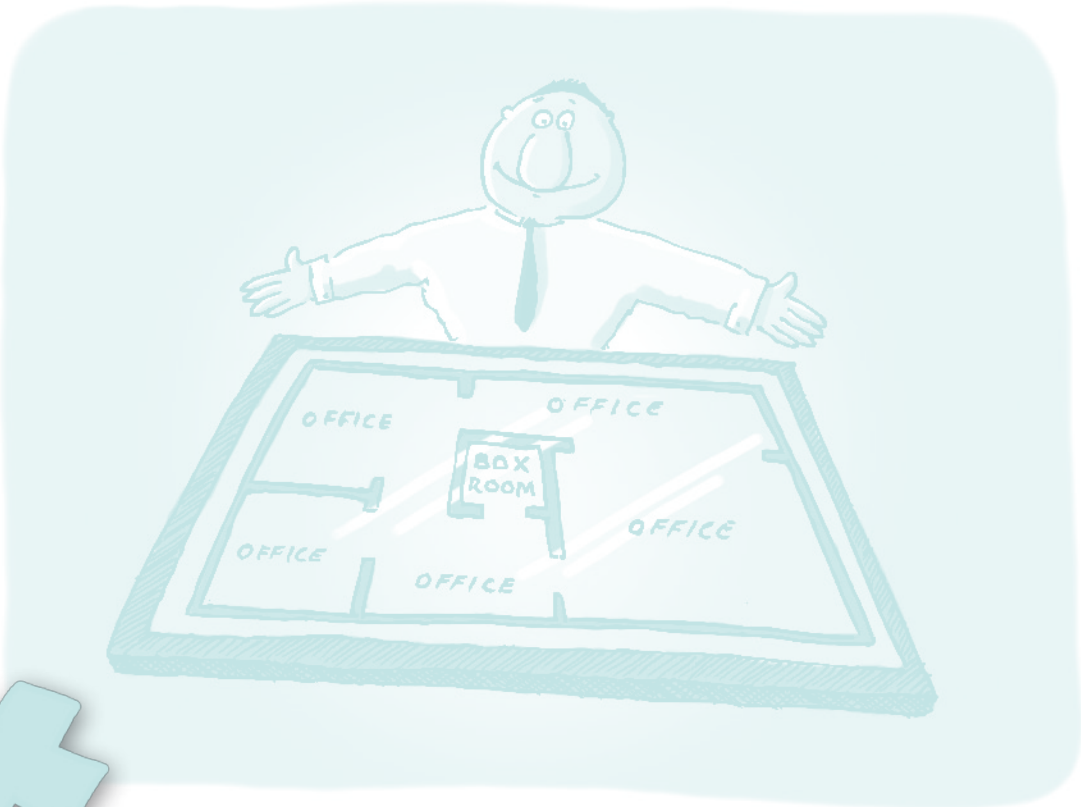
In 1995, during the preparations for the Beijing Conference, the Council of Europe decided to set up the Group of Specialists on mainstreaming, which developed the present conceptual framework and methodology for gender mainstreaming.<sup>6</sup>

In line with EU policy, the Maltese government is committed towards adopting gender mainstreaming as a strategic tool to bring about gender equality. Through the access to EU structural funds, various projects have been designed and implemented by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) Malta to implement gender equality programmes. NCPE has worked on various projects since its inception in 2004, building vast expertise both as a lead partner and as a trans-national partner of EU co-funded projects.

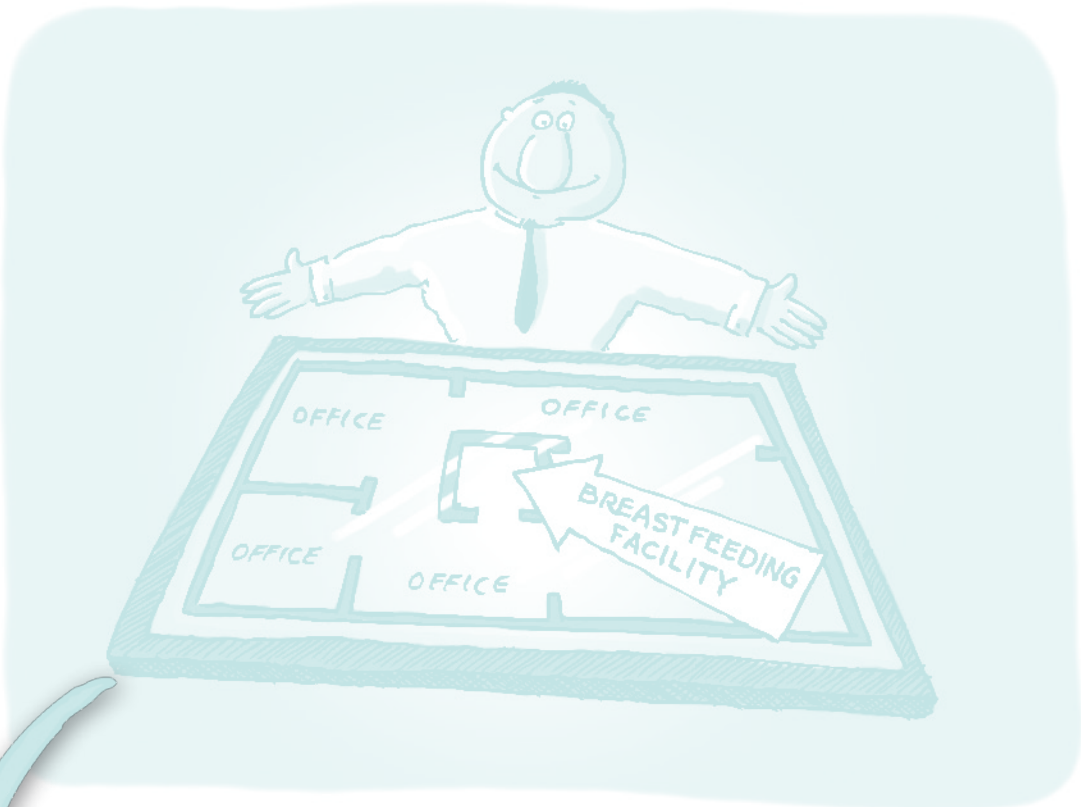
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<sup>6</sup> Council of Europe, 2009. *Equality between Women and Men*. [Online] Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/02factsheets/Factsheet-Equality\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/02factsheets/Factsheet-Equality_en.pdf) [Accessed 4th January 2012]





*The first stages of infrastructure projects*



## 4. What do Infrastructure Projects Incorporate?

For the purpose of this checklist, infrastructure is defined as a structure / space that is used to render services to the general public or a specific group of the general public. So, the term infrastructure refers to public places such as buildings and facilities, including both indoor and outdoor facilities. Public infrastructures may include but are not restricted:

- Work related structures (offices, factories, shops)
- Education related structures (schools, universities, nurseries)
- Health related structures (hospitals, clinics)
- Leisure related structures (restaurants, cinemas)
- Culture related structures (museums, heritage sites)
- Outdoor spaces (public gardens, playgrounds)



## 5. Process of Developing Infrastructure Projects

The development of any infrastructure involves three generic stages, described in the flow chart below:



During the **design stage** of an infrastructure project a number of aspects related to the end product are identified such as, the use of the building, who will be using the building, and the requirements and specifications requested by the client. Further to this, the design stage involves the gathering of any information and documents needed in order to ensure that what is being designed and proposed is feasible and legal. On the other hand, the **planning stage** involves putting the design stage into action by modelling and drafting the project and planning the way the project will be implemented. Finally, in the **implementation stage** the building is actualised.

A number of **stakeholders** are usually involved in the development of an infrastructure project, including the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), architects, engineers, designers, project managers, and builders and so on.

The Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) is the national organisation responsible for the planning process and environmental regulation of any infrastructure project. It is suggested that MEPA should be consulted at the early stages (in the design stage) of any infrastructure project regarding any necessary requirements which have to be undertaken in order to implement gender mainstreaming in such projects.

*MEPA should be consulted at the early stages of any infrastructure project in order to implement gender mainstreaming*

## 6. Infrastructures: Gender Neutral Spaces?

In general, infrastructure is considered as being a structure which hosts individuals in their daily life activities. Structures are considered as being static and while, it is assumed that individuals shape structures, the way structures shape individuals is often neglected.

This then leads to the assumption that infrastructure is a gender neutral space. Such an assumption,

does not consider gender as a factor which affects the way we experience infrastructures. So in reality infrastructure plays a very important role in development of communities and has a fundamental impact on people's economic, social and cultural activities. Below, are two examples of how gender affects the way we access or use infrastructures:

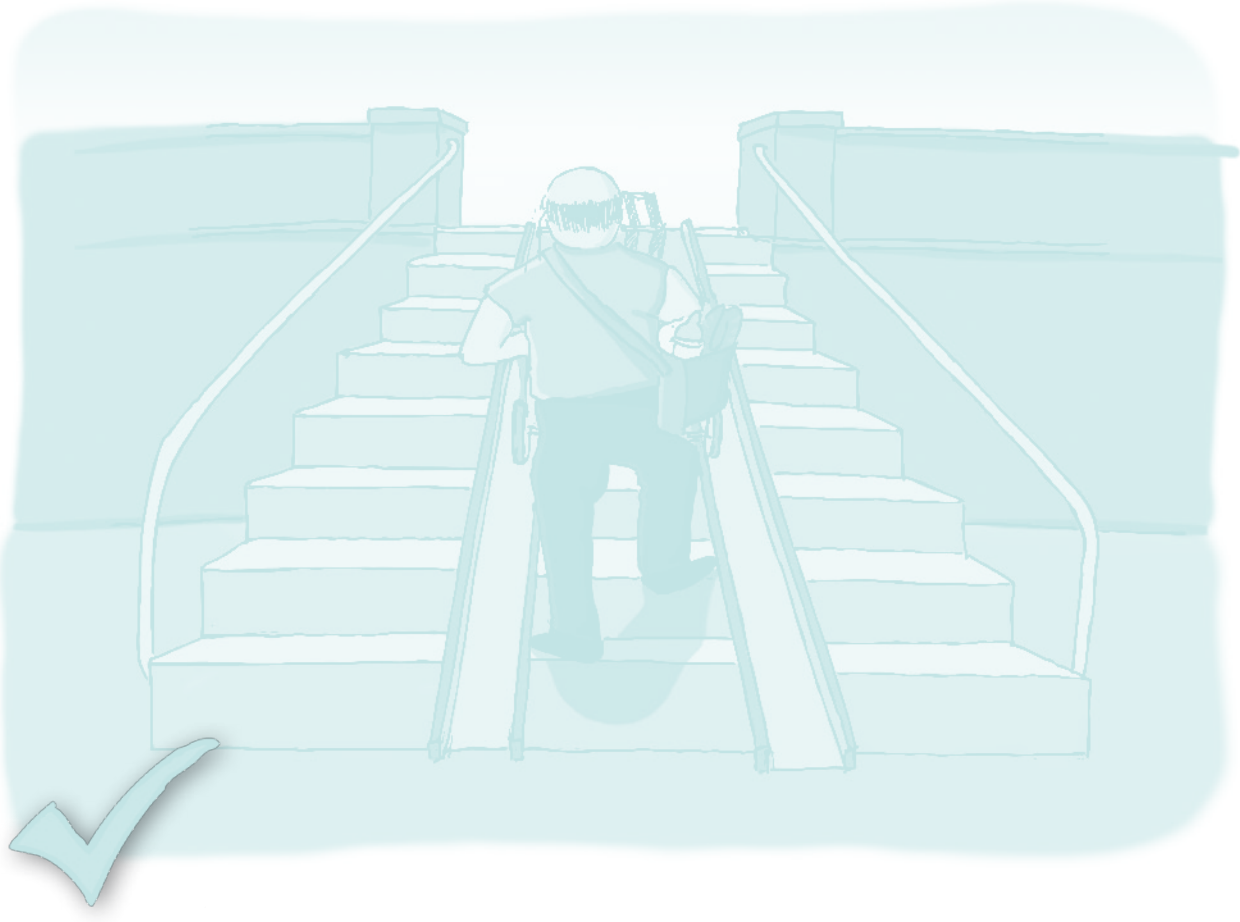
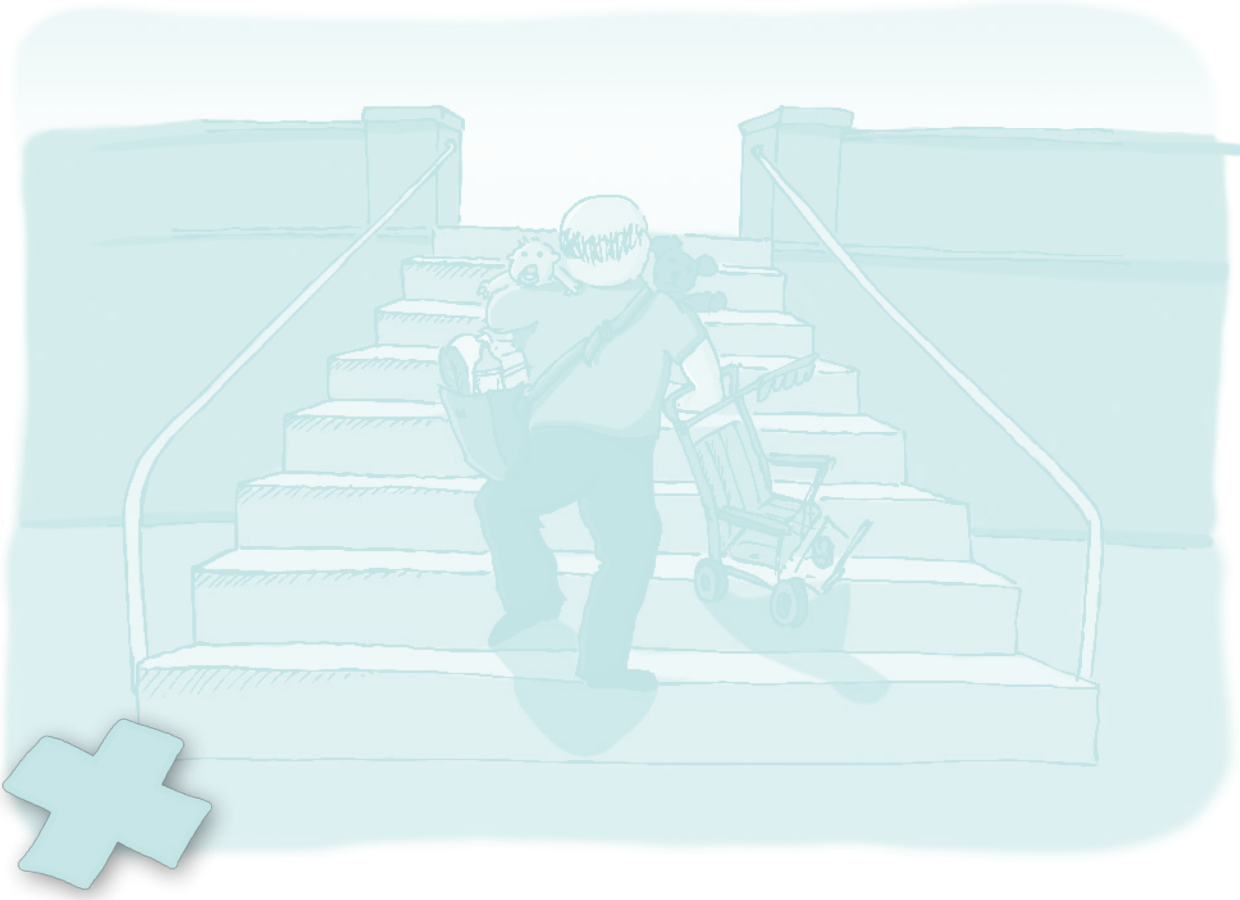
*A woman choosing a street route that is considered safer than others*

*A man having to access a female toilet facility to change his baby's nappy*

*A schoolyard where there is no room for the girls to play since the boys play football, taking up the whole area*

*A museum where all the exhibitions are telling stories about men and men's hardship*





## 7. Potential Gender Issues in Infrastructure Projects

A gender issue can be defined as any issue which arises due to one's social constructed gender or biological sex.

Below are some potential gender issues in infrastructure projects:

### PRIVACY ISSUES

#### Example:

Any public infrastructure but especially entertainment and leisure spaces which usually have a high influx of people should provide a breastfeeding room to provide women with the necessary privacy and comfort to feed their children.

### SAFETY ISSUES

#### Example:

Infrastructure must be well lit and designed in a way that ensures individuals feel safe and comfortable accessing the building at all times of the day. Inadequate planning might lead to exposure to crime, such as sexual harassment, rape or mugging.

### ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

#### Example:

Roads and pavements have to be accessible and safe for parents, guardians and carers using pushchairs in order to ensure a safe pedestrian environment. Moreover, road and pavements must also be accessible and safe for elderly persons using support frames. For example, rugged paving stones, cobbles and uneven roads are not adequate.

Another gender issue related to accessibility and infrastructure is public transport, which must be fully accessible – for example, by having low ramps and enough space for pushchairs / support frames.

Parking spaces must also be easily accessible to parents, guardians and carers using pushchairs by being located near a lift and also spacious enough to be able open the car doors with ease.

Furthermore, another issue concerning gender and accessibility is related to disability. Separate toilet facilities must be provided for males with a disability and for females with a disability, rather than providing one toilet for both genders.

### BIOLOGICAL ISSUES

#### Example:

Infrastructure must be designed in such a way that ensures pregnant women have easy access to a lift and staircases and also comfortable seating. Adequate breastfeeding facilities should also be provided in a public infrastructure.

### CHILDCARE ISSUES

#### Example:

An infrastructure must have ramps and wide entrances which allow parents, guardians and carers to easily access a building as well as a lift. Any public infrastructure must ensure multiple and flexible use of its space, in order to ensure that individuals are able to carry out their different social roles at ease. Moreover, toilet facilities must ensure that both women and men have access to baby changing facilities.

Further to this, if there are no toilet facilities which parents, guardians and carers can access with their children, separate from the usual male and female toilets, children's toilet facilities should be provided.

## 8. The Value Added by Implementing Gender Mainstreaming

There are several benefits when implementing gender mainstreaming in infrastructure projects, for the company / organisation and end user. Below are the identified benefits:

### BENEFITS FOR COMPANY / ORGANISATION:

- Workers feel respected, comfortable and happy that their needs are being taken into consideration and so their performance and participation improves, and the company retains employees who are more loyal
- Women and Men feel that they are being provided with a better service as they also feel respected and comfortable using the space, this encourages them to visit the place more frequently making use of the services provided
- Implementing gender mainstreaming in infrastructure designs means having a more competitive edge as a company / organisation
- Improves the corporate image of the company / organisation
- Enhances the credibility and reputation of the company / organisation
- Attracts more human resources of quality to the company / organisation

### BENEFITS FOR END-USER:

- It is easier and faster to use a 'gender-sensitive' infrastructure
- Women, men, girls and boys feel more confident using the infrastructure
- Women, men, girls and boys feel respected as their needs are being taken into consideration

*Women, men, girls and boys feel respected as their needs are being taken into consideration*

*The checklist is meant to assist those working on infrastructure projects to incorporate gender mainstreaming*

## 9. Infrastructural Checklist: Implementing Gender Mainstreaming

**Gender analysis** is the first step towards gender mainstreaming. As a tool, it allows for a critical assessment of the position of women, men, girls and boys in a given situation, relative to each other, and the determining factors for such positions. (African Development Bank Group, 2009: 10)

At the heart of Gender Analysis there is a basic question:

### *Who does what under what conditions?*

Conducting a gender analysis exercise prior to designing an infrastructure project will help to identify the users of the building and therefore it allows for the design of a project with the needs of the end users in mind.

#### **GENDER ANALYSIS AT DESIGN STAGE:**

- What different uses does the building have?
- What services will be offered?
- Who will be using the building?
- When will women, men, girls and boys be using the building?
- How often will women, men, girls and boys be using the building?
- What are the needs of the women, men, girls and boys who will be using the building?
- What are the priorities of the women, men, girls and boys who will be using the building?
- Do you need to carry out further research regarding any potential gender issues, for example, crime or population statistics regarding the area concerned?
- Are there any relevant data or statistics concerning the area or locality of the infrastructure?





Gender mainstreaming has to be implemented in the early design stages of any infrastructural project. If a building is designed with gender issues in mind, then everything will fall into place during the planning and implementation design.

The following checklist is meant to assist those working on infrastructure projects to incorporate gender mainstreaming in the design, planning and implementation of public infrastructures.

- *These questions are to be used as a guide only. It is not expected that every question will be relevant to all activities.*
- *The questions are designed to assist those involved in the design, planning and implementation stages of infrastructure projects with their assessment and appraisal of gender mainstreaming in infrastructure projects.*
- *The questions are also designed to incorporate gender perspectives into infrastructure activity preparation and design.*
- *The checklist, monitoring and evaluation and project completion and evaluation exercises are based on references from African Development Bank Group, 2009*

# Checklist

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department/Company/Function
Date
Project Title
Main Aims
Completed By
Contact Details

## CHECKLIST

### Identifying gender issues *Ask Yourself*

Does the project design acknowledge that women, men, girls and boys may have different needs and priorities in their uses of infrastructure?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there any gender issues which need to be catered for?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have female as well as male stakeholders been consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the infrastructure project affect the level of participation and benefits any of the potential target group?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Can strategies be identified to address any constraints?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you thought about how value can be added in the process of promoting gender equality? (i.e. catering for the needs of both genders in access to and utilisation of infrastructure)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**Addressing gender issues** *Ask Yourself*

Are identified gender issues of the project being adequately addressed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have the adequate means to implement the gender issues been identified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
How are the constraints related to gender equality being addressed and remedied in the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the targeted intervention required to enhance gender equality?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the infrastructure or sections of it exclude or put one gender at a disadvantage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the infrastructure make provision for women and men with caring responsibilities? (ex. breastfeeding rooms and nappy changers)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have safety issues concerning women, men, girls and boys been taken into consideration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have gender issues been addressed during the assessment of social issues (ex. well lit pavements)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have gender issues been addressed during the assessment of environmental issues (ex. location of recycle bins)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are individuals including sub-contractors aware, knowledgeable and committed to gender issues in infrastructure?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has any training in gender equality been undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION AT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION STAGES:

The aim of the Monitoring and Evaluation exercise is to ensure that the intended outcomes of the gender mainstreaming exercise will effectively take place in the planning and implementation stages. The questions below are intended to assist during the monitoring and evaluation stage in determining the progress of gender mainstreaming in the project:

### Ask Yourself

Are women's', mens', girls' and boys' issues being effectively mainstreamed in the planning and implementation stages?  Yes  No

Is there need to adjust the project because of any weakness in the intended gender mainstreaming?  Yes  No

Is there the need for any specific targeted intervention in order to reach better quality for women, girls and boys?  Yes  No

## PRACTICAL EXAMPLES:

The following is a series of practical examples which should be kept in mind when designing a gender mainstreamed infrastructure. This is just a sample list and other considerations should be done when commencing a design given the diverse utility and beneficiaries that infrastructures of different nature might have.

- Breastfeeding room
- Nappy changers in women and men's toilets
- Proper lighting
- Proper pavements
- Safety of the site
- Child play area
- Enough Space for manoeuvring pushchairs / support frames
- Ramps to facilitate entrance for men and women with pushchairs and support frames
- Seating facilities
- Private and separate sanitary facilities
- Parking and traffic congestion facilities

## PROJECT COMPLETION AND EVALUATION:

The Project Completion and Evaluation exercise will generate lessons learnt on achievements related to the gender equality objectives of the project as well as identifying any strengths and weaknesses in the way gender mainstreaming was implemented. The following issues must be taken into consideration while undertaking such an exercise at the end of an infrastructure project. The main question which one has to ask during this exercise is:

*Where do opportunities exist for change?*



Furthermore, during the Project Completion and Evaluation exercise one should:

- Determine whether the actual project outcomes contributed to gender equality and if there are lessons to be drawn to strengthen the design of any future similar projects
- Establish whether gender mainstreaming receives attention at all stages of the infrastructure cycle, that is, during the design, planning and implementation and monitoring stages
- Examine whether the project team (preferably made up of women and men with balanced decision making power) took time to appreciate the gender – related social and cultural context of the infrastructure in question and if this had positive bearings on the direction and end result of the project
- Assess whether both women and men users of the infrastructure engaged in equal measure and if each gender directly benefitted from the project
- Determine whether there are any realistic prospects of sustaining the benefit being derived from the project in the long run
- Review the factors which were of hindrance to implementing gender mainstreaming during the project progress

## 10. Further Considerations for Implementing Gender Mainstreaming

Further considerations which would provide a more holistic approach for implementing gender mainstreaming in infrastructure projects include:

- Providing **training** to those involved in the design, planning and implementation stages of the infrastructure project on how to identify and address potential gender issues and implement gender mainstreaming in any given project.
- Prior to the design stage of the project, one should consider carrying out desk **research** to establish whether there is any existing data or statistics or other form of research concerning particular gender issues related to the given project.
- Further quantitative and/or qualitative research can be carried out in order to provide more depth and detail to the gender mainstreaming which needs to be carried out or was carried out.
- Specifically during the design stage (although one should not exclude the planning and implementation stages) one should consider whether **consultation meetings** with gender experts who would be able to provide further guidance on how to implement gender mainstreaming need to be set up.

## USE THE TOOLS



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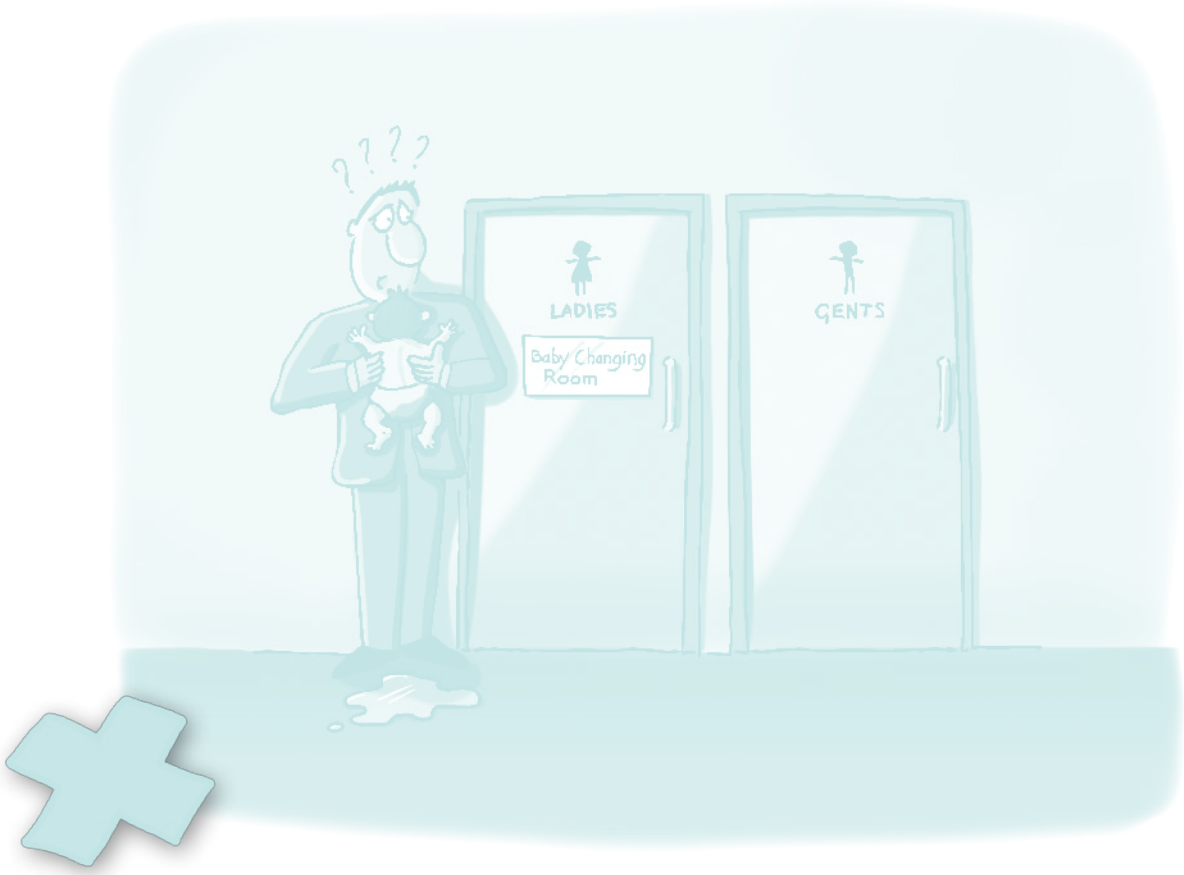
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