

Key sheet - Women's Economic Empowerment and Disability Inclusion in Future Cities programmes

Over 50% of the [population in low- and middle-income countries live in urban areas](#). Urban living can offer opportunities for better health and education services, increased social integration and allows individuals to share the benefits of economic growth through a more diverse range of jobs . Yet globally, nearly [30% of the urban population live in informal settlements](#), with numbers [predicted to treble by 2050](#). Many urban residents will become increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters with an estimated [800 million people at risk from the impacts of rising seas and storm surges by 2050](#) as a result of climate change.

Women and people with disabilities face disadvantages and barriers to opportunities in cities. Underrepresented in terms of voice and decision making, it is estimated that there will be [one billion urban dwellers living with disabilities by 2050](#).

THE CHALLENGE



The economic opportunities of women and people with disabilities are constrained by **transport systems** that are not safe, affordable, accessible, or responsive to their different needs:

- In Buenos Aires, men's commuting patterns gave them access to [80% more jobs](#) than women.
- According to a survey spanning 39 countries in a mix of high-, middle- and low-income contexts, the two biggest challenges for people with disabilities are [inaccessible public transport vehicles and the attitudes of drivers/staff](#).
- A survey in Baku, Azerbaijan, found that [81% of female public transport users had experienced harassment](#), yet almost all had not reported the incident.



Contributions to overall economic development is limited when the voice and priorities of women and people with disabilities are not captured in integrated **urban planning, budgeting, management and governance** systems:

- In Delhi, when 700,000 squatters were resettled from an existing informal settlement to the periphery, [male employment increased by 5% while female employment fell by 27%](#) because their travel time increased threefold.
- Globally women make up only 5.1% of capital city mayors, 6.1% of mayors in cities with over 1 million inhabitants, and only [20% of city councillors worldwide](#).



Cities would be more resilient to **natural disasters** if women and people with disabilities were included in preparedness and response measures:








- [67% of fatalities](#) from the Indian Ocean Tsunami in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, were women.
- Women and children are more than 75% of those displaced by natural disasters and typically [70-80% of those needing assistance in emergency situations](#).
- A survey amongst 5,450 people with disabilities from 126 countries found that in the event of a disaster only [20% of respondents could evacuate immediately without difficulty](#).

DATA

Good design and planning require better data and evidence on gender and inclusion.

- There is a particular lack of data and analysis on barriers and opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Women and people with disabilities are often treated as homogenous groups but in reality, certain groups of women and people with disabilities experience greater discrimination and exclusion. These vary by context, but often include people from low-income backgrounds, raising children on their own, those with severe impairments, migrants, ethnic/religious minorities, sexual and gender minorities and informal economy workers.

KEY TIPS

-  Evidence-based policy, drawing on **disaggregated data** according to sex, disability, and other relevant markers of identity. The **Washington Group Questions** should be used to measure disability prevalence. **Big data** is an emerging source of information to improve the responsiveness of urban planning to the needs of all population groups.
-  **Meaningful participation, voice and agency**, including informed consultations with and participation of women’s groups and organizations of persons with disabilities. Innovative tools and approaches can be used to promote full participation.
-  **Institutional change** of government or private sector organizations, systems and policies at city or national level to promote inclusion of and ensure equality for women and people with disabilities and integrate gender and disability in all aspects of urban programmes and policies.
-  Changing **attitudes, practices, and behavior** so everyone can participate in the social, economic and political life of cities without prejudice or discrimination.
-  **Universal Design** that puts equal access and use at the heart of all infrastructure design.
-  Focus on **safety and security** to prevent gender-based violence, including for women with disabilities. Apps and new technologies can be harnessed to address these issues in cities.
-  **Monitoring and evaluation** to ensure interventions continue to meet the needs of women, people with disabilities and other excluded groups.

Good practice examples



Safetipin is a location-based mobile app that helps women identify the safety of certain areas. Safetipin has now extended to 65 cities spanning 16 countries. In Bogota, Safetipin city officials have been able to overlay Safetipin data with maps of police station locations and incidences of crime, allowing them to identify locations for **CCTV installations** and for dialogues on gender-based violence. Safetipin is funded by **12 key donors**, including United Kingdom.



The design of the Dar es Salaam Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT) System involved active partnership with the Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania Advocacy Unit who were involved in construction inspections, test runs and feedback. Upon launch, people with disabilities took part in awareness raising campaigns on accessibility. An inclusive feedback mechanism is used to report problems and a budget is available to respond to issues. The BRT was funded by African Development Bank, World Bank and the Government of Tanzania.



In 2012, India’s Minister for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation introduced the Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending Bill to protect vendors’ rights. The law was the culmination of advocacy by the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) and the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA). The policy ended the need for costly punitive actions and had a significant impact on urban livelihoods.



There are promising technologies that aim to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. In Delhi, **Street Rehab** has teamed up with local NGOs and wheelchair users to deploy a smart sensor system that maps the physical accessibility in line with mobility requirements. A number of cities have also implemented innovations for the visually impaired, such as **Neatebox**, which allows people to use their phones or smart watches to safely navigate pedestrian crossings, or **Wayfinder** which transmits instructions to users audibly.



In the aftermath of the 2009 Typhoon Ondoy and Tropical Storm Pepeng, the Government of the Philippines passed **two laws that established a legal basis for gender mainstreaming** in climate change and disaster risk management policy: the 2009 Climate Change Act and the 2010 Disaster Reduction and Management Act.

ENTRY POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

	Minimum – do no harm	Empowerment	Transformation
GENERAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct social analysis and impact assessments to identify which vulnerable groups exist in cities and likely impact of urban interventions. Use qualitative and quantitative data disaggregated by sex, disability, age and other characteristics to inform design, assessments, policies, programmes, and M&E. Ensure risk assessments and mitigation focus on specific vulnerabilities faced by women, girls and people with disabilities in cities, and provide safeguards to mitigate and address risks (in line with IFC performance standards). Ensure non-discrimination in access to any urban services, opportunities and assets provided, and included this as a requirement for contractors and sub-contractors. Disseminate information in ways that are accessible to all including women and people with disabilities. Information should be ongoing in multiple, easily accessible formats (including ICT) and in local languages with illustrations. Ensure informed and meaningful participation in consultation and appropriate access to responsive grievance mechanisms. Assess capacity, incentives and engagement of stakeholders and partners and build capacity to comply with existing national- and local-level policies on gender equality and disability inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure meaningful participation of key stakeholder groups, including women and people with disabilities, in a two-way exchange throughout planning, budgeting, implementation and accountability mechanisms. This could include co-defining research questions, gathering data, setting targets and indicators, integrating disaster risk management elements into capacity development curricula, and monitoring and enforcing standards. Use social media to publicise successes and poor performance as a means of stimulating improvements in cities. Develop best practice case studies on the integration of gender and disability issues in urban programmes. Introduce quotas for numbers of women and people with disabilities involved in project or management committees. Capacity building for women and excluded groups to ensure productive employment opportunities in cities. Develop joint ownership with relevant stakeholders (e.g. representative organisations) to enhance actions on gender equality and disability inclusion policies and actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote diverse membership within urban governance/decision making boards, including in sectors that contribute to, or are impacted by climate change. Build capacities of groups of disadvantaged people to promote inclusion in policy and planning processes at all levels. Encourage national authorities to mandate disability- and gender-inclusive service design and delivery within policy, and enforce policy at local level. Strengthen national capacity for disability- and sex-disaggregated data collection through information management systems & training of officials and focal points. Use procurement rules and policies to support economic participation of women and people with disabilities, as enterprise owners and workers.
URBAN PLANNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex- and disability-disaggregated data to inform spatial planning of cities/metropolitan areas. Women's rights to land and compensation in resettlement projects. Green and open urban spaces to be designed for the different needs of women, girls and people with disabilities. Design of accessible housing and residential areas designed to accommodate work and family responsibilities. Learning disseminated to internal and external audiences, including cities and communities, to refine and democratize global strategies for gender equality and disability inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building of women and people with disabilities to join, influence and lead planning processes. Including training on how to conduct vulnerability and risk assessment, in safe building techniques and undertake routine maintenance as well as for emergency response. In addition, women and people with disabilities can conduct audits of existing urban services. Wherever possible, capacity building is to be delivered by women's groups or organisations of people with disabilities. Targeted services include access to loans and micro-insurance policies, as well as channelling funding to community centres and facilities used by women and people with disabilities. Ensure planning and budgeting is gender and disability responsive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a "brand" or visual identity for urban public space that is inclusive and welcoming to women, girls and people with disabilities, and portrayed in the signage, art and wayfinding. Ensure security of tenure, including long-term rental contracts, formal recognition of customary land rights, and collective land titles, among others. Ensure that eligibility for training programmes and microcredit is not dependent on landowning status or gender. Encourage women into careers that support future cities planning such as architecture, urban planning, transport and environmental management.
TRANSPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate a disability and gender analysis into design and implementation of city interventions that will allow greater levels of flexibility and consideration of all users. Conduct community consultations throughout the programme cycle with women and men, including a wide range of people with disabilities to identify and respond to their urban transport needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of women's triple role- productive work, unpaid care work and community work. This includes reducing journey times for women through increased frequency of and access to public transport services, increased bus-stops in peri-urban areas, out-of-rush-hour services and encouraging employers to offer flexible working hours to allow people to balance economic and domestic responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set clear expectations for public transportation/urban development guidelines to use universal design standards, with review mechanisms established to regularly check standards. This could be conducted by women's groups and/or Organisations of Persons with Disabilities. Support policies and practices to challenge social and cultural norms that restrict women's urban mobility and economic employment, and that address VAWG.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal design features at every level of the project planning, design, implementation and operation, which ensures city transport systems and the built environment are accessible to all. • Pricing policies for urban transport to ensure equitable access. Additional costs of accessible transportation and basic public services are not to be borne by users themselves, since these are essential to ensure equitable access. • Address issues around safety and violence. This could include safety audits, promoting anti-harassment awareness building campaigns and zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment. Use city transportation infrastructure to raise awareness of VAWG and to advertise and educate. Safety features can reduce the risk of harassment for women users such as separate entrances and ticketing queues, women-only waiting areas, separate buses or training carriages, reserved seats, street lighting, panic buttons and lighting at stations and on trains/buses and installation of camera and GPS tracking). • Training public transport staff and city police on sexual harassment awareness, how to respond to observed harassment, and how to address complaints of harassment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A whole journey approach to city transport systems, including the provision of information, the pedestrian environment, the interchange within and between modes, including hard (e.g. stations) and soft (e.g. information). • Provide cash incentives for bus drivers to collect people with disabilities. • Systematic use by city transport agencies /municipalities of time-use surveys to ensure transport reduces women’s time poverty and make women’s travel needs central to planning; transport systems and services that respond to women’s productive and domestic responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners work with transport agencies and city authorities to strengthen their capacity, innovation and learning on inclusion, with mechanisms in place to review decisions from a gender and disability lens. • Design in accountability mechanisms to ensure that there is follow through on commitments and action plans such as a recourse mechanism for those who do experience discrimination whilst using public transport, with information used to target resources more equitably and effectively. The capacity of Women’s Representative Groups and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities can be strengthened to hold service providers accountable. • Create higher value jobs for women and people with disabilities in city transport through setting employment targets; public campaigns to attract people to the sector and visibility on public transport and delivering front line services. These labour market initiatives can be complemented through quotas, scholarships and stipends for women students and students with disabilities in formal training institutes. • Awareness raising and changing attitudes on the urban mobility needs of women and people with disabilities. Training on disability issues is to be a condition of employment or qualification, and is best delivered by women/people with disabilities
RESILIENCE TO NATURAL DISASTERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and people with disabilities to be involved in all levels of planning on resilience, including their representative organisations. • Community mapping can be conducted regularly with women and girls and with people with disabilities to identify vulnerabilities and existing resources, including in informal settlements. • Participatory and vulnerability capacity assessments to collate information on people with disabilities and women. • Risk assessment and response teams should have equal representation of men and women and proportional representation of other excluded groups. • Raise awareness of city disaster preparedness strategies. Informal games, competitions, publications and preparedness drills can engage girls and children with disabilities in schools. Similarly, establishing a community information board to display information on evacuation sites, emergency housing facilities, and water, sanitation and health facilities. • Ensuring risk of GBV is adequately addressed in disaster risk reduction management. • Address the increased risks affecting women and girls in disaster recovery such as trafficking, early marriage, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection to mitigate the constraints faced by vulnerable groups after an urban disaster. • Post-disaster urban reconstruction and international sporting events can present good opportunities to link wider infrastructure reconstruction with universal access. • People with disabilities and women, and their representative organisations, are actively involved in the response. • Reduce risk of unwanted pregnancy by ensuring continuous access to sexual and reproductive health services. • Ensure women’s menstrual hygiene and maternity needs are met in disaster situations. • Protecting assets from the impacts of disasters requires access to financial services and improving access to other safe storage methods to help maintain control over assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing reconstruction programmes can improve women’s tenure when the housing they rebuild is jointly titled in both partners’ name. Resettlement is another opportunity to ensure titles for women. • Include gender and disability in all disaster risk reduction and resilience policies, strategies, and laws.



This keysheet has been written during the COVID 19 pandemic. Although evidence is still emerging, there is consensus that although men are more susceptible to the virus, **women are disproportionately affected by its social and economic impacts**. People with disabilities living in cities are particularly vulnerable because **urban health policy, planning and practice has not generally considered their needs**. In addition, COVID 19 can place people with disabilities at a higher risk of infection.

- **CBM (2016) The Inclusion Imperative: Towards Disability-inclusive and Accessible Urban Development. Key recommendations for an Inclusive Urban Agenda from the Disability Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development Network:** provides a list of key facts and figures about disability and accessibility, outlines an overview of the inclusion imperative and provides a series of recommendations for an inclusion agenda.
- **GIZ (2018) Approaches for Gender Responsive Urban Mobility:** examines the challenges for women with respect to urban transport, provides concrete tools and good practices, and provides recommendations for policy makers.
- **ICED Facility (2017) Transport: A Game Changer for Women's Economic Empowerment, Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development:** this briefing note provides guidance on how to accelerate Women's Economic Empowerment through HMG investments in the transport sector.
- **ICED Facility (2018) ICED Briefing: Disability Inclusion through Infrastructure and Cities Investment, Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development:** the note provides basic, introductory guidance on disability inclusion to HMG advisers and managers engaging with a range of infrastructure and urban investments.
- **TUMI and DFID (2019) Disability Inclusive Public Transport: Practical steps to making public transport disability inclusive, TUMI and DFID:** this policy brief sets out practical steps to making the right choices to ensure public transport meets the needs of people with disabilities.
- **World Bank (2020) Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design, World Bank:** Explores the relationships between gender inequality, the built environment and urban planning, and lays out a menu of best practices for more inclusive urban planning and management.
- **World Bank (2018) Five Actions for Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Management, World Bank:** Provides five actions that development institutions, governments, and other key stakeholders can take to ensure that people with disabilities are not left behind in the aftermath of a disaster.
- **World Bank (2021) Gender Dimensions of Disaster Risk and Resilience, World Bank:** Recommends a set of policy actions in exposure, vulnerability, preparedness and coping capacity for use before, during and after a disaster to mitigate differentiated impacts for men and women, boys and girls.