

Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

Hosted by
UNOPS



CITIES ALLIANCE GENDER EQUALITY

ACTION PLAN 2024-2026

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01

INTRODUCTION



Cities Alliance is committed to address and reduce gender inequalities in developing cities to achieve inclusive urban development.



The Cities Alliance Gender Equality Action Plan 2024-2026 guides the organisation's efforts to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are reflected in all its programmes and processes, collaboration with members, as well as global and in-country operations. The Action Plan also provides a roadmap for the core work of the Cities for Women (CfW) Global Programme on gender over the next two years.

The Gender Equality Action Plan 2024-2026 builds on the results of the previous plan for 2022-2023, earlier policies, and strategies. They include the Cities Alliance Charter, which commits the organisation to promoting gender equality; the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-2017; and the Gender Equality Strategy (GES). These strategies laid the foundation for the Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme for Gender Equality in Cities, which has been reshaped as the CfW Programme.

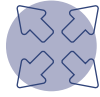
Following the implementation of the first Gender Action Plan (2016–2021), the Cities Alliance Gender team conducted an internal review that identified several lessons learned. The Internal Progress Review on Gender (2017–2021) recommended actions in three major areas: Advocacy and global work, country programmes, and cross-cutting themes (resources, internal collaboration, communication, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning).

The review included four key recommendations:



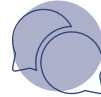
CONTINUING

...to build a consolidated, aggregated evidence base to highlight Cities Alliance's gender work;



EXPANDING

...targeted gender work in priority countries by engaging members and local partners;



COMMUNICATING

...this engagement transparently, particularly to Cities Alliance members, through improved and regular communication; and



CONTINUING

...to improve mainstreaming through ad-hoc training and a consistent monitoring framework.

This Gender Action Plan 2024–2026 is built around these four recommendations. It aligns closely with the Cities Alliance MTS 2021–2024 to enable clear, consistent implementation and monitoring of actions that promote gender equality and women's empowerment in cities. The Action Plan also contains clear, realistic targets and a list of strategic activities and deliverables for the CfW Programme.

02

UNDERLYING RATIONALE

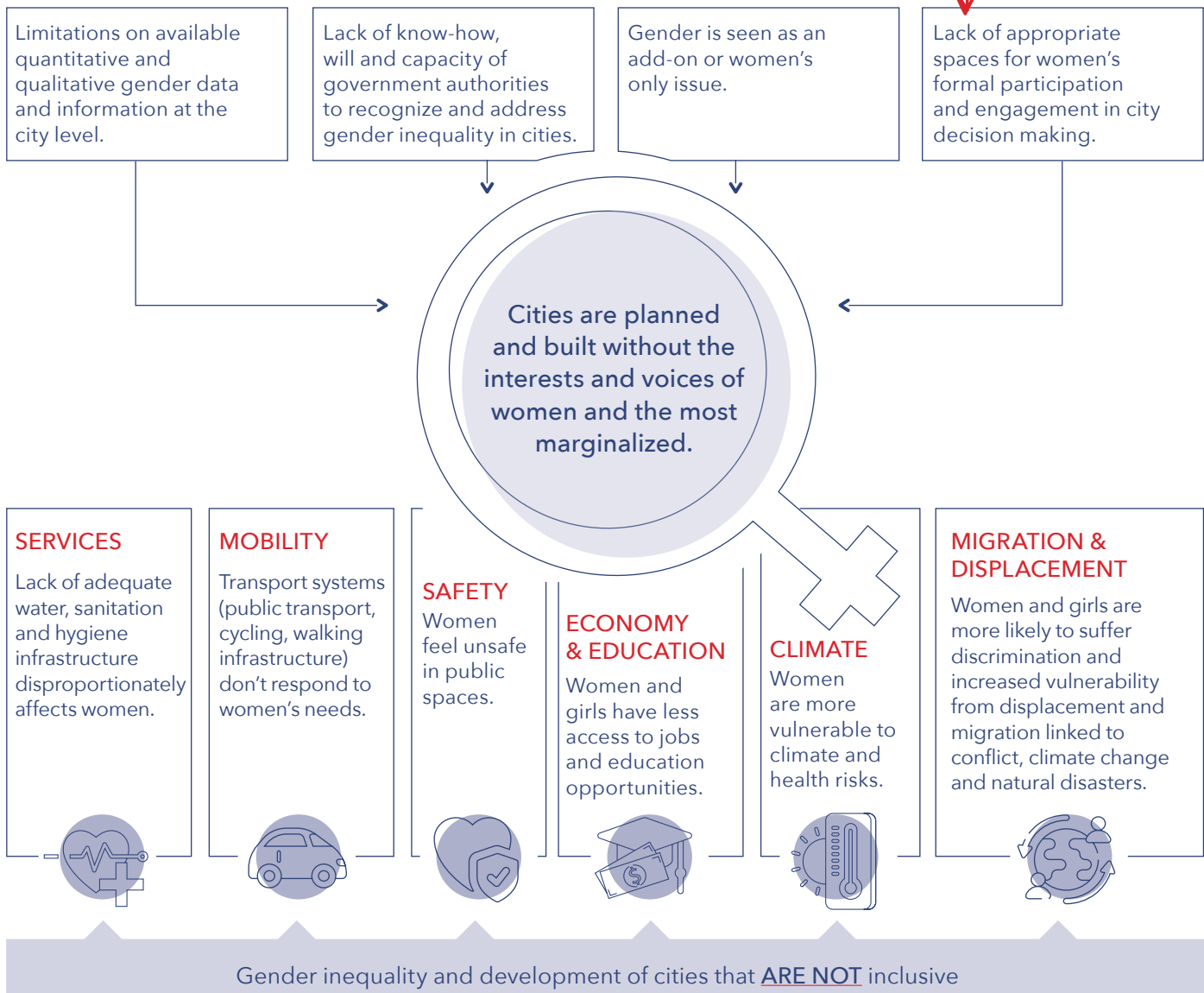


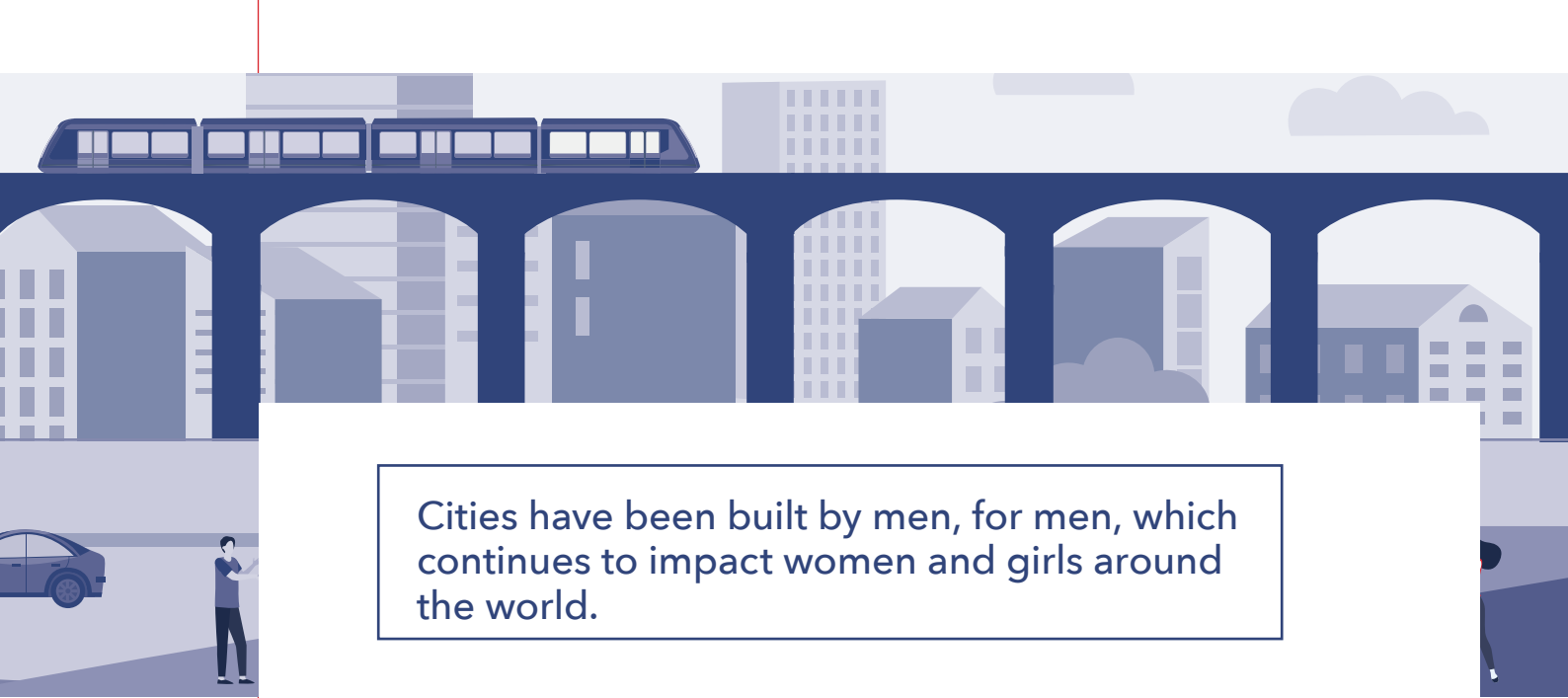
Cities that work for women work for everyone.

The Cities Alliance supports cities to deliver sustainable development and address urban poverty. It does so by promoting inclusive cities that engage all their residents - including women, the young and elderly people - and provide them with equal access to urban opportunities. To create climate-resilient cities that are truly inclusive of all who live and work in them, it is important to start by engaging women. The reverse is also true; cities are the key space for action to advance gender equality globally and the perfect forum for reflecting on central questions such as equality, justice, and the common good. Many city-led initiatives are underway to tackle gender inequality. To ensure more effective inclusion of women and their needs when shaping policy, city governments are engaging women in local governance and decision-making processes and applying a gender lens in different areas of policymaking, such as city planning, budgeting, and development strategy.



Figure 1 highlights the factors that individually and cumulatively increase gender inequalities and preclude the development of inclusive cities, as well as the impact on women.





Cities have been built by men, for men, which continues to impact women and girls around the world.

Women experience and use the urban environment differently from men. As a result, they have different priorities for key urban services and infrastructure, such as transport, public spaces, housing, and health services. Women's priorities rarely feature in urban policy or infrastructure projects, leading to exclusion and lost opportunities for women and society in general. This is particularly evident in areas of limited resources – such as much of the Global South, where urban planning and local governments struggle to provide basic services – and leads to more acute disparities.

Women are disproportionately represented in both the informal economy (with lower incomes and greater insecurity) and in informal settlements (with limited access to basic services). They are therefore more adversely affected by poor services as well as individual and system shocks. A lack of services in the home and workplace is particularly hard on women, who tend to be the primary caretakers, are responsible for fetching water and fuel, and are more likely to work from home. Limited access to affordable, safe public transport also disproportionately affects women, who commute home more often and engage in more fragmented trips related to their care-giving responsibilities, such as shopping, children, etc.¹ Lack of lighting and toilets in public spaces contribute to many women feeling unsafe in their city and limits their ability to trade, meet, and socialise in public areas.

Overall, challenges such as unsafe public spaces and transport affect all aspects of women's lives, including their ability to access educational and income-generating opportunities. This point was highlighted in Cities Alliance's recent collaborative work in Nepal and Tunisia, where women expressed major concerns over lack of safety in public spaces, particularly areas where women can meet and connect. In Nepalese cities, most public open spaces are polluted and under-utilised because of privatisation, poor security, lack of lighting, and poor design. Public spaces are limited and unsafe at night, and there is a pervasive fear of sexual harassment or violence on public transport.² In the Medina of Tunis, women identified street conditions and incidents of violence and crime as concerns. Women in the Medina find it difficult to access and use cultural spaces, and funding and support for cultural programmes and activities are not inclusive of women. Professional development opportunities for working women are limited by gender-based discrimination, while women entrepreneurs face difficulties related to the male-dominated market, inadequate support and training, and cultural perceptions, which hinder their ability to start and grow a business.³

1 Maci, G. and F. Kitchin. 2021. *Ghost Citizens, Women and Informality in Cities: What can Europe Do?* Cities Alliance: Brussels. https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Policy%20Brief_%20Ghost%20Citizens%20-%20Women%20and%20Informality%20in%20Cities.pdf.

2 Kitchin, F. and G. Maci. 2020. *Kathmandu: A City for Women*. Cities Alliance: Brussels. https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Kathmandu%20A%20City%20For%20Women_Cities%20Alliance.pdf.

3 Cities Alliance. 2021. *Femmedina - Women in the City: An assessment of women's participation in the Medina of Tunis*. https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Brochure%20Femmedina_English%20QR.pdf.

Conflicts, war, and global crises such as the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic, lead to increases in migration, displaced people, and refugees, which in turn increase gender inequality, women's vulnerability, and informality.

Gender dynamics influence all stages of migration and displacement, from motivations for migrating, routes followed, and the opportunities and resources available to potential migrants. The roles, expectations, relationships, and power relations associated with gender significantly affect migrants' experiences. Women migrants suffer disproportionately from limited access to vital resources, housing, safe public spaces, basic infrastructure, and services on a daily basis. These challenges are exacerbated during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the current conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. In 2020, female migrants represented 48.1 per cent (or 135 million) of the global migrant stock (UNDESA, 2020). In 2021, women and girls made up 50 per cent (53.2 million) of internally displaced persons (IDP) and 48 per cent (21.3 million) of those displaced across borders (UNHCR, 2021). These numbers have likely increased by 2023, with more refugees forced to leave their homes due to the current conflicts. Women migrants face challenges related to their caregiving roles, limited transportation options, and the heightened risk of gender-based violence (GBV) while in transit or in refugee camps or shelters. Women also face higher employment barriers and greater difficulties upon returning to their communities.⁴ It is crucial to recognise and address these unique challenges.

The dynamics described above are similar worldwide. For instance, female migrants from Libya and Venezuela face severe resource limitations, leading to increased vulnerability. Some resort to transactional sex for survival, raising their risk of human trafficking. Economic precarity, combined with caregiving responsibilities, heightens the risk of violence.⁵ In Libya, cultural isolation, fear of authorities, and limited support networks exacerbate vulnerability.⁶ An assessment of the Libyan labour market by UNDP showed that the labour market favours male migrants, with just 10 per cent of companies willing to hire women. As of 2022, female migrants in Libya experienced higher unemployment rates (44 per cent vs. 21 per cent for males) and often worked in domestic or care roles with poor conditions, low pay, wage issues, insecurity, and sexual harassment. They often cannot open bank accounts, exposing them to theft and feelings of fear.⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic worsened the gender wage gap, especially in South Africa, where it rose from 30 per cent to 52 per cent between February and April 2020.⁸

Despite the hardships and challenges women migrants face, migration can offer them new opportunities, greater financial independence, improved status, and in some cases, greater security as they flee restrictive customs such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, or limited educational prospects. Women migrants are also more likely than their male counterparts to send remittances to their home countries, often making significant contributions to those countries' economies.⁹

4 International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2021. *Gender and Migration Data: A Guide for Evidence-based, Gender-responsive Migration Governance*. IOM: Geneva. <https://publications.iom.int/books/gender-and-migration-data-guide-evidence-based-gender-responsive-migration-governance>.

5 IOM. 2021. DTM Venezuela Regional Response: *Gender-based Violence and Risk Factors for Migrant and Refugee Women from Venezuela During the Migration Journey*. IOM South America. <https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1461/files/reports/4-GBV%28V3%29ML.pdf>.

6 IOM. 2023. *Same but Different: An Analysis of the Experiences of Migrant Men and Women in Libya*. IOM Libya: Tripoli. https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1461/files/reports/DTM_Libya_Women_Men_Experiences_Migration_study_FINAL.pdf

7 Ibid.

8 De Soto, H. 2000. *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. Basic Books: New York.

9 Kwar, M. 2004. "Gender and Migration: Why Are Women More Vulnerable?" in Reysoo, F. and C. Verschuur, eds. *Femmes en mouvement: Genre, migrations et nouvelle division internationale du travail*. Graduate Institute Publications: Geneva. <http://books.openedition.org/iheid/6256>.



Climate change has a disproportionate impact on the lives and livelihoods of women and girls, and yet women often play a key role as climate champions.

Climate change affects family nutrition, childcare, and education. Women's roles in securing food, collecting water, and caring mean that they are disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of climate change.¹⁰ Food and water scarcities also greatly impact women, who are typically responsible for collecting water, food, and fuel for cooking. For example, even though agriculture is often the top employer for women (70 per cent in South Asia and 60 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa¹¹), they have less access to productive agricultural services and resources such as land, which negatively impacts their adaptive capacity for food production. Climate-induced migration particularly affects vulnerable groups, including women and children. Extreme weather events such as droughts and floods have a greater impact on women, who are much more likely to be displaced than men. Women currently constitute 80 per cent of climate refugees, and they are 14 times more likely to die than men during climate-related disasters.¹² This displacement due to environmental change is likely to increase in the future. Emergency shelters built after disasters usually ignore gender aspects such as sanitation and safety. For instance, in Bangladesh, the gender profile of climate change showed that women often did not use cyclone shelters because of poor sanitary and security arrangements.¹³

10 UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP). 2023. "Four Takeaways from Gender-Sensitive Assessments of Climate Change Risks in the Mediterranean." 6 March. <https://www.unep.org/unepmap/news/story/IWD-2023-Mediterranean>.

11 Women's Forum for the Economy and Society. 2019. *Women Leading Climate Action: A World Within Reach*. <https://cdn-assets.inwink.com/4b35381f-d595-4da9-8f03-d28d973544c0/c76bf4b6-6d19-42fe-b845-2e0f8133e3e3>.

12 Ibid.

13 Chowdhury, M. et al. 2015. *A Study of Cyclone Shelters in the Coastal Bangladesh: An Assessment from Gender Perspective*. www.researchgate.net/publication/279574648_A_STUDY_OF_CYCLONE_SHELTERS_IN_THE_COASTAL_BANGLADESH_AN_ASSESSMENT_FROM_GENDER_PERSPECTIVE.



Women and girls are often leaders in their communities and cities, but they are still under-represented in formal politics.

Women's participation in climate-related decision making is often limited, and climate initiatives at the city level tend to ignore gender-specific issues – perpetuating bias in city infrastructure and services usually designed by and for men. This stems from a lack of data on the gender-related impacts of climate change in cities¹⁴ and from governments' failure to understand the specific impacts of climate change (and related dynamics such as migration and conflict) on women. Despite playing a key role in providing livelihoods and food security, women's ability to act on the management of water resources is therefore often limited. Women represent only 17.5 per cent of the global workforce for water and hygiene in developing economies.¹⁵ In regions such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), water scarcity, displacement, conflict, weak governance, and political and civic unrest exacerbate other issues affecting the region. "The implications will be the harshest for the marginalised, impoverished, and least resilient members of society – particularly the elderly, children, women and young girls."¹⁶

Women often have informal roles of influence, recognition, and power within the community, and they play leadership roles as informal activists in churches, community-based organisations, self-help groups, cooperatives, or groups dedicated to specific issues. Through active citizenship at the grassroots level, women have facilitated access to services and improved the lives of many in their communities. The COVID-19 emergency highlighted the role of women in informal leadership.

¹⁴ UNEP/MAP, 2023.

¹⁵ Cities Alliance. 2023. *Her4Water – A Tool to Assess Women's Vulnerability to Water Scarcity and Engagement in Water Governance*. Cities Alliance: Brussels. https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/cities_alliance_her4water_tool_en_august_2023.pdf.

¹⁶ Cities Alliance. 2023. *Empower a Woman with Water and She Can Change Her City: A Focus on MENA*. Cities Alliance: Brussels. https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/cities_alliance_full_version_empower_a_woman_with_water_march_2023.pdf.

Women are also on the front lines of social and political movements worldwide. Their demands for gender equality in different areas (inheritance, family, pay, access to employment and positions of power) and their rights (freedom of decision over their own bodies, freedom of movement, etc.) are renewing the global agenda.

In Ukraine, women mobilised across the country, serving with the army, providing humanitarian aid, protecting the injured and infirm, and “safeguarding the future by doing whatever it takes to keep their children and other family members safe.” Almost 14 million Ukrainians have fled their homes, most of them women and children.¹⁷ However, despite their active service, women are largely absent from formal decision-making processes related to peace making and rebuilding, with the result that policies and practices do not fully address their priorities or needs.

At the formal level, women are under-represented in political office due to gender divisions of labour and a lack of income, education, and freedom. Only 13 per cent of mayors in the world are women. Male-dominated leadership often lacks the political will, understanding, and know-how to address gender inequality, making it a vicious circle that is difficult to break. However, in countries such as India, Nepal, and South Africa, decentralisation with quotas has provided a space for women leaders in local governance. In some cases, though, women leaders are not always able to play a meaningful role in local government due to institutional, cultural, and societal restrictions. This discrimination results in a loss of experience and knowledge of those who are among the most active users of the urban space and reinforces gender stereotypes. Some institutional innovations, such as earmarking a percentage of the budget for women-only deliberations or gender-sensitive local budgeting, have amplified women’s voices in local deliberations and supported spending on women’s needs.

¹⁷ Cities Alliance. 2022. *Rebuilding with Women: Amplifying their Voices in Ukraine’s Recovery*. Cities Alliance: Brussels. https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/cities_alliance_ukraine_rebuilding_with_women_december_2022.pdf.



Local authorities often lack the understanding and capacity to develop and implement gender-responsive policies, budgets, and plans.

Although urban governance and decentralisation have progressed around the world, local government capacities in many countries remain underdeveloped, particularly with respect to the importance of understanding and including women’s experiences, perspectives, and specific needs in policymaking and planning processes. Recognising and addressing gender equality in cities often encounters institutional or individual resistance due to cultural norms and prevailing gender dynamics. Conventional urban governance does not view women as producers or shapers of the urban realm; consequently, many urban contexts are developed without meaningful participation of women. Gender is often perceived as a women-only issue or an add-on, with at best token participation and the use of generalised data sets.

There is a need for urban governance processes to adopt new forms of engagement that can better understand and implement women’s needs, expectations, and capacities. A gender-sensitive approach to urban governance aims to increase women’s participation in the development of human settlements and foster gender-awareness and competence among both women and men in the political arena and planning practice.

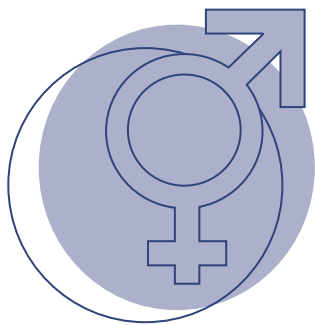
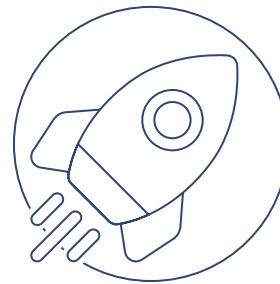
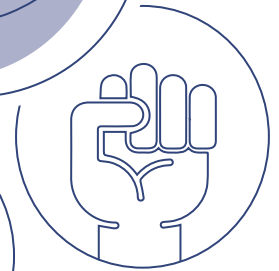
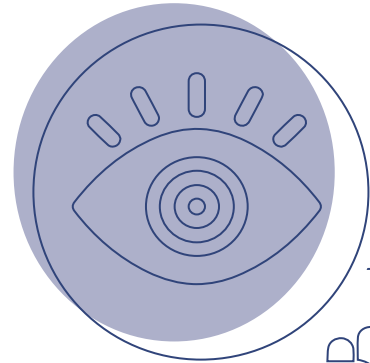
City officials, women’s organisations, and networks need more capacity development and support to effectively collaborate on promoting gender equality. This should include the provision of gender data to show the gender-implications of city policies and projects. Monitoring mechanisms and gender analytical tools are therefore core capacities that local governments need to acquire.¹⁸

¹⁸ Chen, 2016, cited in Maci, G. and F. Kitchin, 2021.

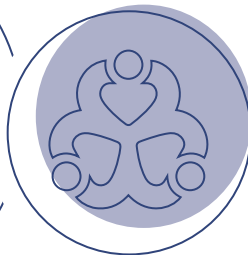
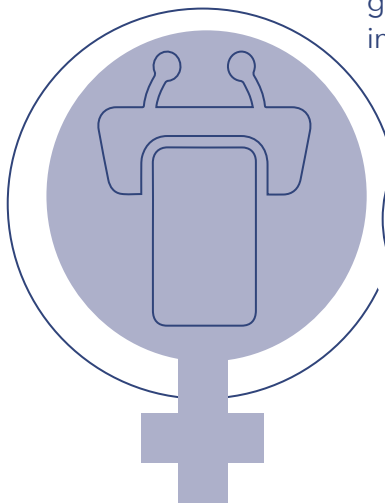
03

THEORY OF CHANGE

IF we foster awareness and capacity development of local government authorities, women's organisations, and community-based organisations on developing inclusive urban projects through collaboration, collection of gender data and piloting,



THEN urban initiatives focusing on women's empowerment and gender equality will increase, leading to enhanced engagement of women and girls in city governance mechanisms and a more inclusive city for everyone.



3.1



STRATEGIC GOALS

Cities Alliance has committed itself to addressing and reducing inequalities in developing cities to achieve inclusive urban development. In cities across the globe, gender is usually one of the main axes of inequality, discrimination, and exclusion. The inclusion of women’s perspectives in city planning and governance also helps to amplify and address the specific situations of other neglected social groups in urban communities. Pro-poor interventions will only be effective if they are planned, implemented, and evaluated based on more nuanced criteria which adopt an intersectional approach that considers gender and integrates factors such as age, ethnicity, economic status, and sexual orientation.



Within this framework, Cities Alliance aims to increase the engagement of women and girls in city development and governance.

3.2



KEY OBJECTIVES

Cities Alliance aims to:



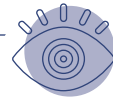
CONTRIBUTE

...systematically and comprehensively to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in all its thematic areas;



DEVELOP

...a premier global partnership working on women’s engagement in cities; and



CONTRIBUTE

...to raising awareness on gender equality and developing capacity and resources for inclusive city planning and governance at the local level.

04 PROPOSED ACTIVITIES 2024-2026

The Action Plan 2022-2023 has guided our recent activities, most of which have been completed or remain ongoing. These experiences have shaped the proposed action plan going forward, and they form the basis of new activities planned for 2024-2026.

Cities Alliance will continue to employ a two-pronged approach to fully integrate gender-equality considerations into our programme strategies and activities, including policy advice, advocacy, research, capacity development, and monitoring and evaluation/assessment. **The two components of this approach are: (i) gender mainstreaming in all programmes and activities, and (ii) gender-specific programming.**

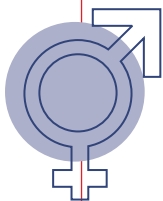
GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN ALL PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

Cities Alliance will organise internal capacity-building training and learning sessions annually to share and discuss results, experiences, and available tools for gender mainstreaming. Ongoing training for staff and grantees will be provided with updated and new tools, including the gender marker, and further learning events such as webinars and Brown Bag Lunch (BBL) series.

The Cities Alliance Gender Team will continue to offer support to colleagues through inputs on new project proposals, programme design, implementation, work plan analysis, and publications, among others, to ensure that all activities undertaken by Cities Alliance are gender-mainstreamed as much as possible.

Monitoring and evaluation will be enhanced by reviewing indicators to capture gender impacts more effectively and developing a baseline to measure programme progress. Gender-focused activities and performance indicators will be included in grant agreements with capacity development support to grantees. Targeted, better structured reports will document learning from both successes and failures. Results across Cities Alliance's work will be aggregated to show case study results and build a well-developed evidence base, documenting lessons learned and showing continuous monitoring.

4.1



This will be communicated to grantees, members, and donors through webinars, reports, videos, and content on the Cities Alliance website.

The approach includes the following sub-components, each with several core activities:



SUB-COMPONENT 1: Global Advocacy and Partnership

A crucial aspect of the programme's activities will be enhancing collaboration with partners and members to improve advocacy. It will do this by engaging key members and partners to influence policies locally and globally and by continuing to push for cities planned for women and by women, gender equality promotion at the local level, climate resilience in cities and gender, and women-led infrastructure.

Activities are designed to analyse, compare, and evaluate project outcomes and local knowledge to improve awareness of relevant policies or activities, effectively communicate how these influence policies and behaviour, and contribute to global debates on women's inclusion in urban development.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT PERIOD

- **PRODUCE** a series of blogs, videos, and podcasts by the Cities Alliance Secretariat and members on gender-related issues.
- **ENSURE** that the programme content on the Cities Alliance website is updated regularly and acts as a usable resource for external users. Communicate the value of the website as a resource to all appropriate stakeholders.
- **ORGANISE** international events targeting the European Union, the United Nations, and member states (all key members of Cities Alliance) to influence programming and policymaking and stimulate investment. These events can be online and/or offline, depending on the context, participants, and whether travel is feasible.
- **HOLD** webinars for Cities Alliance members on gender/cities for women to discuss mutual areas of focus, experiences, and synergies to promote a more collaborative approach across the sector.
- **ENSURE** regular one-on-one engagement with key members through newsletters, emails, webinars and personal contact and consultation as much as possible.
- **PLAN** a series of learning events (e.g., exhibitions, radio shows, trainings, debates) to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange and networking among targeted organisations and local authorities, leading to knowledge products and guidance to support cross-fertilisation and replication.



GLOBAL ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS



From 2021–2023, various activities targeted global advocacy and promoted key partnerships. Highlights included activities focused on peace, reconstruction and inclusivity with Ukrainian women, and work on water management and developing gender-responsive public spaces and cities with women in the MENA region.

UKRAINE

To amplify Ukrainian women's voices and support the inclusive recovery and reconstruction process in Ukrainian cities, Cities Alliance interviewed [Nataliia Kholchenkova](#), Head of International Relations of Chernihiv, to discuss the city's efforts to recover from war and the role women are playing in this recovery.¹⁹

The report [Rebuilding with Women: Amplifying Their Voices in Ukraine Recovery](#)²⁰ assessed the condition of women and girls in war-torn Ukrainian cities and provided recommendations for a gender-sensitive recovery and reconstruction process in Ukrainian cities. It was accompanied by a knowledge event on Amplifying Women's Voices: Women Informal Economy Workers in the War in Ukraine in 2022.

A [closed-door workshop](#) was conducted with EU institutions to highlight the role of women and their needs to promote an inclusive recovery process in Ukraine.²¹

A [webinar on peace and security](#) with a focus on women leaders on the frontlines promoted dialogue and sharing lessons learned among women from Ukraine and other countries that have experienced war and navigated post-conflict challenges.²²

19 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/spotlight/ukraine-bravery-has-no-gender-interview-nataliia-kholchenkova>.

20 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/resources/publications/publications/rebuilding-women-amplifying-their-voices-ukraines-recovery>.

21 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/results/including-women-ukraines-reconstruction-start>.

22 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/events/peace-and-security-women-leaders-frontlines>.



THE MENA REGION

Cities Alliance promoted women-led water management in the MENA region by developing [a brochure](#) based on interviews with experts²³ and organising a workshop in May 2023 titled Empower A Woman With Water and She Can Change Her City: A Focus on MENA.

A new regional programme on water governance and women's empowerment launched in May 2023, supported by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.²⁴ [The Women and Sustainable Cities programme](#) (*Femmes et villes durables*) aims to strengthen women's leadership in the decision making and management of scarce urban water resources in the MENA region. It will be piloted with local governments and feminist organisations in Figuig (Morocco), Kairouan (Tunisia), and Sebkhah (Mauritania) over two-and-a-half years.

Activities engaging stakeholders on gender inclusive public spaces and cities in the MENA region included a training event at WUF11 titled [Cities For Everybody: Capacity Building for Gender-Sensitive Urban Planning](#). Participating institutions included USAID, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the GIZ-C40 Cities Finance Facility. The CfW Programme hosted a roundtable as part of an Inter-regional Forum on Active Mobilities organised by Alda in Mahdia, Tunisia in 2023 ([A Walkable City is Better for Women](#)).²⁵

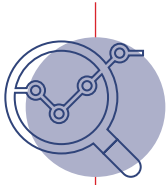
In Tunisia, a vernissage and exhibition titled [When Women Transform Cities](#) was organised with the French Institute of Tunisia (Institut français de Tunisie). Representatives of the French Institute of Tunisia, Cities Alliance, and Professor Dalenda Larguèche, an expert on gender studies and history from the University of Manouba, attended the opening vernissage 1 June 2022. The event was well received by 50+ participants and increased the visibility of Cities Alliance in Tunisia.

23 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/results/empower-woman-water-and-she-can-change-her-city>.

24 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/regional-programme-women-and-sustainable-cities>.

25 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/events/roundtable-walkable-city-better-women>.

CfW organised a workshop titled [HERitage: Creating Green and Inclusive Public Spaces in Historical Cities in Jordan](#) in collaboration with the French Embassy in Jordan. Participants shared experiences and ideas on how to better engage women in creating and activating public spaces and green solutions to make Jordan's historical cities more resilient and inclusive.



SUB-COMPONENT 2: Internal monitoring and cross-support

Effective internal monitoring of activities, aggregating results, and building an evidence base are extremely important to promote the progress of our work. This goes alongside providing effective support to staff, partners, and grantees.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT PERIOD

- **MEASURE** programme progress over time, collecting data and comparing them to the baseline developed in 2022.
- **ORGANISE** BBLs related to gender and extend invitations to a broader audience, including members and partners.
- **CONTINUE** to improve gender training for Cities Alliance staff, grantees, and partners on new tools, the framework, and concepts related to women's empowerment and gender equality in cities, as well as provide ongoing support in this area.
- **DEVELOP** satisfaction surveys for project participants and include more qualitative indicators, such as: "Do people feel involved? How much voice do they feel they have?"
- **PRESENT** members with a well-developed evidence base, documentation of lessons learned, and continuous monitoring.

Internal Monitoring and Cross-support

The CfW Programme supported all Cities Alliance programmes to mainstream gender within project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The main tool for this is the [Checklist for Mainstreaming Gender in Urban Projects Based on a Participatory Approach](#)²⁶ disseminated via multiple training events. Another tool is the [Toolkit For Women-friendly Urban Planning](#).



Cross-support in gender mainstreaming was provided across operational activities, resulting in the incorporation of gender indicators and objectives within new initiatives:

MIGRATION PROGRAMME PHASE II IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Phase II has been designed to mainstream gender equality through a more targeted, gender-responsive approach in the Horn of Africa. At the city level, the programme is being informed by gender analyses of the specific needs, challenges and opportunities for women and girls relating to its objectives of i) improving labour market integration for female migrants, displaced persons, and women from host communities, and ii) improving the gender-responsiveness of basic services for migrants, displaced persons, and host communities.

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system features gender-specific outcome indicators as well as gender disaggregated data at all levels of the results framework. Examples of gender-specific indicators include qualitative tracking of new local gender transformative partnerships and approaches established.

THE IMRIS PROGRAMME IN HAITI

The USAID-funded Increasing Municipal Revenues to Improve Services (IMRIS) programme in Haiti has been designed to deliver gender responsive outcomes through i) the inclusion of capacity building to municipal staff on gender equality; ii) the inclusion of gender responsive approaches in the learning agenda and through stakeholder and end-user feedback mechanisms; and iii) gender disaggregated data and specific outcome gender-responsive indicators have been incorporated into the results framework.

PHASE II OF THE COVID-19 RECOVERY PROGRAMME

The CfW team conducted a review of 16 gender markers and training for Slum Dwellers International (SDI) affiliates participating in Phase II of the COVID-19 Recovery Programme funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The CfW Programme also conducted organisational training on gender mainstreaming for Cities Alliance staff through three sessions titled Cities Alliance - Ally of Women in 2022. Three additional sessions in 2023 provided training on the gender mainstreaming tools and the Cities for Women Approach. The training presentations were followed by a cross-learning discussion on how colleagues from operations and programmes can best integrate gender mainstreaming activities within their work.

²⁶ The checklist informs development practitioners and city officials of the steps needed to implement gender-mainstreaming actions and an inclusive participatory approach within each phase of urban projects. Implementing the checklist can help prevent the reproduction of unequal societal power relations between women and men in the development of cities and informal settlements.



GENDER-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

Gender-specific programming aims to raise awareness, build capacity, develop partnerships, test ideas, and open up opportunities for long-term, in-country programmes focusing on gender-related issues. This work specifically targets women and their needs with the goal of increasing the engagement of girls and women in urban development and governance so that they can live in inclusive, equitable cities and communities.

To do so, Cities Alliance works with local authorities, partners, and stakeholders to collect data and evidence, raise awareness, build capacity, and develop pilot projects to address the issues identified in this participatory process. Successful smaller pilot projects (quick wins) can provide the evidence for developing larger in-country programmes, as in Tunisia in 2020–2021.

Over the next two years, the gender-specific programmatic work will focus on five topics:



The Cities Alliance will conduct participatory research in select cities around the world²⁷ focusing on gender-related vulnerabilities to climate change and enablers to engage women and girls in climate actions in cities. This research will allow a comparison of data and results from different cities, contributing to a greater understanding of how to ensure gender-inclusive cities.

New Programmes for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Cities

THE FEMMEDINA INITIATIVE IN TUNISIA

In 2022, Phase 1 of the Femmedina programme focused on creating public spaces that are responsive to the economic, political, cultural and social needs of women in the Medina of Tunis. The spaces are also designed to stimulate women's empowerment and participation in urban development. It benefited over 1,500 women and included seven public space interventions such as designing and constructing market stalls, playground facilities, a workshop centre. The initiative organised training for 11 municipal staff members in gender-sensitive urban planning.²⁸

²⁷ Research will be undertaken in selected cities across all main geographic areas and different political systems.

²⁸ https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/Femmedina%20Tunis%20Overview_English_.pdf.

Following the success of Phase I in Tunisia, Phase 2 of the [Femmedina Inclusive City Programme \(2023+\)](#)²⁹ focuses on the cities of Kairouan, Mahdia, M'saken, and Sousse. It aims to address gender-based social and spatial inequalities within the medinas while creating economic development opportunities for local women. Phase II is anticipated to run for two-and-a-half years.

CITIES FOR WOMEN IN NEPAL

Building on earlier work, the [Cities for Women in Nepal](#)³⁰ project aims to create climate-responsive and inclusive public spaces in five Nepalese municipalities by strengthening the systems that plan and implement municipal public infrastructure. Launched in October 2023, the four-year project will be implemented in the municipalities of Birendranagar, Chandragiri, Dhangadi, Sunwal, and Tansen in partnership with UNOPS Nepal, UN Habitat, and the Nepalese Ministry of Urban Development.³¹

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- **WORKING** with partners and members to design and test tools for co-designing gender-sensitive infrastructure and climate projects as well as guidelines for targeting and involving marginalised women in urban climate governance.
- **WORKING** with local partners to apply Cities Alliance's participatory/assessment tools in cities by organising and leading Urban Laboratories. These will involve key local actors and representatives of the most marginalised groups, including women and girls. Two of the laboratories will focus on climate/gender and three on women's participation in urban governance.
- **CONDUCTING** women's safety audit diagnosis reports (physical and online) and gender-based community mapping in cities where Cities Alliance is implementing urban projects.
- **DEVELOPING** and testing pilot projects, such as public space interventions, a city campaign on women's safety and engagement, or implementation of a gender-sensitive WASH facility.
- **COMPILING** comprehensive and consolidated reports for each city in which Cities Alliance works, with the information and data collected in the city. This information can then be used to conduct a comparative analysis of the key issues and lessons learned across the cities and compiled into comparative reports.
- **CONDUCTING** surveys with key stakeholders³¹ in each city to collect and generate relevant gender-disaggregated data, develop and measure indicators, and establish a baseline to assess both progress and impact over time.
- **DEVELOPING** a digital storytelling approach focused on the experiences of women and girls in their cities and neighbourhoods across multiple domains (e.g., mobility, political participation, safety, and heritage). This should be done in conjunction with local partners and stakeholders, with steps taken to ensure that the outcome/product is shared with the local community and participants.

29 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/femmedina-inclusive-city-programme-phase-ii>.

30 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/cities-women-nepal>.

31 The surveys will be conducted with local and other government officials and representatives of CSOs, CBOs, FBOs, and NGOs.

Tools and participatory assessment / workshops



The CfW Programme has created various tools to improve the lives of urban women in different areas, each with one or more key focus issues. These tools are based on participatory assessments and link to policy and implementation.

The [Toolkit for Women-Friendly Urban Planning](#) addresses how to engage women in participatory processes, focusing on cities in the Global South. It provides detailed explanations and specific tools and activities for each phase of the project cycle to mobilise women in urban projects. The toolkit has been used in specific development projects and initiatives, especially in informal settlements and communities.³²

The [Her4Climate tool](#) is a participatory assessment tool to mainstream gender considerations in climate adaptation, centred on the knowledge and capacities of women in urban areas. It has been used for the initial assessment of ten municipalities in Nepal, as part of the new EU-funded joint Cities Alliance, UNOPS, and UN Habitat project Cities for Women in Nepal.³³

The [Her4Water tool](#) is a toolkit to assess women's vulnerability to water scarcity and engagement in water governance and to bolster local governments' comprehension of gender-specific challenges tied to water scarcity. It contributes to promoting women's participation in water management and enhancing their economic independence and well-being. It increases awareness and builds local capacity to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated water data. It also plays a role in making better, lasting water plans and projects that help women, girls and communities as a whole.³⁴

Workshops have been organised to complement these toolkits. They include the Enhancing Women's Opportunities in the [Cultural Heritage Sector](#)³⁵ workshop in Jordan, participatory assessments in nine municipalities in [Nepal](#),³⁶ and assessment workshops conducted as part of Femmedina Phase 2.³⁷

32 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/resources/publications/cities-alliance-knowledge/women-friendly-urban-planning-toolkit>.

33 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/results/her4climate-gender-mainstreaming-climate-adaptation-plans>.

34 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/results/her4water-placing-women-centre-water-management>.

35 <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/events/jordan-enhancing-womens-opportunities-cultural-heritage-sector>.

36 https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1StJ4_KC0TtnzM6bvlsa53IW7WNXzUz9/edit?usp=sharing&oid=114742237520839697028&rtpof=true&sd=true.

37 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1woArsKMw-1aHYaXINsPTlcp6MAGnG3Xc/edit?usp=sharing&oid=114742237520839697028&rtpof=true&sd=true>.

05

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

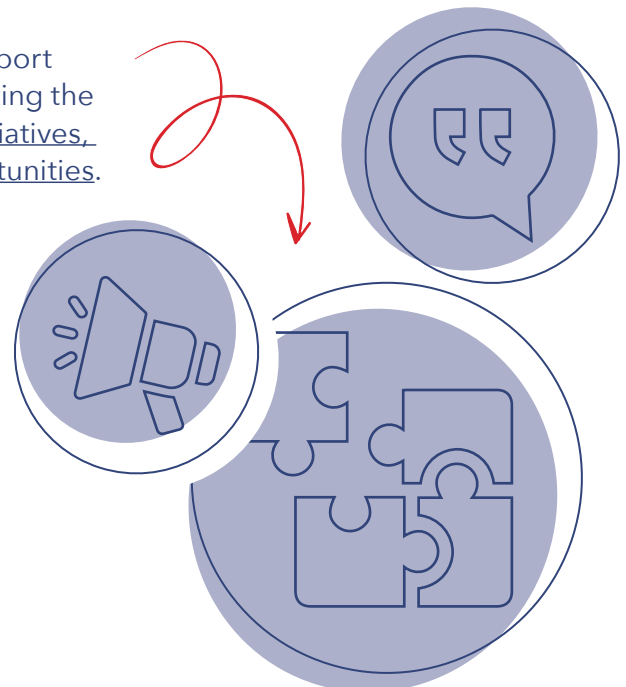
Cities Alliance members are responsible for ensuring that the organisation achieves its vision and objectives. Therefore, Cities Alliance will engage and collaborate with members on advocacy and operational activities to promote the engagement of girls and women in urban development.

Cities Alliance aims to raise awareness of women's inequality in urban contexts among its members, inform them of other members' gender-related activities, and jointly implement projects and programmes. It also seeks to capitalise on the different strengths and expertise of members to mainstream gender perspectives into policy dialogues at the international, national, and local levels.

Members are also responsible for ensuring gender balance in their delegations to Cities Alliance meetings and events and that discussions address the gender equality dimensions of all agenda items.

Communication with Cities Alliance members will include targeted, structured messages that promote a clear understanding of Cities Alliance's work and how they can work together. Cities Alliance members will be involved in specific advocacy activities focusing on gender. Members will be informed and engaged in in-country operations where there is an opportunity. They will have access to information through our website and social media.

CITIES ALLIANCE will also support members' initiatives by promoting the results, co-developing new initiatives, and providing speaking opportunities.





RESULTS FRAMEWORK OUTLINE

Gender Equality Indicators

● Included in the Corporate Scorecard ● Not included in the Corporate Scorecard

Obj	No	Indicator	How to measure it/ useful resources	Responsibility	Result 2022	Result 2023	Aggregated Results
General	1	Number of cities with gender-related Cities Alliance initiatives implemented	Initiatives include events, programmes, and capacity building sessions	Gender team with support from the Communications team	15	31	46
	2	Proportion of city/sector/settlement development plans and strategies incorporating solutions to gender equality and inclusion i) updated, ii) developed, iii) implemented (Tier iii CSC)	This indicator can be measured with the support of project reports and assessments of the produced/updated policy of projects. Solutions may include gender-participatory assessments, specific budget allocations, or the definition of gender-specific objectives.	The MEL Specialist supported by the Gender team	100%	100%	100%
	3	Number of women (professionals in the national and local governments, community representatives, civil society, etc.) with strengthened capacities (Tier iii CSC)	This indicator can be measured by using surveys and other assessment tools at the beginning and end of the implemented training session/programme/workshop. A list of useful participatory assessment tools can be found in the Women Friendly Toolkit for Urban Planning (pp.12 and 32).	The MEL Specialist supported by the Gender team	Circa 2,600	597	3197
1	1	Percentage of relevant Cities Alliance programmes that mainstream gender equality considerations through the project cycle	The actions and considerations that can be taken to mainstream gender in the project cycle are listed in the Checklist for Mainstreaming Gender in Urban Projects . To mainstream gender equality, a project should follow at least seven of the 10 activities suggested in the Checklist.	Gender team, in collaboration with project management (PM) and MEL Specialist	70%	100%	85%

Gender Equality Indicators

● Included in the Corporate Scorecard ● Not included in the Corporate Scorecard

Obj	No	Indicator	How to measure it/ useful resources	Responsibility	Result 2022	Result 2023	Aggregated Results
1	2	Proportion of Cities Alliance staff who participate in trainings and awareness sessions on gender equality by contract level and sex	<p>Trainings and awareness sessions include training sessions, BBLs, workshops, and organised visits.</p> <p>This indicator can be measured with the support of attendance sheets and recordings of sessions, such as BBLs and other training.</p>	Gender team, in collaboration with the PM and MEL Specialist	Analyst: 71% Specialist: 53% Management: 100% Female: 73% Male: 64%	Analyst: 60% Specialist: 100% Management: 90% Female: 60 % Male: 40%	Analyst: 65,4% Specialist: 76,5% Management: 95% Female: 66,5% Male: 52%
1	3	Percentage of project (grant or procurement) budget allocated explicitly to gender equality and women's empowerment	<p>This indicator can be measured through the Annual Work Plan (AWP) and Cities Alliance programme budget documents.</p> <p>To understand how to create a gender-sensitive budget, refer to p.8 of the Checklist.</p>	Gender team in collaboration with PM and the MEL Specialist	/	71,12%	71,12%
1	4	Number of organisations/NGOs/companies supported by Cities Alliance that are led by women/have gender equality as core objectives	<p>This indicator includes organisations engaged through the procurement system and through grants.</p> <p>To measure the number of women-led organisations/companies, support can be requested from the Cities Alliance Procurement Officer or the women-owned businesses section of the UNOPS procurement Dashboard can be checked.</p> <p>To measure the number of women-led organisations supported through grants, the Cities Alliance Grants Officer can be consulted or the completed grant application forms and the gender markers of each grantee controlled.</p>	Gender team with support from the Procurement and Grant Officers	16 grantees (SDI Affiliates) and one woman-owned business	24	40
2	1	Global audience for gender-equality and women's empowerment Cities Alliance knowledge products and digital stories	<p>This indicator can be measured by monitoring webpage views (Google Analytics) and newsletter mailing lists.</p> <p>The Comms team can be contacted for Google Analytics.</p>	Gender team with support from the Comms team	Newsletters in Mailchimp: 711 Gender webpages: 15,283 views YouTube: 4,807 views	Newsletter recipients in Mailchimp: 3614 (Opened 1229) Gender webpages: 15841 views Youtube: 316 views	Newsletter recipients: 4325 Gender webpages: 31.124 Youtube: 5123 views

Gender Equality Indicators

● Included in the Corporate Scorecard ● Not included in the Corporate Scorecard

Obj	No	Indicator	How to measure it/ useful resources	Responsibility	Result 2022	Result 2023	Aggregated Results
2	2	Number of policy dialogues, awareness-raising activities, and formal learning events incorporating gender-related issues and inclusive city development supported by the Gender team and implemented by members, partners, and/or the Secretariat [Volume] (Tier iv CSC)	This indicator can be measured through project reports, AWP, and event-related concept notes and briefs.	Gender team with support from the Comms team	20	26	46
2	3	Proportion of total gender-related knowledge/advocacy products financed by Cities Alliance and produced by members, partners, and/or the Secretariat (Tier iv CSC)	To be gender-related, a knowledge product must have at least one section focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment in relation to the main topic.	The MEL Specialist supported by the Gender team	19/30 = 63%	14/14 = 100%	81,5%
3	1	Number of local stakeholder organisations with gender equality as part of their objectives engaged in Cities Alliance-supported diagnostic, planning, and piloting activities	<p>This indicator can be measured by looking at project reports and gender assessments.</p> <p>In this indicator, objective can be taken broadly (such as specific objective) or in approach (vision of the organisation).</p> <p>Stakeholders may include networks of women; women-led civil society, community-based, or faith-based organisations; women youth associations; departments, offices, or units of national and local governments; female political leaders; elected officials; and digital activists.</p> <p>Stakeholders may be supported financially or through partnerships and capacity building.</p>	The Gender team in collaboration with the PM and MEL Specialist	24 from Cities for Women	70	94

Gender Equality Indicators

● Included in the Corporate Scorecard ● Not included in the Corporate Scorecard

Obj	No	Indicator	How to measure it/ useful resources	Responsibility	Result 2022	Result 2023	Aggregated Results
3	2	Number of gender-sensitive toolkits, assessments, and other technical assistance products for inclusive city planning developed with evidence of uptake by stakeholders and/or beneficiaries (Tier iii CSC)	This indicator can be measured through project reports, gender assessments, and project evaluations. The list of Cities Alliance gender-sensitive tools and toolkits can be found here .	The MEL Specialist supported by the Gender team	2	2	4
3	3	Number of female beneficiaries of services (Direct) (Tier iii CSC)	Number of female individuals with strengthened tenure, upgraded or more resilient housing, benefitting from community infrastructure projects and public space projects, improved livelihoods; benefitting from community-based adaptation to climate change or nature-based solutions, gaining access to services; completing vocational training; and with strengthened capacities.	The MEL Specialist supported by the Gender team	Circa 270,000	2867	272.867

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APPENDIX

Recommendations from the 2021 Internal Review:

Thematic Area	Recommended Actions
Advocacy and Global Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Explore the potential for advocacy to continue and expand, with possible thematic areas of focus including advocating further for cities planned for women and by women, gender equality promotion at the local level, climate resilience in cities and gender, and women-led infrastructure. · Increase advocacy by engaging key members and partners to influence policies locally and globally and continuing to push for engagement by women and the CfW Programme in international organisations and forums.
Country Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Expand the CfW Programme’s work in priority countries, agreed on with members and partners. · Continue to improve mainstreaming through ad-hoc training and co-design of programmes, with improved country operations involving Country Programmes and local partners with concrete impacts on the ground. · Move towards an integrated approach, working with a few cities in the same country or with national governments and expanding work to cities close to our current operations. · Continue working with local implementing partners to increase implementation of “quick wins.” · Ensure that certain gender-related indicators are explicitly addressed in the Country Programme Framework, with quantitative and qualitative indicators. · Ensure more gender mainstreaming in programmes, from early design stage to implementation.
Cross-cutting issues	<p>RESOURCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase funding for gender-related work, particularly to increase capacity (personnel) to reduce the risk of gender driven largely by one staff member. · To do this, increase dialogue and communication with donors and members.

INTERNAL COLLABORATION:

- Continue training internally and with grantees on a regular basis to ensure ongoing understanding of the need for gender mainstreaming and how to do it.
- Provide further tools, such as checklists on how to do gender mainstreaming and an updated gender marker, which can be shared with grantees.
- Ensure programmatic work is aligned with the gender programme by approaching the Gender team early in the design stage and including gender early in the PCR process.
- Ensure that gender mainstreaming across Cities Alliance is reflected in membership engagement so that members do not feel that Cities Alliance's gender-related work is confined to the Gender team.
- Consider increasing learning and sharing events, such as BBL series.

COMMUNICATION:

- The gender mainstreaming approach and the CfW Programme need to be broadcast more broadly at the strategic level, such as with potential donors and members.
- There is a need to increase and improve communication and dissemination of results as an ongoing process that includes targeted, structured messages and a clear understanding of target groups.
- Constant, regular communication and engagement is needed at all levels, internally and externally.
- Work with members to communicate joint messages and each other's work and successes, for example, Communications departments working together.

MEL:

- Review indicators/MEL to capture gender and impacts more effectively.
- Finalise indicators for the CfW Programme.
- Develop a baseline to measure programme progress.
- Revise the reporting process to ensure more targeted, better-structured reports that document learning from both successes and failures.
- Build an evidence base for Cities Alliance's work to articulate case study results and aggregate them to show their reach.
- Include gender-focused activities and performance indicators in grant agreements and provide capacity development support to grantees.
- Have follow-up indicators show the impact of interventions over time.
- Add satisfaction surveys for participants in projects and include more qualitative indicators, such as: "Do people feel involved? How much voice do they feel they have?"
- Show members a well-developed evidence base, documentation of lessons learned, and continuous monitoring.

Thematic Area	Recommended Actions
<p>Cross-cutting issues</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strengthen the partnership by developing a membership engagement strategy and stakeholder management processes. · Explore if it would be useful to approach new members whose work aligns well with the CfW Programme, as suggested by some interviewees. · Continue to reinforce relationships with members through ongoing regular engagement and updates. · Invite member input on strategies, such as the draft Gender Action Plan. · Hold webinars to present the CfW Programme’s work to increase awareness and promote collaboration. · Engage more members around specific issues and explore working jointly with members on projects. · Follow up on potential areas of collaboration, particularly those proposed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

Cities Alliance

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