

Metropolitan governance and gender equality...



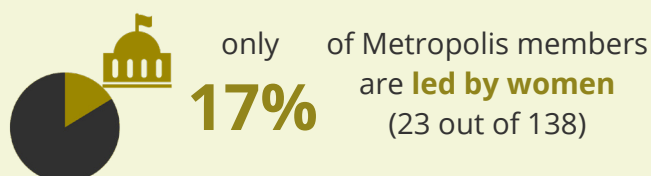
Gender Keys 03

... a challenging relationship ?

As we learned in the previous editions of Gender Keys, **urban spaces are not neutral**. Most of them have historically been planned and built considering experiences, opinions and needs of, exclusively, a pattern of masculine citizen. This process has resulted in metropolises that lack meeting, rest and play spaces, do not offer safe and walkable roads and barely count on inclusive public transport, just to name a few examples.

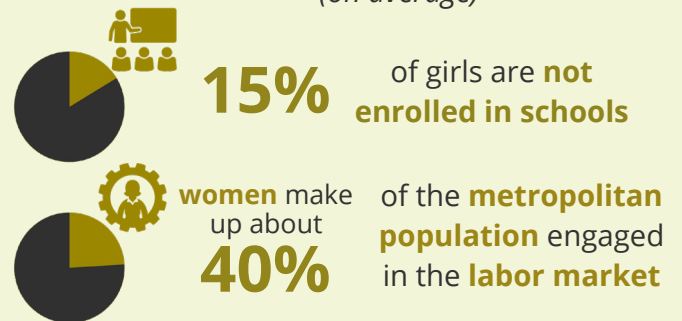
One of the main reasons why this is still a reality in many parts of the world is the **limited access of women and vulnerable groups to penetrate governance structures**. When we talk about governance, we refer to the exercise of leadership and power to take decisions, involving not only political authority, but also the allocation of institutional resources to plan and manage public affairs and socioeconomic development.

Although men and women are nearly equal in the composition of the world population, this equality is far from having a correspondence in political leadership roles. **Women remain underrepresented in public and political arena in all levels of government**, including the administrations of major cities and metropolitan areas:



Furthermore, governance includes the institutions, procedures and administrative systems, as well as the arrangements and practices that lead to the access to political leadership roles. It is not surprising, then, to also observe **gender inequalities** in 58 metropolitan spaces of the **Metropolis membership**:

(on average)



source: indicators.metropolis.org

GENDER AND GOVERNANCE

The less opportunities women and girls have to **access education and decent work**, the less likely it is that any **governance structure**, at any level, **becomes more diverse and inclusive**.

While governance models remain gender blind and do not recognize women as legitimate political actors with equal power and status, the **presence and voices of all citizens in influencing decisions** that directly affect us will remain limited.

TURN THE PAGE

Women and girls as the engine of inclusive urban governance

Because of a gendered perception of women's engagement in improving living conditions as an extension of their domestic responsibilities, so far, **women have managed to engage only at some community or neighborhood levels of decision making.** Much work is still required to **rethink cultural gender norms and stereotyped sex roles**, and provide the space to bring on board women's specific interests to decisions concerning **urban management, planning and financing.**



There is increasing recognition that promoting women's entry into public and political arenas has a direct impact on **inclusive urban governance**, because:

- 1. Accountability of governance institutions** to women enhances responsiveness
- 2. Multi-level and context-sensitive decentralized governance** fosters economic development, sustainability, social cohesion, gender equality and quality of life
- 3. Participatory frameworks and tools** help formulate and implement policies to strengthen citizenship involvement, mainly women, by having their needs and concerns heard and understood

CASE STUDIES



MASHHAD

GIRLS LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Empowering young women student to take leadership roles in urban sustainability and simultaneously encourage participation in civic affairs [\[+info\]](#)



BUENOS AIRES

GENDER INDICATORS SYSTEM

An open platform that provides statistical information with a gender perspective, generated from a collaborative process and organized into physical, economic and decision-making autonomy [\[+info\]](#)



DURBAN

SAFER CITIES PROGRAMME

This program has been developed with the contributions from different levels of government (local, provincial and national) and representatives from diverse community-based organizations [\[+info\]](#)



BARCELONA

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

Under the strategy to achieve a feminist transformation of the city, the budget of the Barcelona City Council is being built under the orientation of the results of an analysis which takes into consideration the needs of women and vulnerable groups [\[+info\]](#)

"Gender-sensitive governance is both the substantive representation of women in decision making, and an enhanced awareness and understanding of gender-specific needs within the governance structure" (Beall, 1996)

An initiative of:

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